



# DISTRICT OF WELLS: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN BACKGROUND REPORT

June 1, 2021



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The District of Wells has embarked on a community planning project to revise the Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP is the District's highest-level policy document, and it provides guidance and direction for the future development and evolution of Wells as a community.

## What is an OCP for and who uses it?

The OCP is a municipality's highest-level policy document. The OCP answers the question **“where will new development go and what will it look like?”** but it also provides direction for a variety of important topics, including:

- Recreation and Parks
- Social Development (education, equity and inclusion, culture, poverty, etc.)
- Environmental Protection and Hazards (areas that should not be developed)
- Climate Change and Community Resilience
- Infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, etc.)

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Community Safety
- Design and Architecture
- Location of Land Uses (residential, park, industrial, commercial, etc.)

Citizens, landowners, businesses, and developers use the OCP to guide property and investment decisions. Council and staff use it to guide municipal decisions such as budgeting, servicing, capital projects, land use, and development proposals. The School District and other agencies use it to guide facility planning, as well as program and service delivery.

To set the stage for the development of the OCP, this report compiles background research including information about the history of Wells, the current context of the community, and ideas for the future. This report includes analysis of data for the 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census periods which included a comparison of Wells statistics to the Cariboo Regional District and B.C.

The report is organized into the following sections:

- **Wells Past:** A summary of Wells Indigenous and modern history.
- **Wells Present:** A community profile including demographic information and maps identifying various existing conditions in Wells.
- **Wells Future:** Population projections for growth scenarios and a summary of draft principles for the revised OCP.

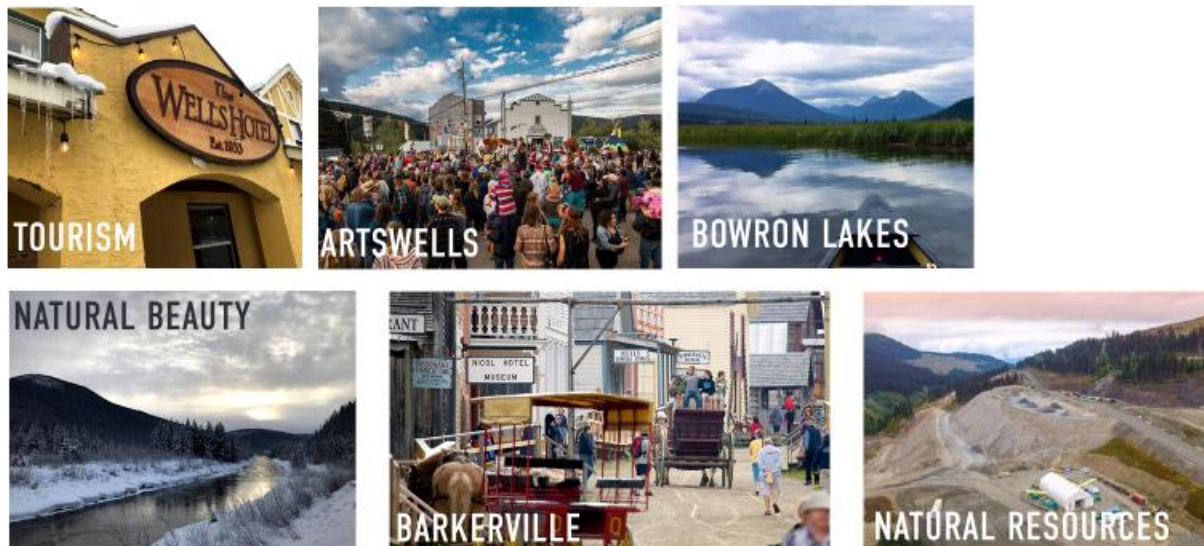
## 2.0 WELLS PAST

### 2.1 COMMUNITY & REGIONAL CONTEXT

Wells is located approximately 80 kilometres east of Quesnel, BC, on the Barkerville Highway. Wells is situated in the Cariboo mountains at an elevation of 1,200 metres, at the confluence of the Willow River and Williams Creek. The townsite is centred on a gravel knoll overlooking Jack of Clubs Lake, surrounded by forested hills and a scenic wetland and meadow area.<sup>1</sup>

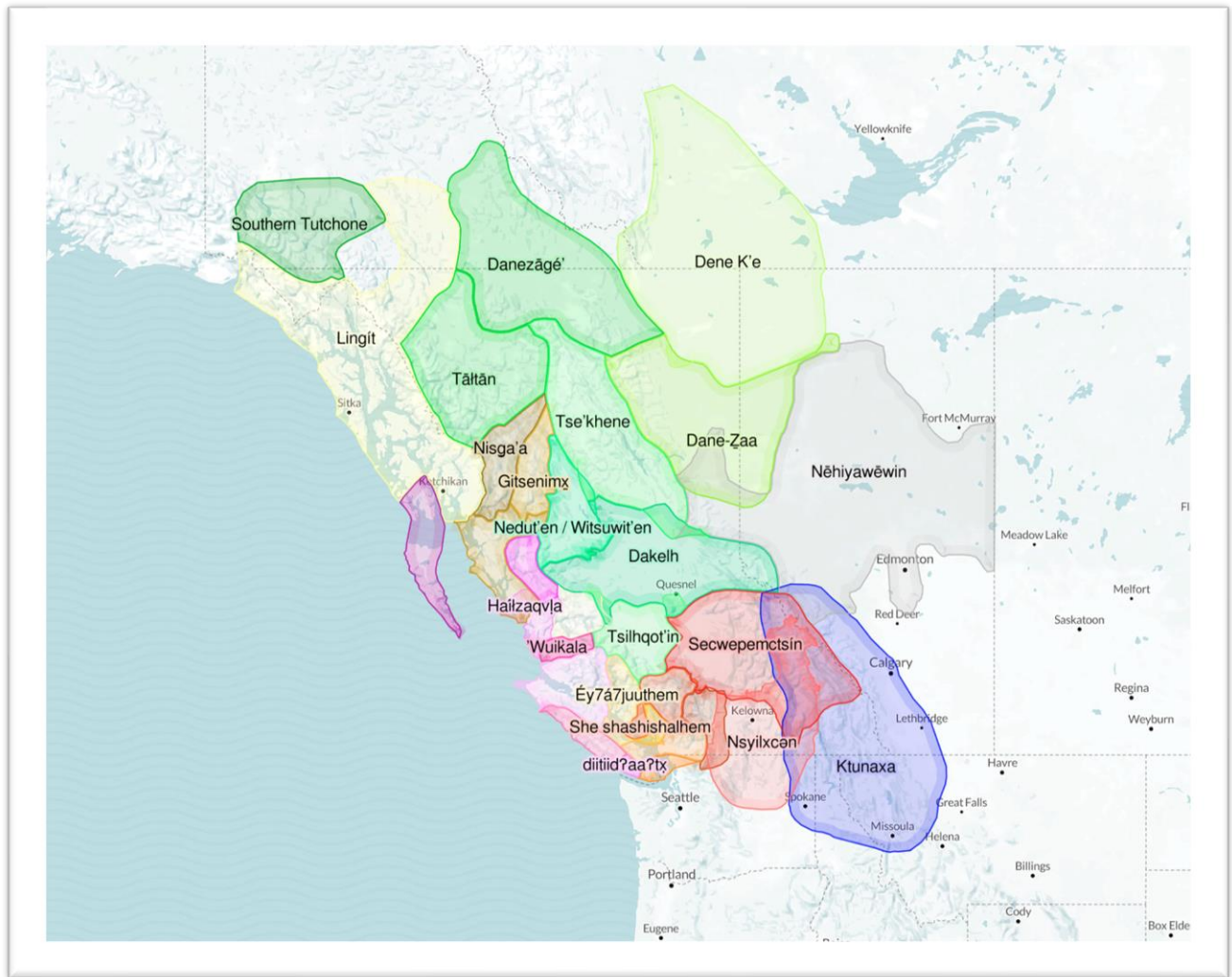
Wells is a small community with a permanent population of approximately 217 people. Wells is known as a historic gold mining town and is the gateway to two major tourist attractions: Barkerville Historic Town & Park and the Bowron Lakes provincial park canoe circuit. Wells is known for its strong arts community (30% of residents in Wells are employed by arts, culture, or recreation) and the annual ArtsWells festival hosted by Island Mountain Arts.

Gold mining has continued to be a part of Wells, with placer miners consistently living and working in Wells. In 2020 exploration began for the proposed Cariboo Gold Project and underground gold mine that could bring 250 peak construction jobs and an estimated 460 direct operations positions. The Cariboo Gold Project would represent a new chapter in the community's mining history and presents both opportunities and challenges for the people of Wells. The Cariboo Gold Project is currently going through the Environmental Assessment Process. All approvals for the gold mine are the responsibility of the provincial government and outside of the jurisdiction of the District of Wells.



## 2.2 INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Barkerville Historic Town and Park is located in the shared ancestral territories of the Dakelh (Carrier) and Secwepemctsin (Secwépemc or Shuswap) Peoples. Several nations have history and territory in the area, including Lhatko, Nazko, Lhoosk'uz, Ulkatcho, ?Esdilagh, Xatsúll, Simpcw, and Lheidli. Evidence of early indigenous settlement in the region dates back over 10,000 years.



The above map is from the First People's Cultural Council:  
<https://maps.fpcc.ca/languages/secwepemcts%C3%ADn>

The First Peoples' Map can be used to view Indigenous language regions, artists and artworks, place names and community landmarks. You can hear the pronunciation of language names, greetings, places and more. All of the 34 languages Indigenous to what is now called British Columbia are represented. The First Peoples' Map was created by First Peoples' Cultural Council in collaboration with First Nations communities and Indigenous artists, language champions, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and cultural workers.<sup>ii</sup>

## 2.3 MODERN HISTORY

Wells was developed as a "company town" by the Wells Townsite Company and was incorporated under the *Companies Act* on December 14, 1933. Fred M. Wells, for whom the town was named, prospected in the area for ten years before finding the minerals that built the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine Company. The physical plan for Wells was originally prepared by the Wells Townsite Company, a subsidiary of the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine Company. The majority of the buildings in Wells were constructed between 1934 and 1936 as residences for the miners working in the local mines.

Following its initial establishment, Wells grew quite rapidly; **by 1934, the population had grown to 2,000 people.** Wells continued to be a thriving centre of gold quartz mining until the Second World War when the gold market collapsed. The war brought both financial and social ruin to Wells. During the war years, Wells was on the verge of becoming a ghost town because there was no one left to work at the Cariboo Gold Quartz Company's mine. At the end of the war in 1946, the Company was able to attract returning soldiers to work in the mines. New discoveries of rich gold ore veins after the war meant that the Wells area was once again in boom times. Following the war, the population peaked at 4,500; but declined again to 300 in 1967 when "Old Number One," the last shaft of the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine, closed.

The economic well-being of Wells declined following the closing of the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine in 1967. The local economy is currently based on a mixture of tourism, placer mining, logging, and hard rock mining. Tourism is seen as the major growth industry, with logging and mining as companion industries. Wells has been named a 'Gateway' community which will focus significant resources towards developing links between front country and backcountry tourism enterprises, resource stewardship, marketing, and the integration of natural and cultural tourism products.

The District of Wells was incorporated as a municipality on June 28, 1998. Residents of Wells elect a Mayor and Councillors to make decisions on land use, infrastructure and other community issues that were previously managed by the Cariboo Regional District. In 1998 the DOW endorsed their first Official Community Plan, and the plan was amended in 2001 and again in 2010. This current work to revise the OCP represents a comprehensive revision of the OCP, considering the potential land use and growth management impacts resulting from the proposed Cariboo Gold Mine.

- *District of Wells 2002 Official Community Plan*

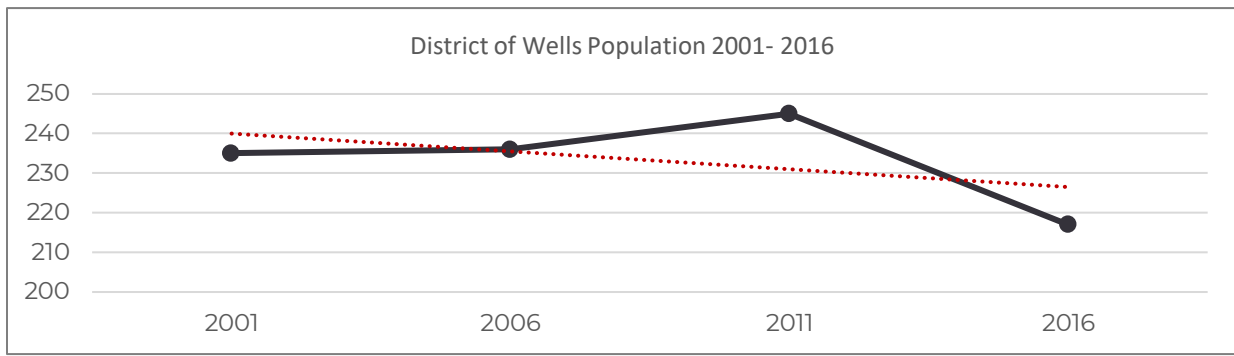
# 3.0 WELLS PRESENT: DEMOGRAPHICS

## 3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Due to the different methods of Census data collection and as a result of rounding, total counts and percentages for data included in this document may not always be consistent.

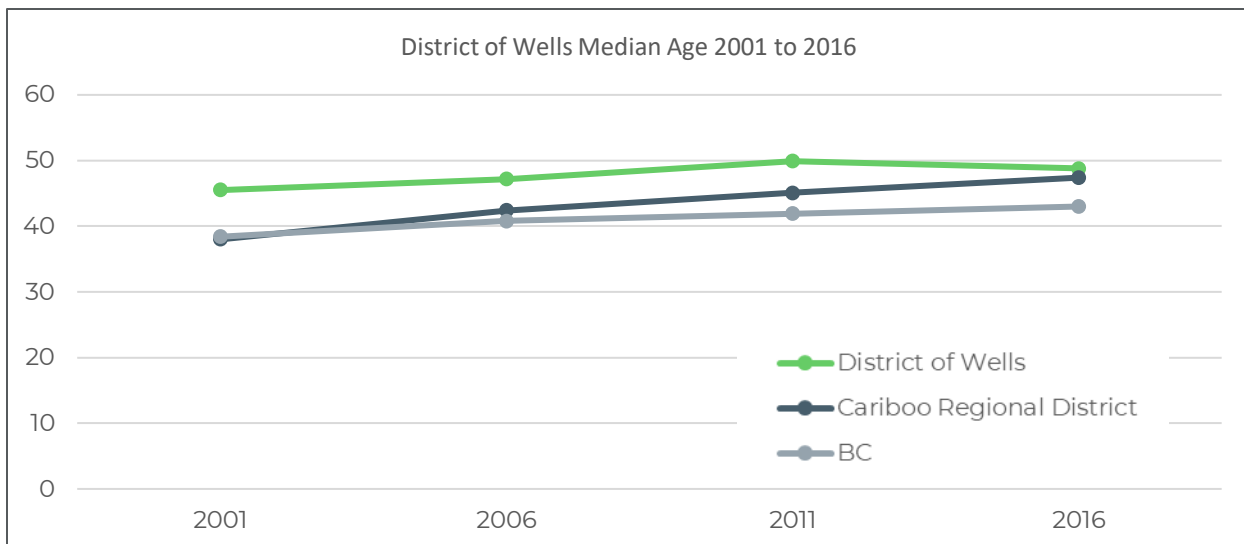
### Population:

**Wells population has been declining since 2011:** Wells population declined by 28 people (11.4%) from 2011 to 2016; at the same time, the CRD pop was constant, and the provincial pop increased by 5.6% (Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016).



### Age:

**Wells has an aging population:** Wells has an aging population, similar to provincial trends. Wells also has slightly fewer children under 14 in comparison to the regional and provincial trends. Wells median age of 48.8 years is older than the regional (47.4) and provincial averages (43).



AGE DISTRIBUTION	DISTRICT OF WELLS	CARIBOO RD	BC
0 to 14 years	11%	15%	15%
15 to 64 years	68%	64%	67%
65 years and over	18%	21%	18%
85 years and over	0%	2%	2%
Median Age	48.8	47.4	43.0

Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016

### Aboriginal Identity:

**Well has a small population who identify as Aboriginal:** Based on 2016 census data, approximately 4% of Well's population identifies as Aboriginal. This is slightly less than the 6% of the population of British Columbia that identifies as Aboriginal.

ABORIGINAL POPULATION (2016)	DISTRICT OF WELLS		BRITISH COLUMBIA	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Population in Private Households by Aboriginal Identity</b>	<b>230</b>		<b>4,560,240</b>	
Aboriginal identity	10	4%	270,585	6%
Non-Aboriginal identity	215	93%	4,289,655	94%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016 via Sitewise

## Education:

**About half of Well's population has a post-secondary education:** Based on 2016 census data, 22% of the population of Wells does not have a certificate, diploma, or degree; 29% has a secondary school diploma or equivalent certificate; and 49% has a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree. Out of the population with post-secondary education, 22% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Compared to British Columbia, there are slightly more residents in Wells with no education and slightly fewer residents with post-secondary education.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2016)	DISTRICT OF WELLS		BRITISH COLUMBIA	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Population 15 years and over by Educational Attainment</b>	<b>205</b>		<b>3,870,380</b>	
No certificate, diploma, or degree	45	22%	601,640	16%
Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate	60	29%	1,138,565	29%
Postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree	100	49%	2,130,175	55%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma)	10	5%	338,985	9%
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	25	12%	700,945	18%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	15	7%	138,005	4%
University certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above	45	22%	952,240	25%
Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016 via Sitewise				

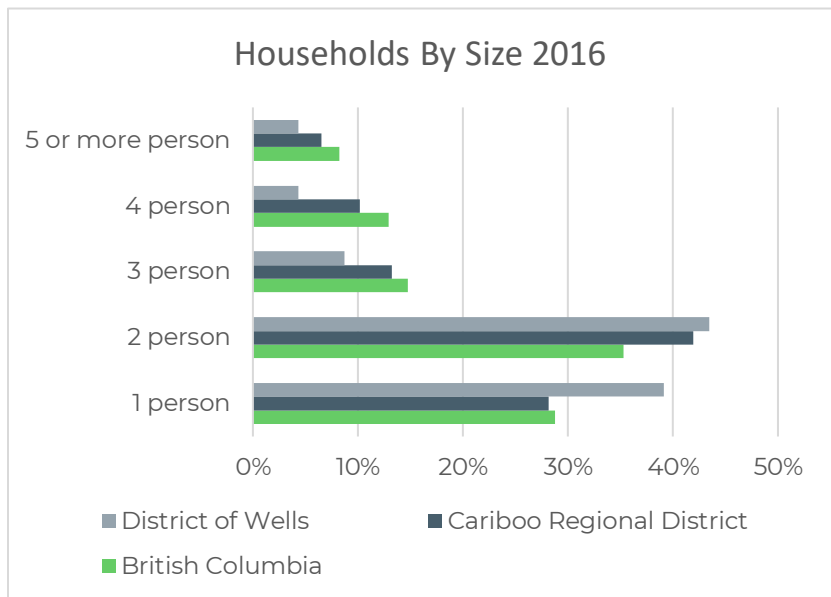
### 3.2 HOUSING & HOUSEHOLDS:

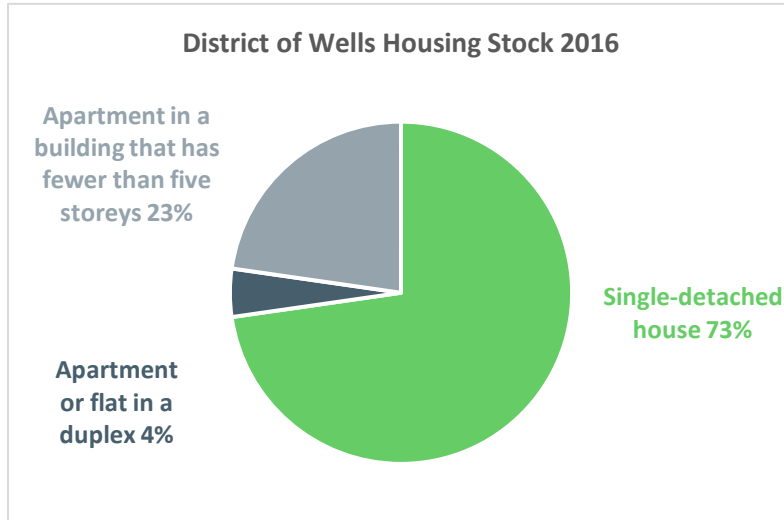
**The number of households in Wells has decreased:** In 2016, Wells had 115 private households, down from 130 in 2011. During the same time, the CRD saw a 2% increase in the number of private households, and the province saw a 7% increase in the number of private households.

PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS	DISTRICT OF WELLS		CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT		BRITISH COLUMBIA	
	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change
2016	115	-12%	26,700	2%	1,881,970	7%
2011	130	0%	26,150	4%	1,764,635	7%
2006	130		25,225	0%	1,643,150	7%
2001	0		25,310		1,534,335	

Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

**Wells has predominantly single, and two-person households:** Households in the District of Wells are predominantly single (39%) and two (43%) person households. A comparison of household sizes reveals the District of Wells has significantly more single-person households than both the Cariboo Regional District and B.C. (Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016).

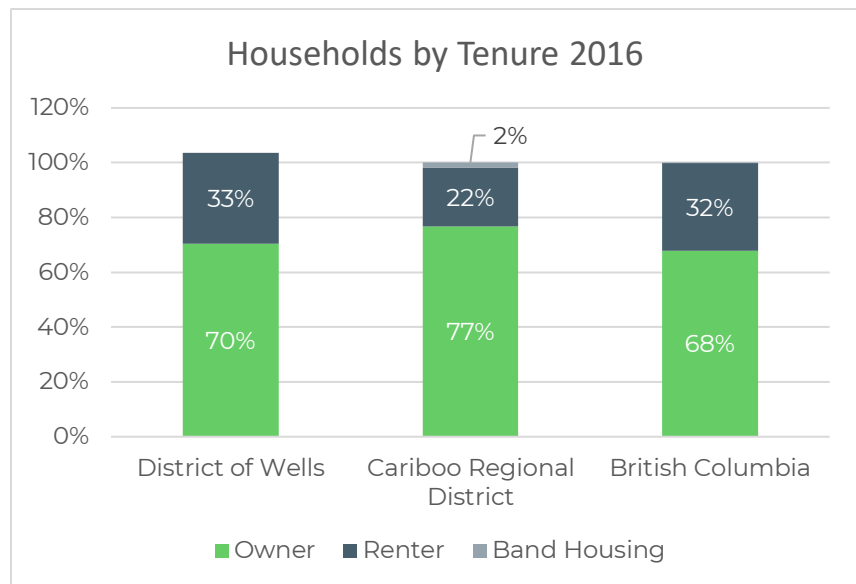




**Wells housing stock is predominantly single-family dwellings:** 70% of homes in the DOW are single-family dwellings and the remaining home are apartment units or "other" units. The DOW has less variety of housing types in comparison to the province.

### Wells has more rentals compared to the Cariboo Region:

The DOW has more renter households (33%) compared to the region (22%), but the number of renter households in Wells is consistent with the provincial average (32%) (Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016).



**Most homes in Wells were built before the 1960s:** 70% of Wells housing was built prior to the 1960s; this is vastly different to the Cariboo Region (10%) and the province (14%).

DWELLINGS BY PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION	DISTRICT OF WELLS		CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT		BRITISH COLUMBIA	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1960 or before	95	70%	2,765	10%	267,560	14%
1961 to 1980	25	19%	11,875	44%	559,485	30%
1981 to 1990	0	0%	4,205	16%	289,565	15%
1991 to 2000	10	7%	4,615	17%	331,865	18%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016

**Major Repairs to Housing:** 29% of housing in Wells needs major repair, compared to 10% in the Cariboo Region and 6% in the province.

HOUSING SUITABILITY & ADEQUACY	DISTRICT OF WELLS		CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT		BRITISH COLUMBIA	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total - Suitability	135	100%	26,700	100%	1,881,965	100%
Suitable	120	89%	25,880	97%	1,781,905	95%
Not suitable	15	11%	820	3%	100,060	5%
Total - Adequacy	140	100%	26,700	100%	1,881,970	100%
Only regular maintenance or minor repairs	100	71%	24,055	90%	1,763,105	94%
<b>Major repairs needed</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>2,645</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>118,865</b>	<b>6%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, Core Housing Need Data Tables (see <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/chn-biml/index-eng.cfm>)

### 3.3 ECONOMY

The economy in Wells is deeply tied to arts and tourism. At present, mining is a secondary but prominent industry. This section details Well's current economic status.

#### Primary Sectors

**The arts, culture, and recreation sector is the primary employer in Wells:** Arts, culture, and recreation jobs account for 30% of the labor force in Wells, compared to only 1% in the Cariboo Region and 2% across the province.

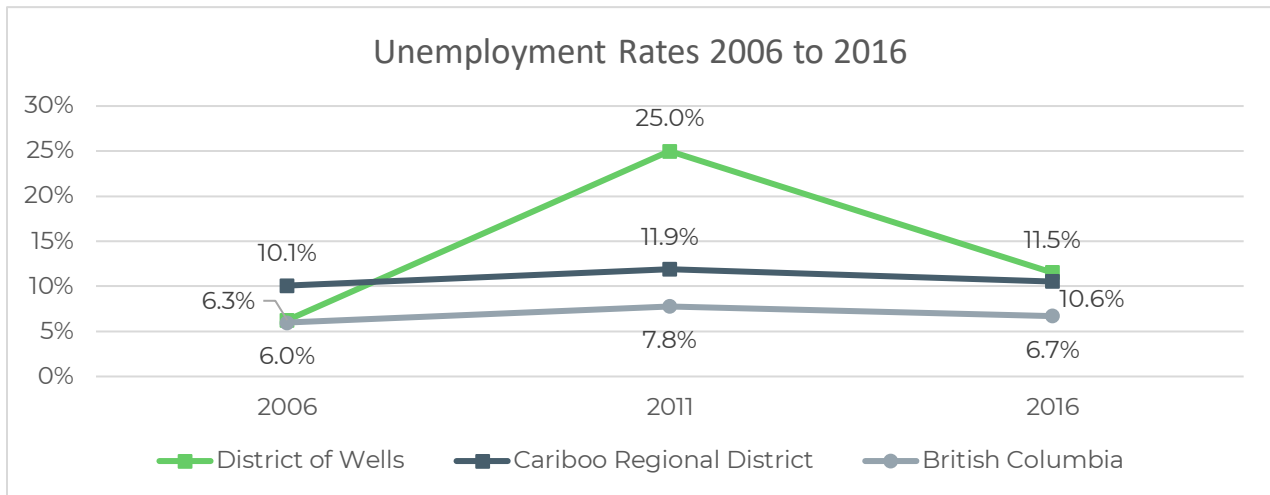
LABOUR FORCE	DISTRICT OF WELLS	CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT	BRITISH COLUMBIA
<b>Arts, entertainment, and recreation</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Accommodation and food services	15%	7%	9%
Retail trade	15%	13%	12%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	7%	4%	1%
Manufacturing	7%	13%	6%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	7%	4%	8%
Educational services	7%	6%	7%
Public administration	7%	5%	5%
Other services (except public administration)	7%	4%	5%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016

## Employment Rates

### Wells's unemployment rates are high and fluctuate more than the region and province:

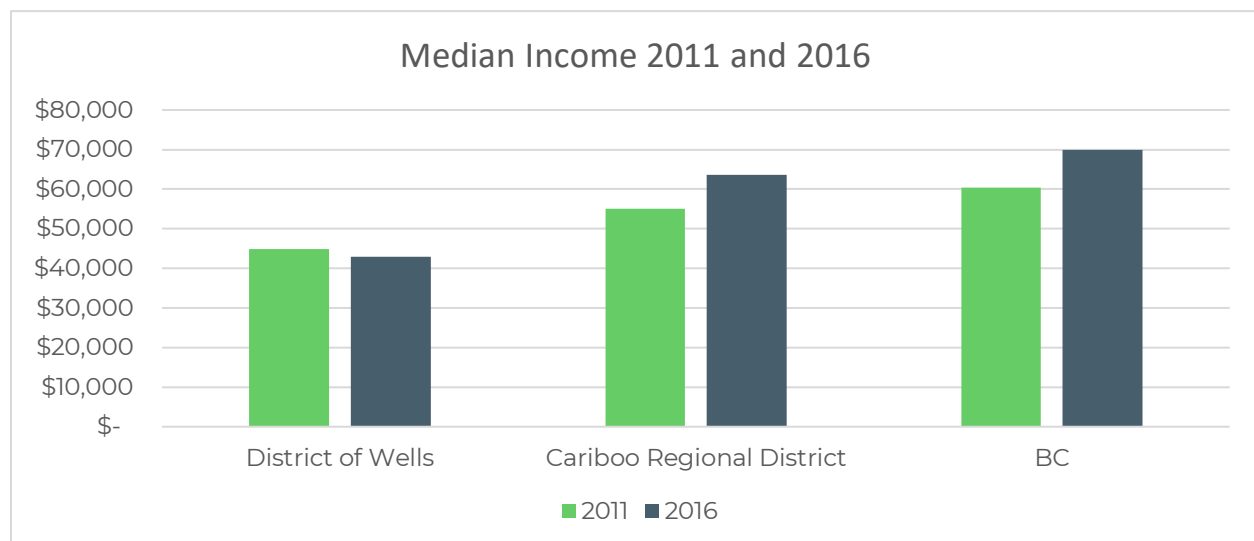
IN 2016, Wells unemployment rate was 11.5%, compared to 10.6% in the Cariboo Region and 6.7% in the province. Unemployment rates in the Cariboo Region and the province stayed fairly constant between 2006 to 2016, while in Wells, unemployment rates fluctuated from 6.3% (2006) to 25% (2011) to 11.5% (2016) (Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016).



## Household Income

### Households in Wells have a lower median income than the Cariboo Region and Province:

In 2016, Wells households earned a median income of \$42,880, compared to \$63,638 in the Cariboo Region and \$69,995 in the province (Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2011, 2016).

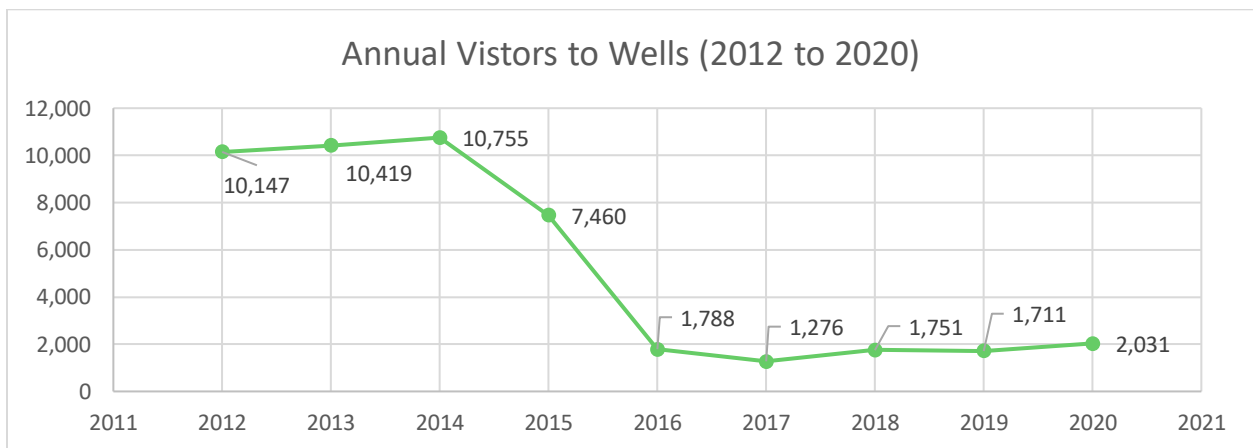


## Tourism

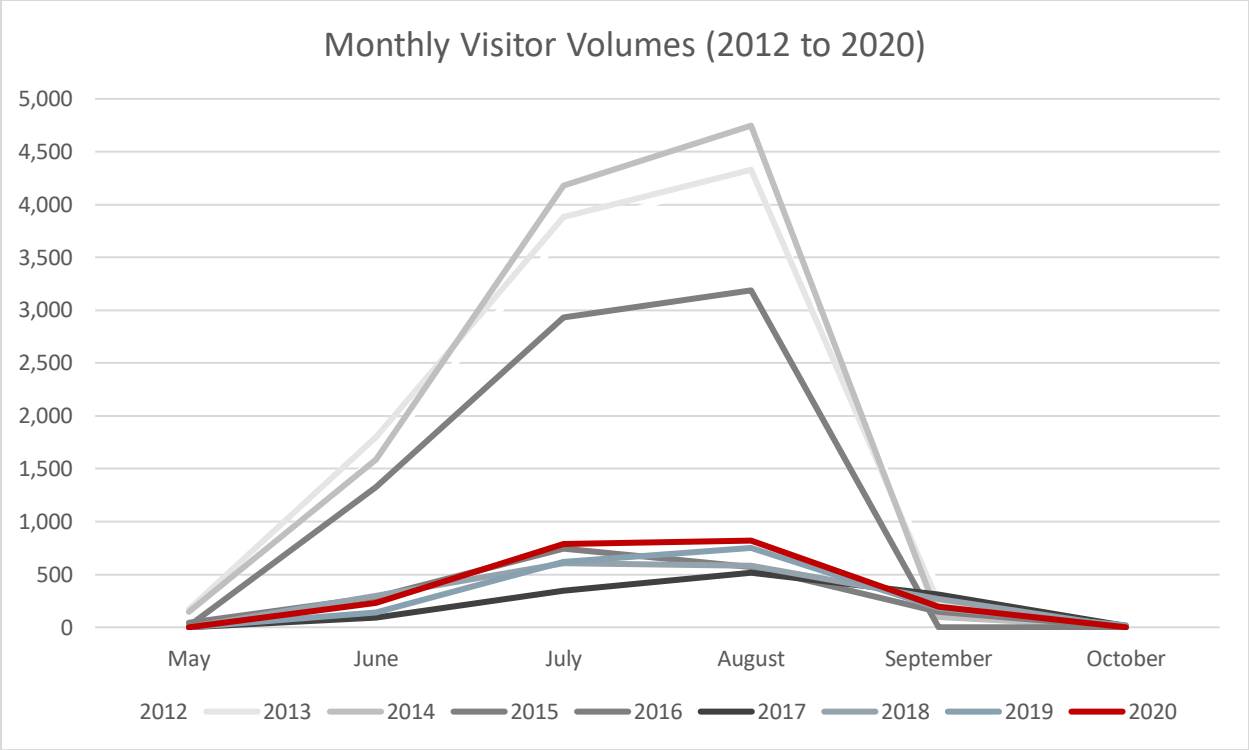
Many Wells residents are employed in arts and culture professions; many are either directly or indirectly tied to the local tourism industry. Barkerville, Bowron Lakes, Arts Wells, and other attractions bring visitors to the area who contribute to the economy and support local business.

### i. Visitor Statistics

The Wells Visitor Information Centre (VIC) is a primary community touchpoint for visitors to the area. The VIC collects statistics on the number of visitors that come through its doors each year. The chart below shows the number of visitors recorded at the Wells VIC between 2012 and 2020. Visitor numbers regularly hit approximately 10,000 people annually until about 2015, when volumes fell. Possible contributors to the decline in visitor volumes include a broader decline in tourism in 2015 resulting from a small recession and fires that closed Highway 97 and restricted visitor movements in 2017. Visitor volumes hit an annual low in 2017 and were still recovering in 2019. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in another setback for the tourism industry. Curiously, the Wells VIC reported higher visitor volumes in 2020 than it had in 2019. Volumes were still nowhere near pre-2015 levels but were possibly stemmed from an increase from local visitors.



The Wells VIC is open most years between May and October. Visitor volumes are generally highest in August, which corresponds with the annual Arts Wells Festival.



**i. Barkeville Historic Town and Park**

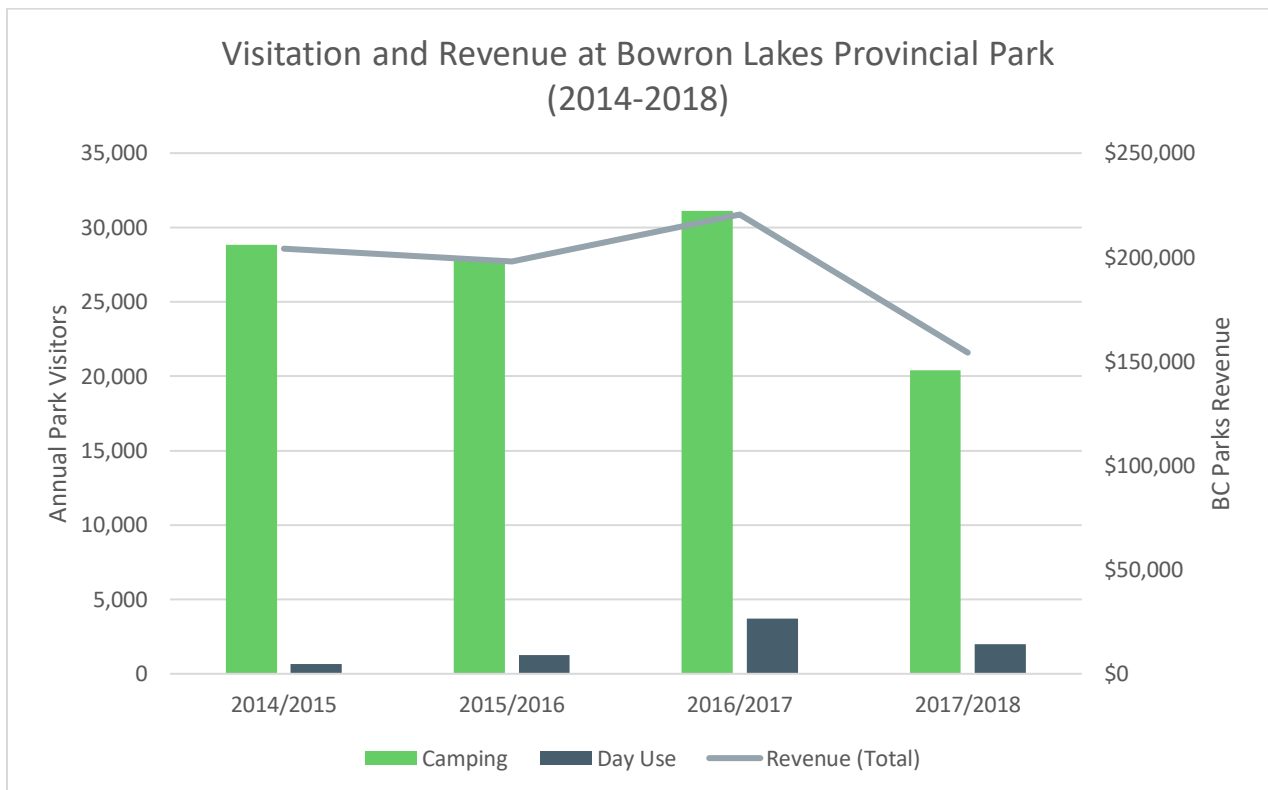
The Barkerville Historic Town and Village is also a significant draw; seeing an average of 70,000 visitors per year. Barkerville does see significant visitor volumes each year and has made recent strides to establish itself as a year-round destination by adding a tube park and other winter events. As with Bowron Lakes, Barkerville is a large draw for people coming to the area. Those on their way to Barkerville may not necessarily be stopping in at the visitor centre to be counted. The economic impact of Barkerville has long been an important contributor and attraction for Wells.



**Figure 1 Barkeville Historic Town and Park**  
[www.barkerville.ca]

## ii. Bowron Lakes Provincial Park

Bowron Lakes Provincial Park is famous for its week-long canoe circuit. The park attracts visitors from all over the world, and it has become an important part of the tourism landscape for wells. The chart below shows annual visitation to the park, including annual revenue collected by B.C. Parks. Interestingly, the visitation numbers are relatively steady and do not reflect the same pattern of decline as the VIC. This suggesting that visitors to the park do not stop at the VIC. Bowron Lakes also has a reservation system that limits the number of people who can travel the canoe circuit at any given time, which may also help explain the relatively steady numbers.



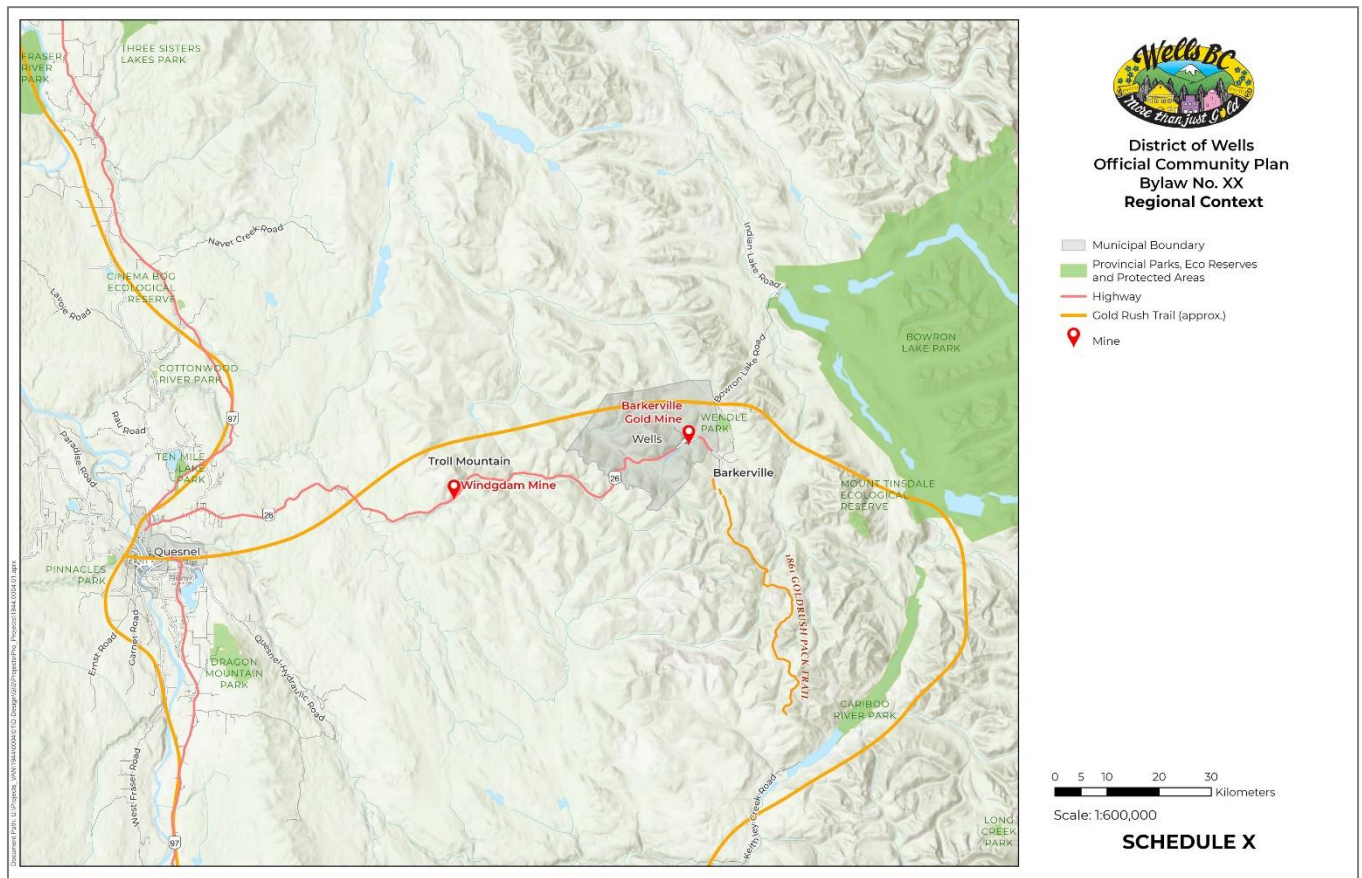


# 4.0 WELLS PRESENT: LAND USE & MAPPING

## 4.1 CONTEXT MAP

The map below illustrates the regional context of the District of Wells. Wells is located approximately 80 km east of the Town of Quesnel. The District of Wells (grey shaded area in the map below) encompasses a large area totalling 159 square kilometres; however, the town centre only accounts for approximately 1.6 square kilometres. All of the existing urban development is within the town centre.

Wells is the gateway to Bowron Lakes provincial park and the Barkerville Historic Town Site and Park. Troll Ski resort is 46 km west of Wells.

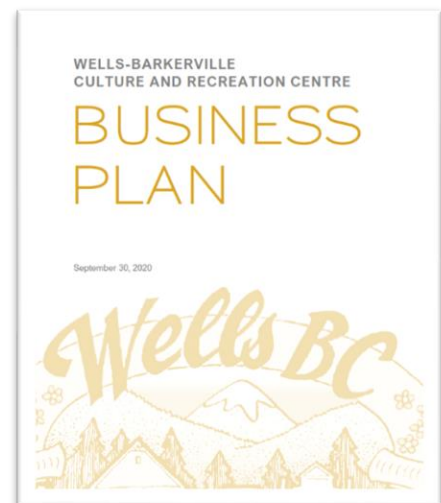


## 4.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The map on the following page illustrates the location of community facilities and services, including:

- Wells Community Hall, which includes:
  - Gathering Space (rental)
  - Library
  - Fitness Centre
  - Primary Health Care Clinic (one day/month)
  - Library
- Wells Fire Hall
- Wells RCMP Detachment
- Wells-Barkerville Culture and Recreation Centre

In September 2020, the District of Wells developed the Wells-Barkerville Culture (WBCRC) and Recreation Centre Business Plan. The Business Plan outlines the current use of the WBCRC, identifies required upgrades and proposes opportunities for new revenue streams. The Business Plan was developed with input and support from residents, community organizations, local businesses, Lhatko Dene Nation, and School District 28. The WBCRC currently provides space for childcare, kindergarten to grade six school, workspaces for independent artists, and space for delivering both Island Mountain Art and Barkerville programs. The Business Plan proposes a renewed vision for the WBCRC that includes various community, education, fitness, and revenue- generating uses.





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District of Wells  
 Official Community Plan  
 Bylaw No. XX  
 Community Facilities



Scale: 1:3,500

**SCHEDULE X**

## 4.3 OUTDOOR RECREATION

The map on the following page illustrates the outdoor recreation areas and trails in and around Wells. Wells has an extensive multi-use trail network, and many of the trails are shared by motorized and non-motorized trail users. The Cornish Mountain Cross-Country Ski Trails are located close to town, with the trailhead located in the meadow.

There is also an extensive trail network around Barkerville, but those trails are outside of the District of Wells municipal boundary.

Outdoor Recreation Asset	Description/Name
<b>Urban Parks</b>	Picnic park at the east end of Pooley St
	Fred Wells Park at the intersection of Pooley St and Sanders Ave.
	Playground at the Wells Community Facility Centre
	Playground at the Community Garden
<b>Crown Land Park</b>	Cornish Lake
	Nine Mile Lake
	Eight Mile Lake
<b>Snowmobile Trails</b>	Groundhog Lake, Prosperpine, Yanks Park, Sugar Creek Loop (Wells Snowmobile Club) <sup>1</sup> ,
<b>Cross-Country Ski Trails</b>	Cornish Cross-Country Ski Trails
<b>Mountain Biking Trail</b>	Cow Mountain Trails, Sugar Creek Loop, Valley Trail, Prosperpine Trail
<b>Other Recreation Trail</b>	Cow Mountain Trails, Sugar Creek Loop, Valley Trail, Prosperpine Trail
<b>Baseball Diamond</b>	2 small baseball diamonds at the Wells Community Facility Centre
	Large baseball diamond at the west end of Pooley St
<b>Skating Rink</b>	Skating rink at the Wells Community Facility Centre

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.snowmobilewells.com/cpages/trail-maps>



**District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX  
Recreation Local**

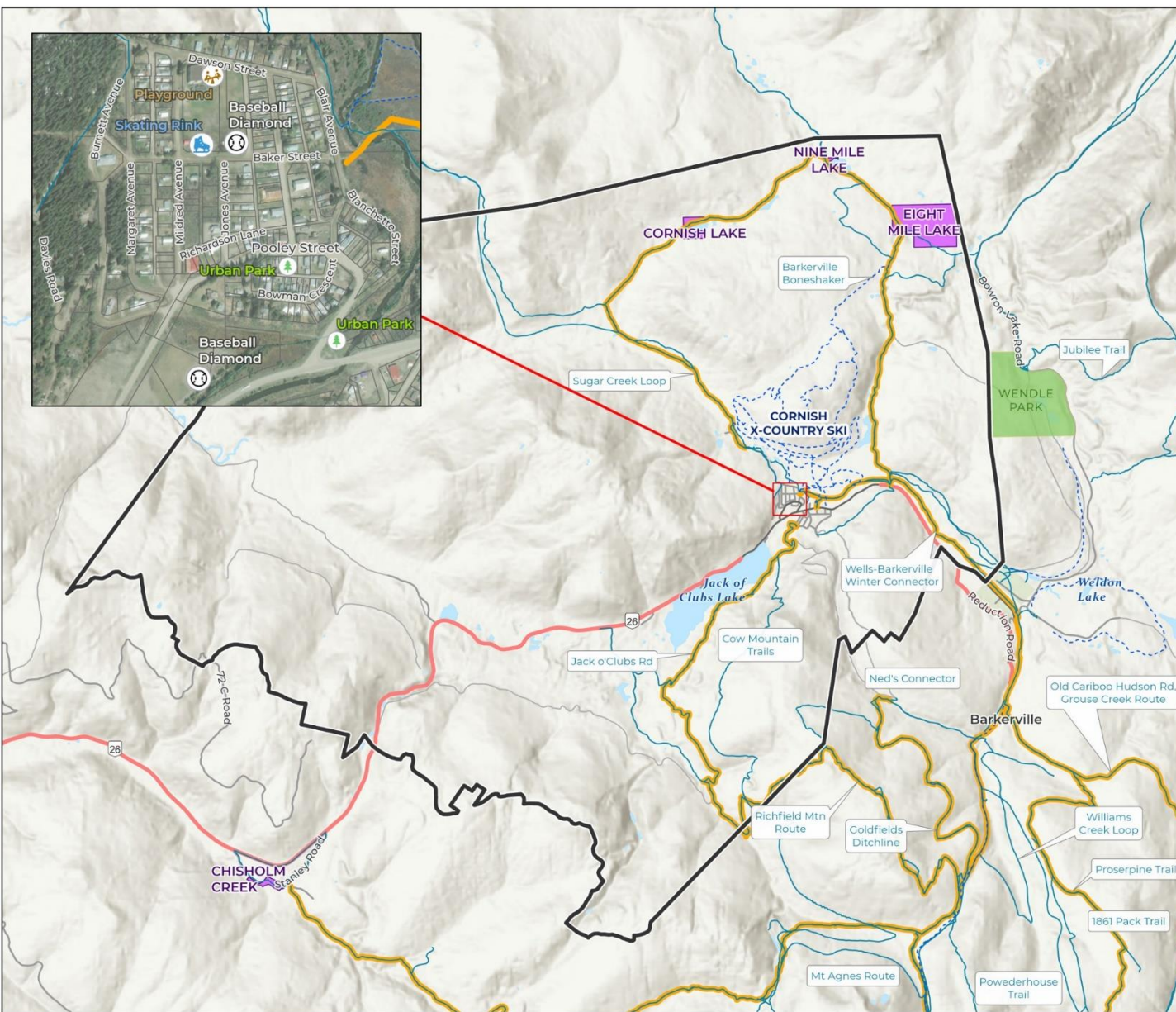
- Municipal Boundary
- Provincial Parks, Eco Reserves and Protected Areas
- Recreation Site
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Local Road/FSR

- Trails**
- Recreation
  - Cross country skiing
  - Snowmobile



Scale: 1:70,000

**SCHEDULE X**



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## 4.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The map on the following page illustrates environmentally sensitive areas within the District of Wells, including:

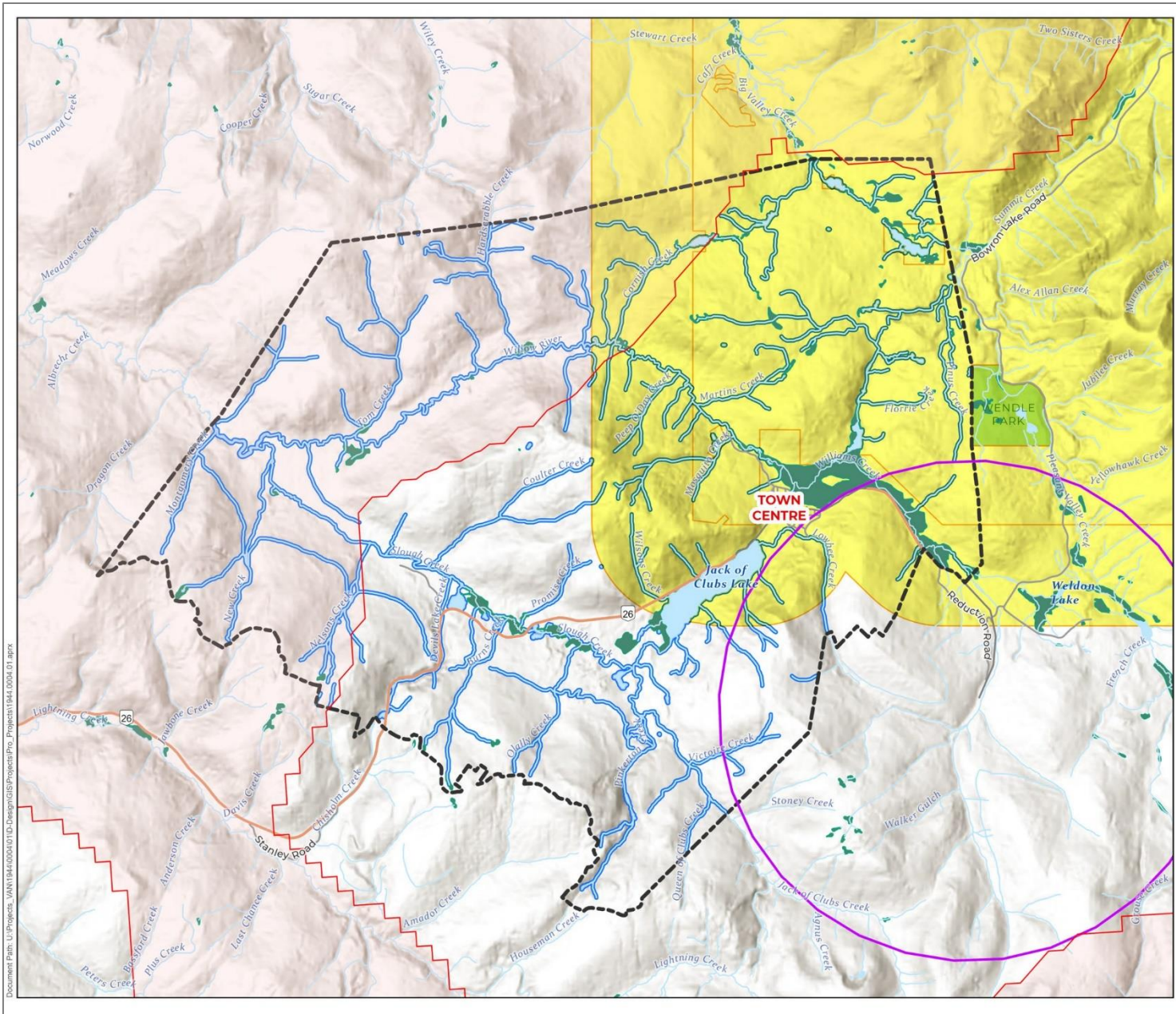
- **Riparian Areas:** The map on the following page highlights the many riparian areas within the District of Wells. Through the OCP, the DOW can designate fish-bearing riparian areas as Development Permit Areas, requiring buffers between new development and watercourses. The main riparian areas close to the Wells town centre include:
  - Lowhee Creek
  - Willow River
  - Williams Creek

In addition to these riparian areas, the Jack of Clubs Lake is located at the entrance to Wells, and there is a large wetland just north of the town centre. Wetlands are important environmentally complex areas that provide habitat and sustenance for a wide variety of plant and animal life. As such, several provincial acts and guidelines govern how wetlands are protected and managed, including the *Water Act*, *Fisheries Act*, *Wildlife Act*, *Community Charter*, *Local Government Act*, and others. The province's "Wetland Ways: Interim Guidelines for Wetland Protection and Conservation in British Columbia"<sup>iii</sup> details how impacts to wetlands can be avoided or mitigated from different types of development.

- **Southern Mountain Caribou:** Southern Mountain Caribou (SMC) are classified as Endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.<sup>iv</sup> The northwestern corner of the DOW (light red) is identified as significant SMC habitat for the Barkerville Caribou herd, which is estimated to include 65 animals. The Barkerville caribou subpopulation is found on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, north and south of Wells, BC, in the Quesnel Highlands. Throughout the year, lichen is a dominant part of their diet together with buds from coniferous trees, but this is supplemented with grasses, forbs and shrubs in the spring and summer.<sup>v</sup>
- **Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee:** Habitat in the southeast corner of the DOW (purple line).
- **Whitebark Pine – Critical Habitat:** The northeast corner of the DOW is identified as whitebark pine habitat (yellow on map). Whitebark pine is designated as Endangered under the *Species at Risk Act*<sup>vi</sup> and found in high elevations in British Columbia and Alberta. The primary causes of decline are White Pine Blister Rust, effects of Mountain Pine Beetle, climate change, and fire exclusion. Likely, none of the causes of decline can be reversed.



**The primary environmental values that could be impacted by urban development in the town centre are riparian areas/water quality and whitebark pine habitat in the forests that surround the town centre.**



**District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX  
Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

- Municipal Boundary
- Provincial Parks, Eco Reserves and Protected Areas
- Riparian Areas
- Wetlands
- Whitebark Pine - Critical Habitat
- Species and Ecosystems at Risk**
- Caribou (Southern Mountain Population)
- Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee

Note: The whole map extent is Grizzly Bear habitat, as well as critical habitat for Caribou - Southern Mountain population



Scale: 1:120,000

**SCHEDULE X**

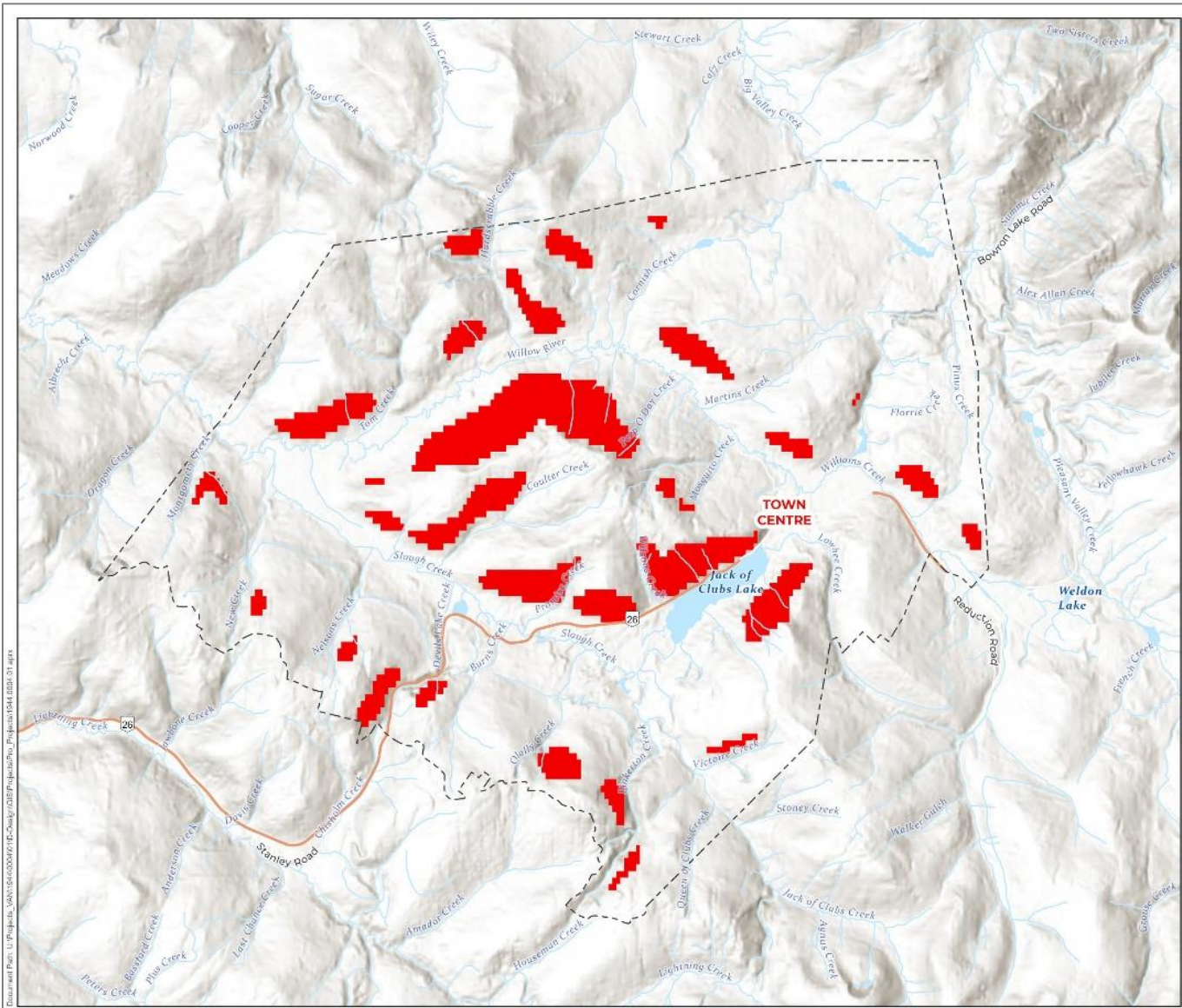
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## 4.5 HAZARDS

Hazards include natural environmental features that can lead to disasters or emergencies. Hazards can include flooding, wildfires, avalanches, mud or landslides, sedimentation, and erosion. An OCP can identify specific hazards and include policies to mitigate risks and limit development in hazardous areas.

The map below includes hazardous sloped areas (over 20% grade) that could be included in the OCP as areas where development would be discouraged. The hazardous areas in Wells are outside of the town centre and are unlikely to be developed for urban uses that the DOW authorizes and controls.

The provincial government maintains spatial information about flood and wildfire risk; however, unfortunately, no information about flood and wildfire risk is available for the District of Wells.



**District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX  
Hazardous Areas**

- Municipal Boundary
- Steep Slopes (>30%)



Scale: 1:120,000

**SCHEDULE X**

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## 4.6 LAND OWNERSHIP

The Province of B.C. manages a large portion of the land in Wells as Crown land. Of the 340 acres of land in the town centre, 194 acres is Crown land, and 134 acres are privately owned. The majority of the Crown land (blue on the map below) is located outside of the developed areas of the Wells townsite. For urban development to occur on Crown land, the province of B.C. must sell or lease the land to the individual or organization interested in developing the land.

Owner	# of Properties	Area
Provincial Government	99	78 Ha (195 ac)
Private	252	54 Ha (134 ac)
Municipal Government	23	2.2 Ha (5.5 ac)
Other	5	2 Ha (5 ac)
Federal Government	3	0.2 Ha (0.5 ac)
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>137 Ha (340 ac)</b>

The District of Wells owns 2 hectares (5.5 acres) of land within the DOW townsite. The DOW owns the sites shown in green on the map below. There are also 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) of federally owned land within the DOW, identified in purple on the map below.

The map on the following page provides an overview of Crown tenures within the DOW, including the TFL52, The Wells-Barkerville Community Forest, and quarry tenures.

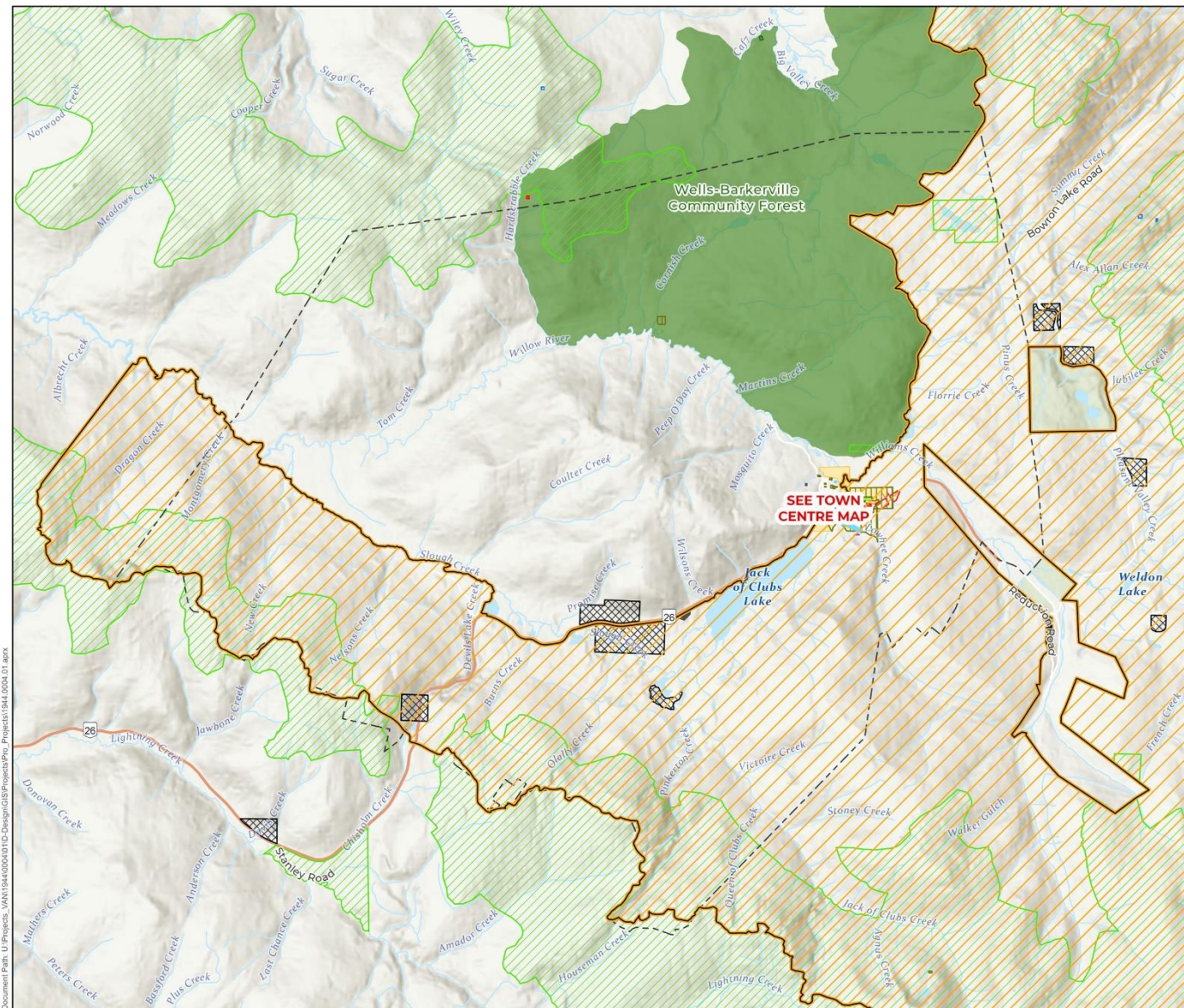




District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX

**Crown Tenures - District Wide**

- Municipal Boundary
- Wells-Barkerville Community Forest
- TFL52
- Crown Tenure**
- COMMERCIAL
- COMMERCIAL RECREATION
- COMMUNICATION
- COMMUNITY
- ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION, & RECR
- INSTITUTIONAL
- QUARRYING
- RESIDENTIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- UTILITY
- MISCELLANEOUS LAND USES



SEE TOWN CENTRE MAP



Scale: 1:70,000

**SCHEDULE X**

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## 4.7 INFRASTRUCTURE

### Water & Sewer

Water and sewer servicing within the DOW includes a water treatment and distribution system and a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system.

The water system services the community from Burnett Avenue and Dawson Street in the northwest to Lowhee Road in the southeast. A groundwater well and water treatment plant are located at Ski Hill road and Solibakke Drive. Treated water is distributed directly into the distribution system from the water treatment plant, where both community services and a storage reservoir are connected. The storage reservoir is located on the hill to the community's west, generally in line with Baker Street. The water system has only one pressure zone.

The sanitary sewer system is comprised of a gravity main collection system servicing the community generally from Burnett Avenue and Dawson Street in the northwest to Lowhee Road in the southeast, similar to the water system. Gravity mains drain towards a sanitary lift station located at Blair Avenue and Dawson Street, where sewage is pumped up Hard Scrabble Road to the wastewater treatment lagoon. The single-cell lagoon is aerated and continuously discharges by gravity to the Willow River. A weir structure is used to control the level of the lagoon, and flow is monitored across a v-notch weir. The DOW is currently experiencing issues with the flow monitoring system. The aeration system also experiences challenges, where the equipment frequently stops running and must be restarted by operations staff.

### Roads and Drainage

The DOW road network is comprised of both paved and gravel roads, with most roads being gravel.

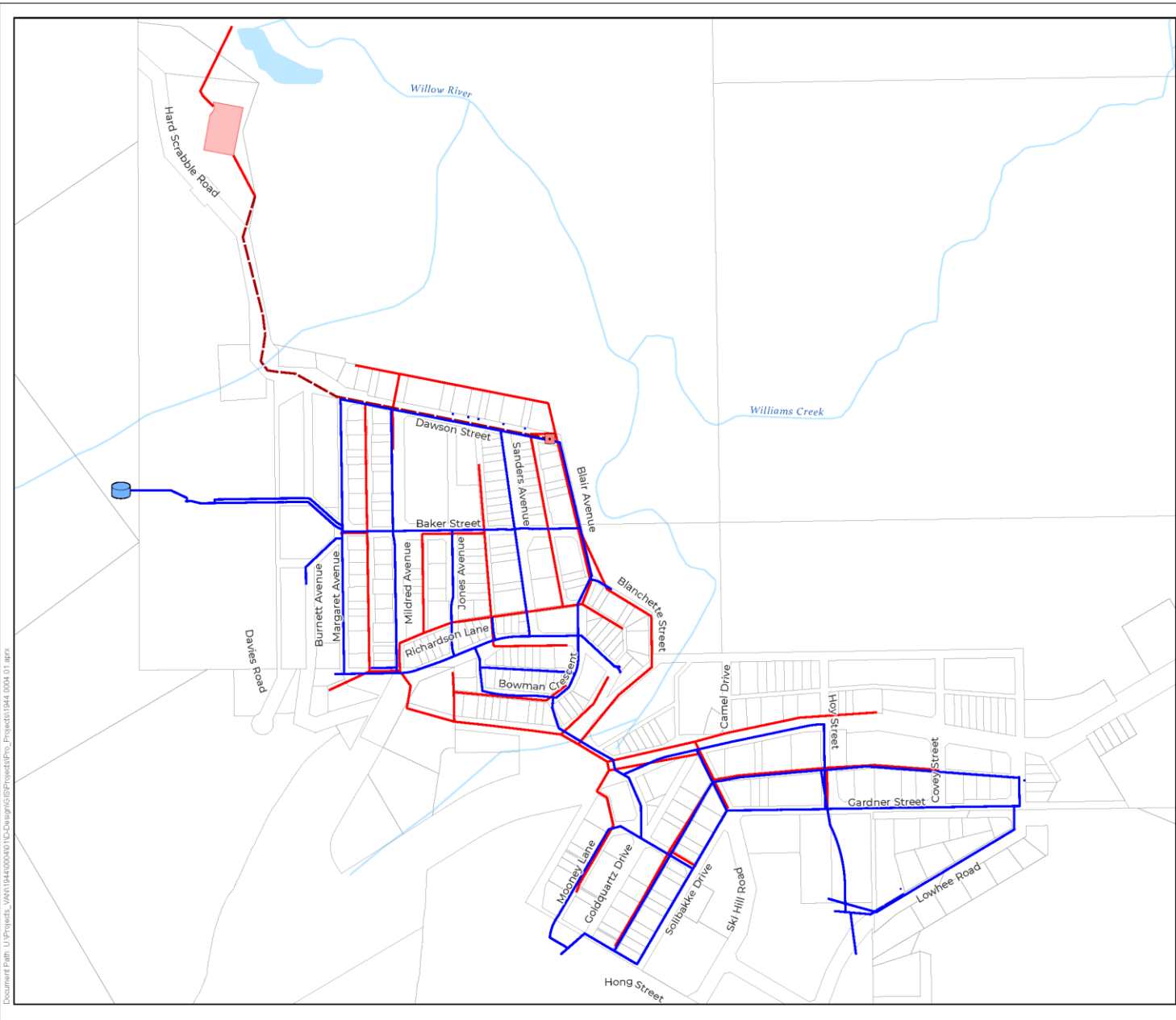
Drainage is mainly conveyed overland, and there are a few catch basins that outlet to the ditch, but no other underground storm drainage system. Drainage is managed by ditches and culverts in some areas of the community, while other areas have no defined drainage system. Some catch basins exist that outlet to the ground.

### Electricity

Single-phase overhead power runs down Highway 26 from Quesnel to service the community. The power service is not looped such that power is supplied only from one direction. An interruption to this power service line means a power outage in Wells.

### Internet

High-speed internet was announced for Wells in 2018 to be provided by ABC Communications. The broadband connections are designed to achieve download speeds of 50 Mbps when feasible.



**District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX  
Existing Utilities**

- Municipal Boundary
- Reservoir
- Water Main
- Lift Station
- Sanitary Pressure Main
- Sanitary Gravity Main
- Lagoon



Scale: 1:5,000

**SCHEDULE X**

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## 4.8 ZONING

The map below illustrates the existing zoning in Wells. Neighbourhoods north of the highway are known as "Upper Wells" or "Uptown," and neighbourhoods to the south are known as "Lower Wells" or "Downtown." Upper Wells includes most of the community facilities as well as a mix of commercial and residential uses. Lower Wells includes a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

There is a large portion of undeveloped land that is zoned for future development. These areas include:

- Single-family and duplex (yellow R2) along Margaret and Burnett Avenue.
- Single-family (yellow R1A) Lowhee Drive and Solibakke Drive.
- Multiple-family (orange R3) between Ski Hill Road and Lowhee Drive.
- Rural residential (beige RR2) in outlying, forested areas.
- Commercial (red C.W.) along Barkerville Highway.

There is one area zoned for industrial use (M2 purple), located on two lots on Gardner Street.



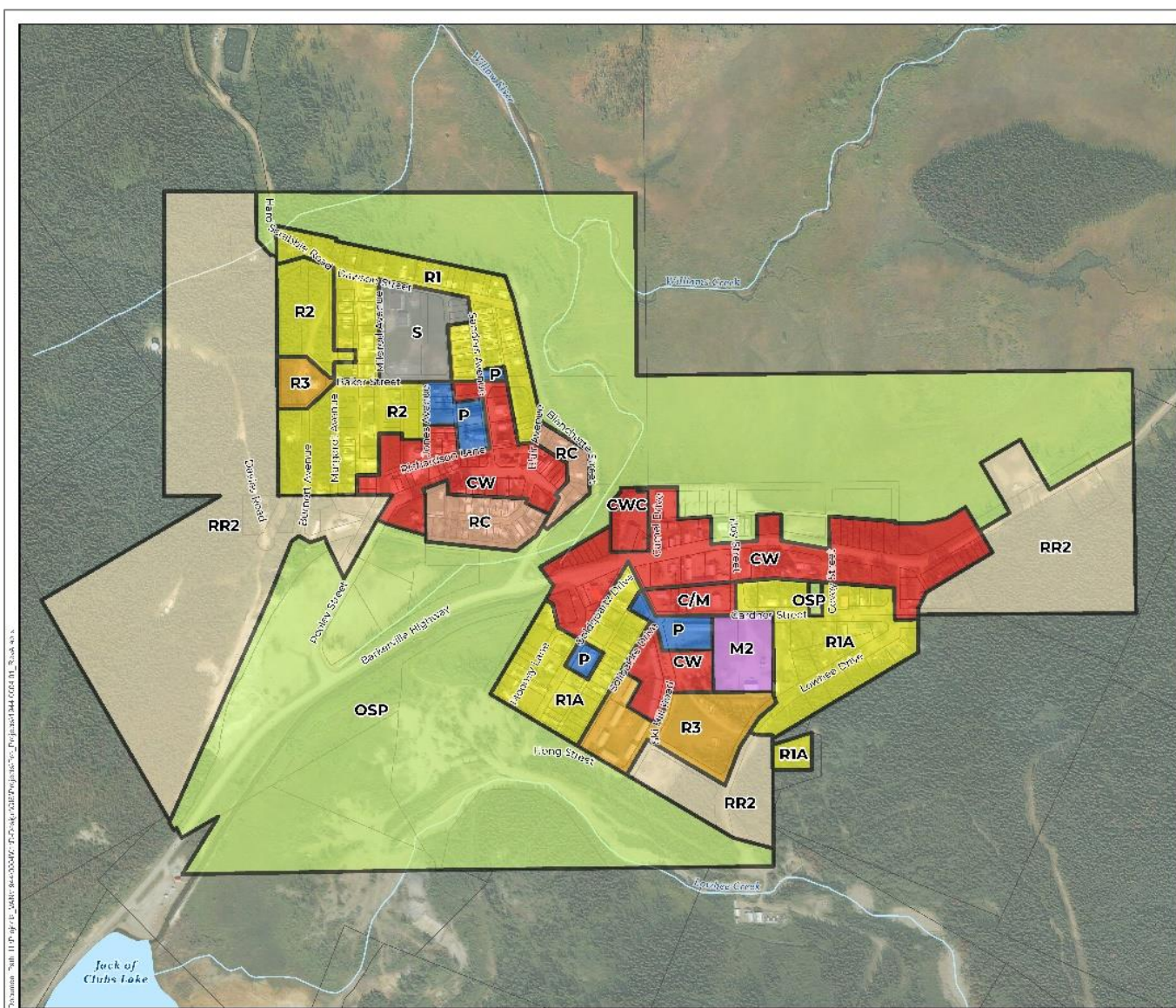
District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX

**Zoning Categories - Town Centre**

□ Parcels

**Zones**

- R1, R1A, R2 - Single Family Residential
- R3 - Multi-Family Residential
- RR2 - Rural Residential
- RC - Residential Commercial
- CW, CWC, C/M - Wells Commercial District
- M2 - Commercial Service/Light Industrial
- S - Educational
- P - Institutional
- OSP - Park and/Recreational Area



**SCHEDULE X**

## 4.9 EXISTING OCP LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The maps on the following pages illustrate the land use designations in the existing OCP. The OCP land use designations are intended to direct the type and density of development that should occur if the area is developed. The District of Wells relies on the OCP designation to determine what types of development would be appropriate for each parcel of land. In many cases, the existing use may not align with the OCP designation, but the goal is for future development to be consistent with the OCP land use designation.

The table below summarizes the OCP land use designations within the town centre and the outlying area. The District of Wells encompasses a large area (15870 hectares). Much of the land outside of the town centre is designated for Open Space Parkland (15,321 ha), except for Troll Ski Resort which is designated for Commercial Recreation.

There are 30 acres of rural residential land located on the periphery of Wells in forested areas adjacent to the town centre; much of this land appears undeveloped. The town centre itself is 1.9 square km, and within that area, 9 acres are designated for multi-family residential, and 9 acres are designated for single-family residential. Some of the homes in Upper Wells are designated for residential-commercial uses that allow for a mixing of business and housing. The 1-acre Wells school site is designated for educational use, and a total of 1 acre of land between Upper and Lower Wells is designated for institutional use. The 1 acre of Commercial Service/Light Industrial use is located in Lower Wells along Gardner Street.

OCP Land Designation	# Properties	Area (hectares)
Open Space Parkland	1	15,321
Commercial Recreation	1	326
Parkland/Recreational Area	34	138
Rural Residential	12	30
Multi-Family Residential	40	9
Single Family Residential	119	9
Wells Commercial District	86	8
Residential-Commercial	50	2
Institutional	16	1
Educational	1	1
Commercial Service/Light Industrial	5	1



District of Wells  
Official Community Plan  
Bylaw No. XX

Existing OCP Designation- District Wide

[- - -] Municipal Boundary

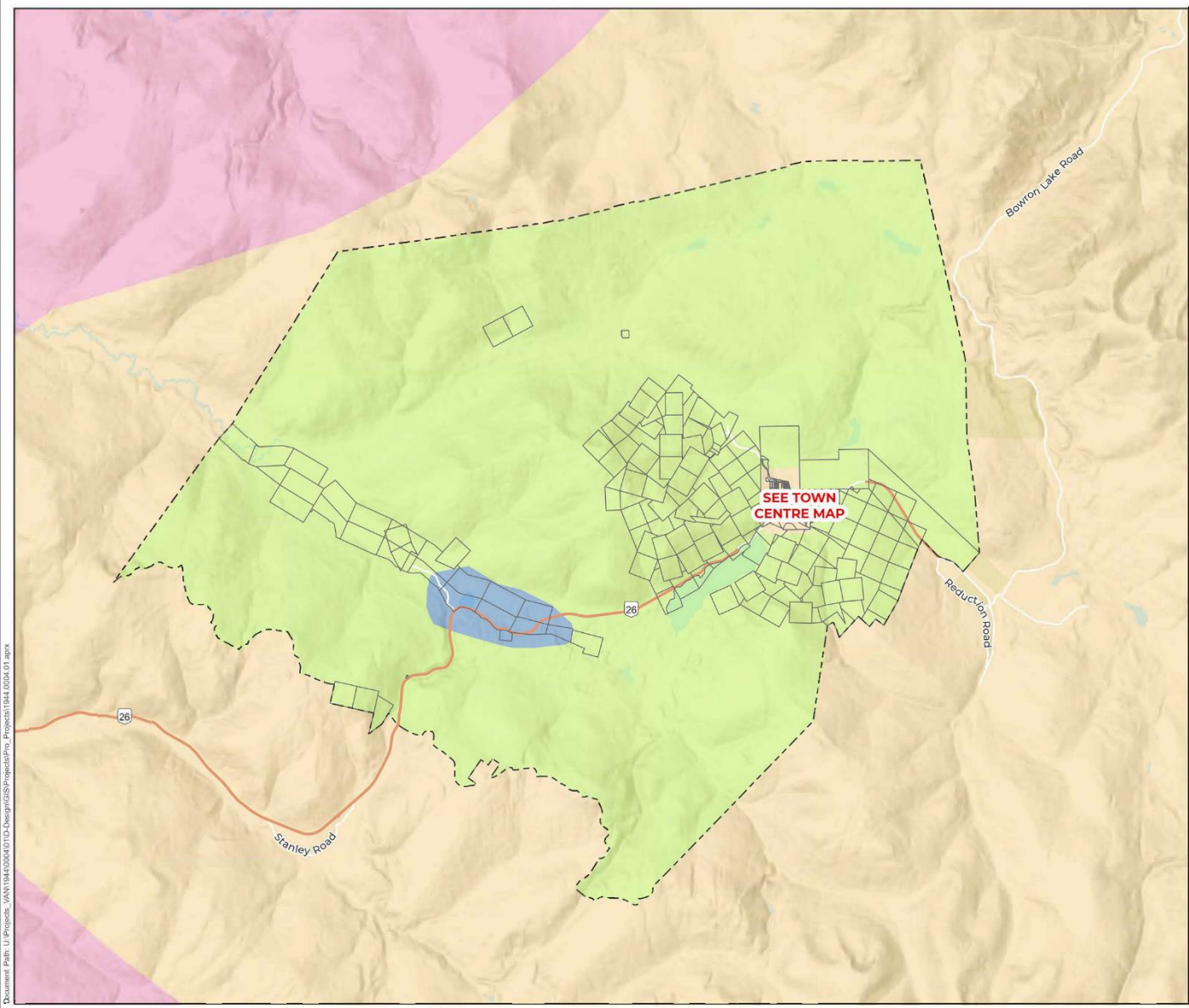
[Light Green Box] Open Space Parkland

[Blue Box] Commercial Recreation

LRMP Zone

[Pink Box] Enhanced Resource  
Development Zone

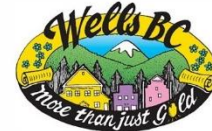
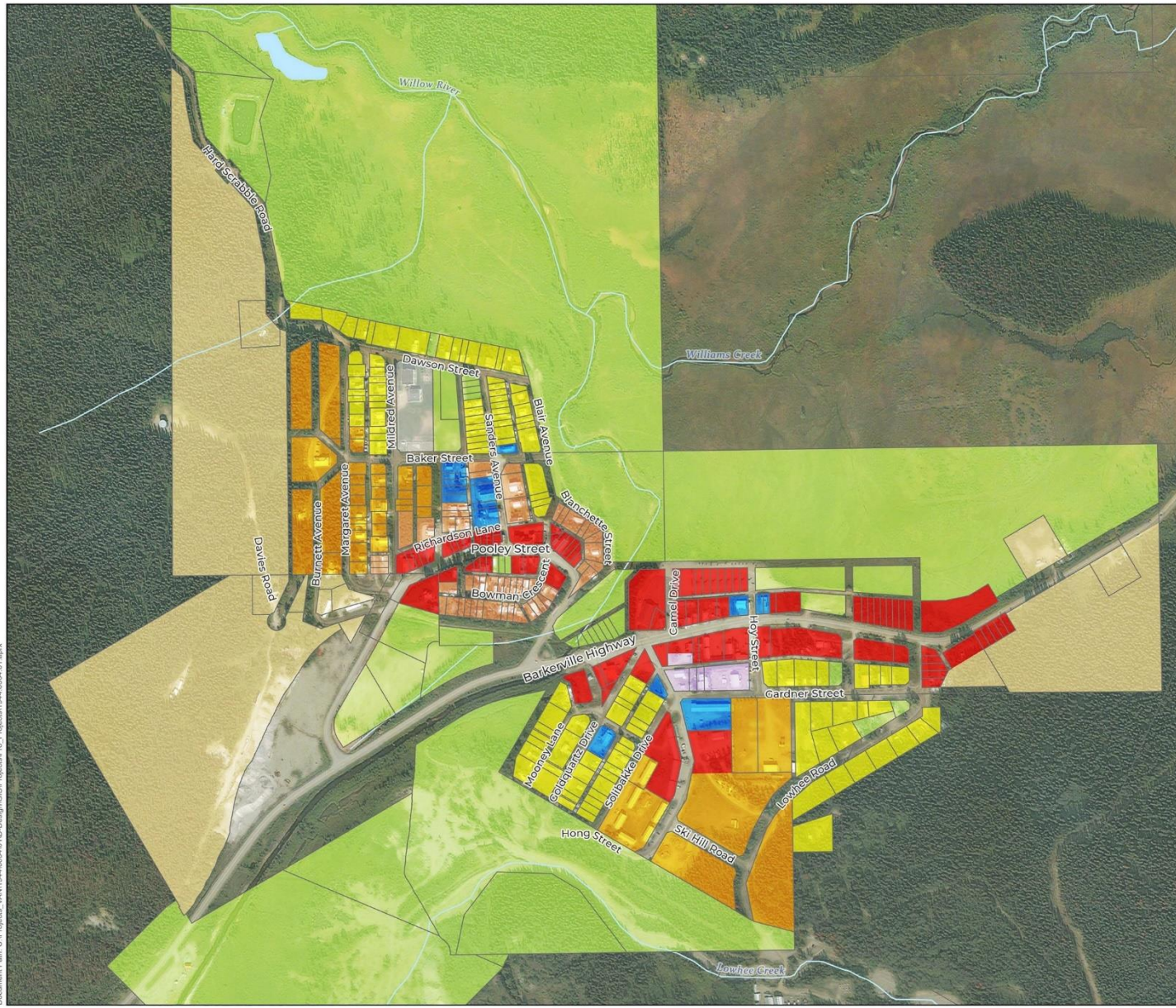
[Orange Box] Special Resource Development  
Zone



Scale: 1:75,000

**SCHEDULE X**

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District of Wells  
 Official Community Plan  
 Bylaw No. XX

**Existing OCP Designation- Town Centre**

- Municipal Boundary
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Rural Residential
- Residential-Commercial
- Wells Commercial District
- Commercial Service/Light Industrial
- Institutional
- Parkland/Recreational Area
- Educational



Scale: 1:6,000

**SCHEDULE X**

## 5.0 WELLS FUTURE

### 5.1 PREDICTING FUTURE LAND NEEDS OVERVIEW

Future population growth in the District of Wells will be influenced by various factors, including the continued aging of the population, the availability of housing and essential services, including education and healthcare, and the success of proposed industrial initiatives such as the Barkerville Gold Mine. The District also encompasses a large land area that could host any number of opportunities.

Potential projects and developments that could affect the future of Wells include:

- Barkerville Gold Mine
- Other potential mines
- Large forestry projects
- Potential ski resort or lodge
- Further development and increased popularity of the Purden Connector Road

Any one of these opportunities or a combination of these outcomes could greatly influence the number of full-time or seasonal residents and potential stress on infrastructure such as water, sewer, or roads in Wells.

# 5.2 GROWTH SCENARIOS AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Despite the potential array of opportunities that could affect future development and growth in the District of Wells, the Barkerville Gold Mine (BGM) is the only active major development proposal in Wells. The BGM mine is estimated to add 460 direct jobs to the region and has the greatest potential to impact the District's future growth patterns. The growth scenarios presented are designed to illustrate the potential scale of influence of the BGM project for planning purposes.

Two growth scenarios have been developed to illustrate potential impacts resulting from the development of the BGM mine. Each scenario provides detail on population growth, need for housing, and land needs. The scenarios focus on the potential implications of a new mining development because the final operating structure of the mine has the highest potential to impact community growth over the long term. Many modern mines operate using camps with rotating shifts of workers who live in camps and have minimal interactions with the community. While this may be attractive to some community members over the short-term, it does not necessarily generate long-term benefits for the community in terms of new families or businesses relocating to Wells. The proportion of workers living in camps will be one of the greatest factors in determining the level of future growth for Wells. Whether the current mining project is built or a similar project moves ahead down the road, the scale of impacts is likely to affect how the District plans for services in the community. These scenarios include:

<b>Scenario 1: Business as Usual</b>	<b>Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025</b>
Wells continues its current path of modest population growth.	The new mine is built, and between 15% and 40% of its workforce lives in town.

### iii. Mine Employment

To model the potential population, employment, and growth impacts of a new mine in Wells, it is important to factor in three types of employment.

- **Direct Jobs** - Employment at the mine (from BGM)<sup>2</sup>
- **Indirect Jobs** – Contractor jobs for those who work with the mine. Many contractor jobs are specialized and do not translate to long-term residency.
- **Induced Jobs** - Jobs not associated with mine, but that support population and activity growth<sup>3</sup>.

Mine Employment		Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025
<b>Direct employment</b>		
Jobs at Mine		460
Projected Proportion of Export Jobs (employees do not live in the District)		60 – 85%
Projected Proportion of In town Jobs (employees do live in the District)		15 – 40%
Export Jobs		276 – 391
In town jobs		69 – 184
<b>Indirect Employment</b>		
Contractors		50
<b>Induced Employment</b>		
Employment Multiplier (total direct jobs/export jobs)		1.18 – 1.67
Induced Jobs (in town jobs * multiplier)		81 – 307

<sup>2</sup> <https://securereservercdn.net/104.238.68.196/f5q.857.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Cariboo-Gold-DPD-October-2020.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://pages.uoregon.edu/rgp/PPPM613/CommEconAnalysis.htm>

The table above illustrates the scenario of export/in-town employment. In this scenario, 15% to 40% of mine employees live in Wells. This scenario also illustrates indirect and induced job numbers. Indirect job numbers have been kept constant as contractor jobs tend to be specialized and task-specific and do not tend to translate into long-term residency. Induced demand for jobs as described above is a measure of all other jobs that may be expected in a community due to the presence of a new large industrial operator.

For the remainder of the growth scenario discussion, only the direct employment numbers will be used. While induced jobs are interesting to illustrate potential employment, how that translates to real community impacts is less certain.

#### iv. Household Assumptions

New mine employees who choose to live in Wells will have a range of housing needs. Some new residents will move to Wells with their families, while some will seek housing for themselves only.

Having a good variety in the local housing stock is key to attract families and others to make their home in Wells. Having an array of housing options and choices also aids affordability for new and current residents. This is an important factor that has been highlighted in other mining communities such as Sparwood, BC in their 2019 Sparwood Livability Study<sup>4</sup>.

Household Size (Occupants)	District of Wells	District of Sparwood	District of Elkford	District of Logan Lake	Average
One	39%	30%	27%	29%	29%
Two	43%	37%	37%	48%	41%
Three	9%	14%	15%	11%	13%
Four	4%	14%	14%	8%	12%
Five More	4%	5%	7%	4%	5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	

It is valuable to look at the household composition in other mining communities to model a potential need for variety in housing choice. The table above illustrates the proportion of households of different sizes in Wells, Sparwood, Elkford and Logan Lake (other communities

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<sup>4</sup> <https://sparwood.civicweb.net/document/87409>

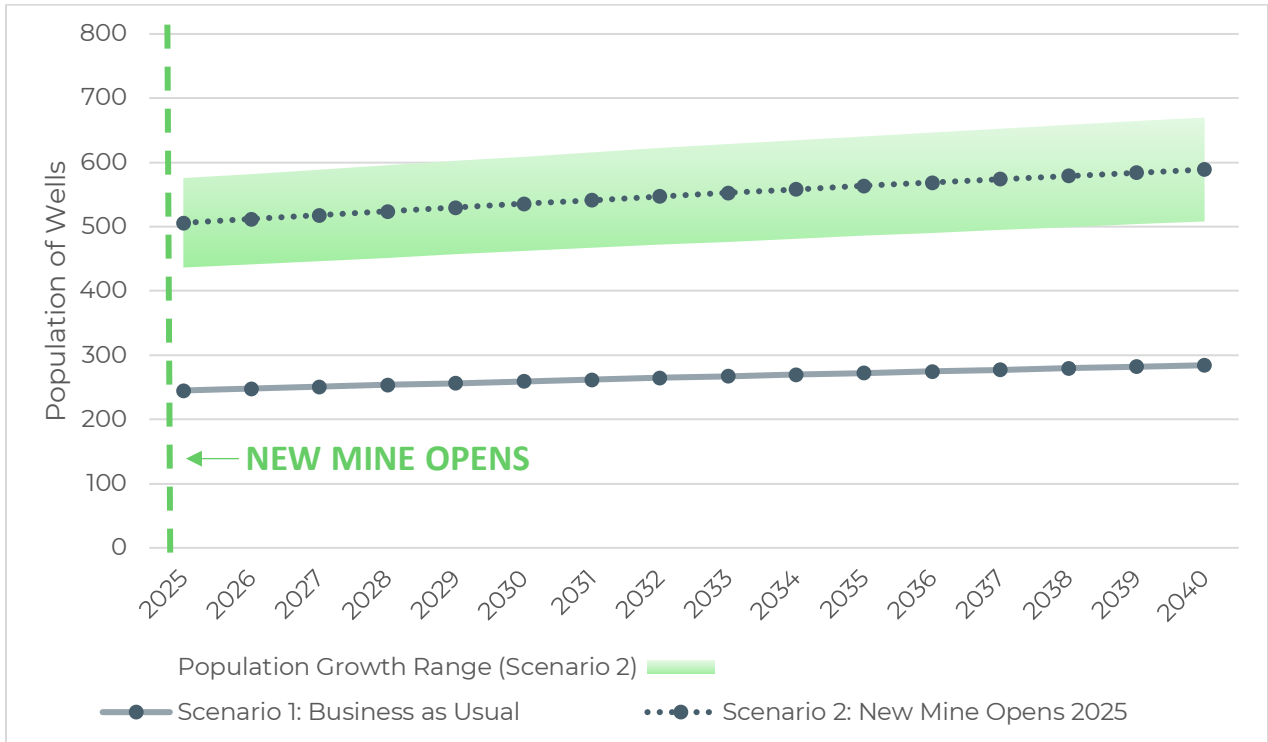
where mining is a significant employer). New residents moving to Wells may come by themselves, or they may bring their families with them. Single versus multiple-occupant households may have different preferences and needs, and this distinction will inform future potential residential land needs in the District. Other mining towns average about 29% single-occupant households and 71% multiple-occupant households (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Population and Household Projections for Direct Jobs in 2025	Assumed Ratio of Single vs. Multiple Occupant Households	Housing Needs by Type	Average Household Size (B.C.)	Estimated Population
<b>Direct Jobs Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025</b>	69-184			
Single-Occupant Households	29%	20 – 53	1	20 – 53
Multiple-Occupant Households	71%	49 – 131	2.49	123 – 327
<b>Total</b>		<b>69 – 184</b>		<b>143 – 380</b>

Using the ratio of single versus multiple-occupant households, is it possible to model the potential population impacts for the two growth scenarios. The District could expect to accommodate 143 to 380 new residents by 2025, depending on the proportion of new mine employees that choose to live in town.

## v. Population Projections

The population projections illustrate how the assumptions from the different growth scenarios might affect population growth in Wells should a new mine be built in Wells and opened in 2025. The population growth rate is designed to reflect current growth projections for Wells from B.C. statistics. Although Wells has exhibited a slight population decline over the last two federal census periods, long-term projections still forecast modest growth.



Year	Scenario 1: Business as Usual	Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025
<b>Proportion of new mine employees living in Wells</b>	-	<b>15 – 40%</b>
<b>2015</b>	228	228
<b>2016</b>	227	227
<b>2017</b>	228	228
<b>2018</b>	230	230
<b>2019</b>	231	231
<b>2020</b>	231	231
<b>2021</b>	234	234
<b>2022</b>	237	237
<b>2023</b>	239	239
<b>2024</b>	242	242
<b>2025</b>	245	387 – 625
<b>2026</b>	248	392 – 632
<b>2027</b>	251	396 – 639
<b>2028</b>	254	401 – 646
<b>2029</b>	256	405 – 654
<b>2030</b>	259	410 – 661
<b>2031</b>	262	414 – 668
<b>2032</b>	265	419 – 675
<b>2033</b>	267	423 – 682
<b>2034</b>	270	427 – 689
<b>2035</b>	272	431 – 696
<b>2036</b>	275	435 – 702
<b>2037</b>	277	439 – 708
<b>2038</b>	280	443 – 715
<b>2039</b>	282	447 – 721
<b>2040</b>	284	451 – 727

## vi. Households

The average household size in Wells is just under two persons (1.87)<sup>5</sup>, and there are approximately 124 households in the community. In the future, it is estimated that between 29 and 282 additional homes will be required in Wells to accommodate future growth. It is assumed that new residents to Wells will have a household composition that reflects the provincial average (2.49 people per household) rather than the average for Wells. Under Scenario 1: Business as usual, where no mine is opened, only 29 homes will be required. However, many more homes may be necessary if a new mine does open. The proportion of camp workers who live in town versus a potential camp will significantly impact the number of homes needed and the subsequent servicing needs (roads, sanitary, water, sewer).

Year	Average Household Size Wells (2021)	Average Household Size B.C. (2021)	Households - Scenario 1: Business as Usual	Households - Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025
<b>2020</b>	1.87	2.49	124	124
<b>2025</b>	1.87	2.49	131	213 – 349
<b>2030</b>	1.87	2.49	139	225 – 369
<b>2035</b>	1.87	2.49	146	237 – 388
<b>2040</b>	1.87	2.49	152	248 – 406
<b>Estimated New Homes Required 2040</b>			<b>29</b>	<b>124 – 282</b>

If a new mine were to open in 2025, there would be significant and immediate need for housing in Wells. Depending on how many mine workers choose to live in town, 15% – 40%, the need for new housing could range from 124 to 282 additional homes. This is a much greater amount than the number of homes that would be required if no mine opens in Wells.

New housing should be a mix of multi-family units and single-family units. To meet the housing needs in Wells if a new mine opens, it is estimated that between 36 and 81 multi-family units as well as 88 to 201 single-family units would be required.




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<sup>5</sup> Environics 2021

Projected Housing Needs By Unit Type	Proportional Demand for Unit Types	Households - Scenario 1: Business as Usual	Households - Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025
<b>Estimated New Homes Required 2040</b>	-	29	124 – 282
<b>Multi-Family Units</b>	29%	8	36 – 81
<b>Single-Family Units</b>	71%	20	88 – 201

## vii. Housing Density

Various housing forms have different space requirements. In Wells, current lot sizes and housing types are spaced at approximately four units per acre. The table below illustrates neighbourhoods with slightly higher and lower densities. Conversations about neighbourhood density must be informed by the availability of land, the community's desires, and the municipality's ability to build and maintain the infrastructure associated with new neighbourhoods (roads, water, sewer, etc.). Lower density development is expensive to service and maintain, which can result in increased property taxes to finance. The exiting Wells OCP envisions that many new growth areas in Wells as multi-family developments that are scaled to fit the context. For this exercise, multi-unit residential has been interpreted to mean duplex housing that can be scaled to fit within most existing residential areas.

	Wells (Present)	Typical Suburb	Multi-Unit Residential (Duplex)
<b>Units per Acre</b>	4.1	5	10
<b>Units per Hectare</b>	10.1	12.4	24.7
<b>Context</b>			
<b>Description</b>	Present day lot sizes and configuration.	Comparable lot sizes to present day Wells. All lots have a house on them.	Duplex housing <sup>6</sup> on slightly larger lots.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/DocumentCenter/View/1550/Visualizing-Density---Lincoln-Institute-of-Land-Policy-PDF>

### viii. Projected Land Needs

To estimate the future land needs for Wells based on the two growth scenarios, we can use the density examples shown above and apply them to the projected demand for new households. The land requirements are summarized below.

Residential Land Requirements for Future Growth 2040	Required Housing Units	Units per Acre	Units per Hectare	Required Residential Land Area (Acres)	Required Residential Land Area (Hectares)
<b>Scenario 1: Business as Usual</b>	29				
Continued Wells Development Pattern	29	4.1	9.9	7.0	2.8
<b>Total</b>				<b>7.0</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025</b>	124 – 282				
Multi-Family Units	36 – 81	10.0	24.7	3.6 – 8.1	1.4 – 3.3
Single-Family Units	88 – 201	5.0	12.4	17.7 – 40.3	7.2 – 16.3
<b>Total</b>				<b>21.2 – 48.4</b>	<b>8.6 – 19.6</b>

Depending on the density of new development and the proportion of potential new workers that move to Wells, there could be demand for between 2.8 and 19.6 hectares of new residential lands. The current OCP designates several undeveloped areas for both future multi-family residential and future rural residential development.

Under the current growth scenarios, there appears to be sufficient land to accommodate the new growth under current densities. However, there may be demand for a mixture of housing types in Wells, including rural residential, multi-unit, and single-unit residential development. However, potentially higher demand for rural residential lots could pose issues for the District in the future in terms of servicing costs and maintenance and land supply.

## ix. Existing Residential Capacity in OCP

The existing OCP designates several undeveloped areas as future residential for multi-family and rural residential development. Four key sites are below. Combined, these sites provide a total of 7.1 ha (17.5 ac) of multi-family residential and 17.2 ha (42.5 ac) of Rural Residential lands. These lands are currently unserviced but are of sufficient size to accommodate even the largest growth projections. There are additional lands that could be developed as infill in Wells to absorb new residential growth, but it is likely that some of these unserviced areas may need to be developed to accommodate high growth scenarios.

Site Overview	Area	Current OCP Designation	Ownership
	2.4 ha (5.9 ac)	Multi-Family Residential	Privately Owned
	4.7 ha (11.6 ac)	Multi-Family Residential	Mix of Private and Crown Land

		<p>11.6 ha (28.6 ac)</p>	<p>Rural Residential</p>	<p>Privately Owned</p>
		<p>5.6 ha (13.8 ac)</p>	<p>Rural Residential</p>	<p>Crown Land</p>

## x. Other Land Needs – Park Space

As Wells grows, it will also have other land needs for parks, playgrounds, schools, roads, and other infrastructure. The District encompasses a large area that can accommodate any number of uses. Much of it is already designated "Open Space and Park"; however, future residents and their families may require additional park amenities such as playgrounds, sports fields, or other recreational amenities. The table below illustrates potential land needs for park space in Wells under each of the growth scenarios. A ratio of 6.3 acres per 1000 residents is used to denote park space requirements<sup>7</sup>.

As presented in Scenario 1, based on a projected population increase to 284 residents by 2040, an estimated 1.8 acres (0.7 ha) of park space would be needed. As presented in Scenario 2, based on a projected population increase to anywhere between 451 and 727 residents by 2040, an estimated 2.8-4.5 acres (1.1-1.8 ha) would be needed.

2040 Park Land Needs	Space per 1000	Scenario 1: Business as Usual	Scenario 2: New Mine Opens in 2025
2040 Projected Population		284	451 – 727
Parks Space per 1000 (ac)	6.3	1.8	2.8 – 4.5
Parks Space per 1000 (ha)	2.5	0.7	1.1 – 1.8

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<sup>7</sup> Hok-Lin Leung (2013)

### 5.3 TAX RATES FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY

Currently, Wells does not collect taxes for industrial operations. Some reasons to have a low industrial tax rate are an overall lack of industrial operators or a strategy to attract new businesses to a municipality. In the case of Wells, where there is potential to have a new large industrial operator, the discussion of industrial taxes should be revisited.

Many municipalities in B.C. have large industrial facilities that operate within their boundaries. While the approach to taxation is the purview of the municipality, there are many ways that it can be approached. The 2018-2022 Financial Plan for the District lists its current tax revenues by property class and shows that no taxes are currently collected from major industrial operators. Should a new mine open, there may be an opportunity to revisit how taxes are collected in the District.

The following table illustrates some example tax rates in other municipalities with mines and large industrial operations within their boundaries.

Tax Class	District of Wells	District of Logan Lake	District of Kitimat	District of Sparwood
	2020 Tax Apportionment	2020 Tax Apportionment	2020 Tax Apportionment	2020 Tax Apportionment
<b>Residential Class 1</b>	58.0%	20.0%	15.90%	24.6%
<b>Utilities Class 2</b>	2.8%	7.5%	0.18%	15.3%
<b>Supportive Housing Class 3</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%
<b>Major Industry Class 4</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>70.3%</b>	<b>73.79%</b>	<b>46.9%</b>
<b>Light Industry Class 5</b>	0.0%	0.0%	1.11%	0.3%
<b>Business Class 6</b>	38.9%	2.3%	8.95%	12.4%
<b>Managed Forest Land class 7</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.5%
<b>Recreation Non Profit Class 8</b>	0.3%	0.0%	0.06%	0.0%
<b>Farm Class 9</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

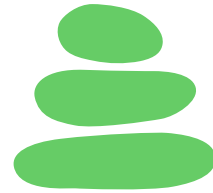
While there may be an opportunity to begin collecting taxes from Major Industry if a new gold mine opens, the District will need to carefully weigh its approach in doing so. In researching new tax rates for Major Industry, it is important to have a conversation with those operators to ensure that tax rates are fair for the community and the Company. By setting the proportion of taxes from Major Industry too high, the District risks either damaging to losing a working relationship with a potentially large employer or creating an unsustainable tax structure should that operator close down. At the same time, a new mine would increase demand for District supplies services; new tax rates should be set to cover the costs associated with that delivery.

## 5.4 DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Through the planning process to date, the several common themes emerged. These common themes have been summarized below as draft planning principles that will guide the creation of the draft OCP and the next rounds of community engagement. This section provides a summary of each of the seven draft principles and includes a discussion of their rationale and opportunities for how each theme can be incorporated into the new OCP. The seven draft principles are listed below and discussed in further detail throughout this section:

- i. Strike a balance between arts, culture, heritage, and industry**
- ii. Maintain historical character and pedestrian-first, compact design**
- iii. Invest in infrastructure upgrades that will promote community and environmental health**
- iv. Diverse and affordable housing options for residents and seasonal workers**
- v. Develop a community that is both environmentally and economically sustainable**
- vi. Create an inclusive, self-sufficient community**
- vii. Keep Wells quiet and wild**

## i. Strike a balance between arts, culture, heritage, and industry



- According to the 2016 census, 30% of the jobs in Wells were in the arts and culture sector (significantly more than the provincial average of 1%). The proposed gold mine could significantly change that statistic by introducing both new industrial jobs, as well as secondary spin-off jobs.
- When asked about the types of industries and job opportunities they would like to see in 2040 in Wells, the top three survey responses included: Tourism (69%), Creative (68%), and Industrial (38%).
- Census data indicates that Wells has a higher unemployment rate and lower median incomes than the provincial average.
- Visitor information data indicates that tourism in Wells has declined since 2015.
- Survey responses report that residents see mining as an opportunity for economic prosperity, but they want to ensure that a balance is struck to ensure the arts and culture economy can continue to thrive in the context of a new mine.
- When survey respondents were asked to select a statement that represented their vision for Wells in the future, the top 3 statements included:
  - A diverse community with a mix of industrial workers, creative professionals, and tourism opportunities (21%)
  - A self-sustaining and healthy community (20%)
  - A community recognized for creativity, heritage, and the arts (19%)

### **OCP Opportunities:**

- Develop land use patterns that distinguish industrial areas from commercial and residential areas.
- Explore options for housing that integrates workers into the community, minimizes the impact on tourism accommodation supply, and minimizes the impact on market rentals for long-term and seasonal arts and culture workers.
- Partnerships between the industry, arts organizations, and the District of Wells.

## ii. Maintain historical character and the pedestrian-first, compact design



- Wells has maintained its original community footprint from early mining days, with the town centre totalling 1.9 square kilometres.
- Census data confirms that 70% of homes in Wells were built before 1960 (as opposed to 14% across B.C.). The older buildings painted with vibrant colours and murals inspire residents and visitors alike, evoking a sense of simple living and creativity.
- Through the engagement process, residents confirmed that they value the historical character of buildings, stating that they would like to see older buildings restored and newer buildings that look similar to historical buildings or new buildings with modern designs that still respect the town's 1930s character.
- Survey respondents confirmed they would prefer for Wells to stay compact and walkable, with 84% of respondents reporting that it is important for Wells to be walkable and many respondents (including school children) expressing the importance of simply going for a walk in Wells.

### **OCP Opportunities:**

- Consider how traffic will be impacted by increases in population and new development.
- Support infill development and avoid developing areas outside of the townsite footprint.
- Encourage investment in active transportation infrastructure.
- Support beautification efforts that make walking more enjoyable and interesting.
- There is a sufficient supply of undeveloped, infill land available for residential development within the Wells townsite.

### iii. Invest in infrastructure upgrades that will promote community and environmental health



- Over 80% of survey respondents reported that upgrades to water and sanitary are a high priority.
- 70% of survey respondents felt that major industry should contribute to infrastructure upgrades, and 20% felt that they should only contribute if they are a user of the infrastructure.
- Responses to the survey acknowledged the link between environmental health and infrastructure, with the top environmental policies reported as 'Very Important' being the protection of the source of drinking water, good air quality and protection from wildfires.

#### **OCP Opportunities**

- Encourage partnerships between government agencies and industries.
- Encourage studies and asset management planning to better understand infrastructure issues and how to address them.
- Explore a taxation structure for major industry that could financially contribute to infrastructure management and upgrades.

#### iv. **Diverse and affordable housing options for residents and seasonal workers**



- When asked about housing issues, the top three survey responses reported were lack of rental housing (17%), lack of housing for seasonal workers (15%), and lack of supply for market housing (12%).
- According to census data, single-family dwellings account for 70% of housing in Wells.
- When asked about what housing in Wells should look like in 2040, the top three responses included: restored heritage homes (17%), more diversity of housing types (16%), and new homes that are similar in size and scale to existing houses (15%).

#### **OCP Opportunities**

- There is a sufficient supply of undeveloped, infill land available for residential development within the Wells townsite.
- Include policies and actions that support affordable housing.
- Engagement with land owners to discuss development options and ideas.

## v. **Develop a community that is both environmentally and economically sustainable**

- The survey asked respondents to list three words to represent what they want Wells to be known for in 2040. The second most frequently used word was "sustainable."
- When asked about priorities for the environment, survey respondents indicated that protection of the source of drinking water, good air quality and protection from wildfires is considered a "high priority".
- When asked to select statements that reflect their ideal version of Wells in 2040, the second most frequently reported statement was "a self-sustaining and healthy community" (20%)



### **OCP Opportunities**

- Identify environmentally sensitive areas that should be protected from development.
- Explore options and actions for reducing wildfire risk.

## vi. Create an inclusive, self-sufficient community



- The term "self-sustaining" was also frequently reported in the survey, reflecting the desire for a community that is resilient and can provide the services that its population needs while also speaking to the self-sufficient lifestyle that Wells is known for (i.e. chopping firewood).
- When asked about policies for social development, respondents considered improving access to healthcare services, healthy and fresh food, and the creation of an inclusive and diverse community as the most important policies. More activities and amenities for children and youth emerged as an important policy and was considered Very Important or Important to over 80% of respondents.
- Many survey respondents mentioned the need to upgrade or replace the school.
- School children expressed the need for more playgrounds and activities for kids, and many of them noted that it would be great if more kids were living in Wells.

### **OCP Opportunities**

- Refine priorities for social issues and consider how they relate to the idea of sustainability and self-sufficiency.
- Support work done through the Wells-Barkerville Culture (WBCRC) and Recreation Centre Business Plan.

## vii. Keep Wells quiet and wild

- The District of Wells encompasses a large area (15,870 hectares), and the Wells townsite only makes up 200 hectares of that land base. The community of Wells is surrounded by nature, and residents value the quiet, peaceful environment.
- The survey asked respondents to list three words to represent what they want Wells to be known for in 2040. The most frequently used word was "quiet."
- Many respondents expressed concerns that the proposed mine could bring light and noise pollution and that they value starry, quiet nights.
- During interviews with school children, the kids highlighted the importance of getting outside all year-round and most of their fun activities took place in nature or outside.
- Wells has an extensive multi-use trail network, and many of the trails are shared by motorized and non-motorized trail users. The Cornish Mountain Cross-Country Ski Trails are located close to town, with the trailhead located in the meadow.



### **OCP Opportunities**

- Explore dark sky policies that minimize the impact of exterior lighting on the night sky.
- Identify opportunities for expanding and supporting outdoor recreation.
- Support compact development and limit development in the forests and wild spaces surrounding Wells.

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<sup>i</sup> District of Wells Official Community Plan. 1998.

<sup>ii</sup> First People's Cultural Council: <https://fpcc.ca/stories/first-peoples-map/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-planning-strategies/wetlands-in-bc#:~:text=British%20Columbia's%20wetlands%20currently%20comprise,5%25%20of%20the%20land%20base.&text=Conservation%20and%20management%20efforts%20help,protection%20and%20management%20of%20wetlands.>

<sup>iv</sup> Government of Canada Species at Risk Public Registry: <https://species-registry.canada.ca/index-en.html#/species/1295-945>

<sup>v</sup> Government of BC . Draft Woodland Caribou Plan – Barkerville Subpopulation, Quesnel Highlands Local Population Unit. 2018. Available at: [https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/HTH/external/!publish/Caribou%20Recovery%20Program/Herd%20Plans/FTP\\_upload\\_herd\\_plans/southern\\_mountain\\_south/Caribou%20Herd%20Plan%20Barkerville\\_EN\\_disclaimer.pdf](https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/HTH/external/!publish/Caribou%20Recovery%20Program/Herd%20Plans/FTP_upload_herd_plans/southern_mountain_south/Caribou%20Herd%20Plan%20Barkerville_EN_disclaimer.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Government of Canada Species at Risk Registry: [https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/species/speciesDetails\\_e.cfm?sid=1086](https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=1086)