

RURAL COMMUNITY PLANNING: GROARD AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

Cities, Policy & Planning
research series



AUTHOR Alexander Krause

EDITOR Sasha Tsenkova
Faculty of Environmental Design
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, Alberta, 2TN 1N4
Canada
www.ucalgary.ca/cities

PRINTING University of Calgary Printing Services
December 2007

INQUIRIES Dr Sasha Tsenkova, tel: +403-220-2155
E-mail: tsenkova@ucalgary.ca

RURAL COMMUNITY PLANNING: GROARD ARE STRUCTURE PLAN

Alexander Krause

Supervisor: Dr Sasha Tsenkova

December 2007

Cities, Policy & Planning
research series



ENVIRONMENTAL | UNIVERSITY OF
DESIGN | CALGARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 AREA STRUCTURE PLAN PROCESS	1
2.1 Provincial Legislative Framework.....	1
2.2 Municipal Land Use Policies	1
2.3 Public Consultation.....	2
3.0 PLAN VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
3.1 Vision	2
3.2 Goals	3
3.3 Objectives	3
4.0 DESCRIPTION OF PLAN AREA.....	3
4.1 Location	3
4.2 Plan Area.....	3
4.3 Natural Features	4
4.3.1 Topography.....	4
4.3.2 Vegetation.....	4
4.3.3 Soils	4
4.3.4 Wildlife and Waterfowl	4
4.4 Existing Land Uses	5
4.5 Land Ownership	5
4.6 Transportation and Access	5
5.0 LAND USE CONCEPT	5
5.1 Future Land Use Scenario	5
5.2 Population Projection	6
5.3 Opportunities within the Plan Area.....	7
5.3.1 Natural Environment	7
5.3.2 Recreational Opportunities	7
5.3.3 Cultural Amenity	7
5.3.4 M.D. Owned Land.....	8
5.4 Constraints within the Plan Area	8
5.4.1 Public Amenities and Services.....	8
5.4.2 Social Conditions and Policing.....	8

5.4.3 Community Appearance	8
5.4.4 Current Servicing	9
6.0 AREA STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES	9
6.1 General Policies	9
6.2 Hamlet Residential Land Use	9
6.3 Hamlet Recreational Land Use	10
6.4 Hamlet Commercial Land Use	11
6.5 Servicing, Infrastructure and Utilities.....	12
6.6 Community Services	13
6.7 Community Enhancement	14
6.8 Land Consolidation	14
6.9 Public Open Space and Trails	16
6.10 Transportation and Access	17
7.0 PHASING	18
8.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	18

LIST OF FIGURES

- FIGURE 1 – HAMLET OF GROUARD PLAN AREA & EXISTING ZONING**
- FIGURE 2 – HAMLET OF GROUARD EXISTING MUNICIPAL SERVICING**
- FIGURE 3 – EXISTING MUNICIPAL SERVICING -- HAMLET CORE**
- FIGURE 4 – HAMLET OF GROUARD TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**
- FIGURE 5 – HAMLET OF GROUARD FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT**
- FIGURE 6 – FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT -- HAMLET CORE**

1.0 Introduction

The Hamlet of Grouard is a historical hamlet within the Municipal District of Big Lakes. The community's origins date back to the early 1800's as it began as a fur trading post. Grouard played a prominent role in the region and was a bustling community by the early 1900s. In recent history, growth in the Hamlet has been minimal. With an influx of tourists and amenity migrants into the region, Grouard may experience future development.

The Hamlet of Grouard Area Structure Plan (ASP) has been prepared at the request of the M.D. of Big Lakes No. 125. It meets all requirements set forth in provincial legislation, the M.D. of Big Lakes Municipal Development Plan No. 9-97 and Land Use Bylaw No. 8-97. The purpose of the Area Structure Plan (ASP) is to develop a long-range plan that reflects the community's aspirations and identifies the opportunities and constraints for future growth and development within Grouard. The ASP defines specific land uses within the Plan Area to ensure future development occurs in an orderly and efficient manner. The ASP also addresses opportunities to improve the existing quality of life in Grouard through expanded community services and community beautification.

2.0 Area Structure Plan Process

2.1 Provincial Legislative Framework

The Hamlet of Grouard Area Structure Plan has been prepared pursuant to Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act. In particular, the ASP process is consistent with provisions for the development of statutory plans set forth in section 633 (1), 636 (1) and 638 of the MGA.

An Area Structure Plan is a planning document adopted as a municipal bylaw. It is intended to provide a regulatory guide for future development within a specific area. Following official adoption, the ASP is administered by the M.D. All future development remains subject to approval by the M.D.

2.2 Municipal Land Use Policies

The Hamlet of Grouard ASP complies with the broader objectives of the M.D.'s Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB). With respect to section 1.6 of the MDP, the Grouard ASP aims to i) minimize the potential for land use conflict; and ii) ensure the natural environment is protected and preserved. More detailed than the MDP, the ASP is intended to provide a framework for the community's future growth and development.

Planning policies for the Hamlet of Grouard support the following broader policies outlined in section 2.6 of the MDP:

- a) Commercial, industrial, and public uses intended to serve the rural area should be encouraged to locate in hamlets where possible.
- b) The infilling of existing vacant lots is encouraged before the establishment of new expansion areas are considered.

This ASP also supports the broader transportation objectives outlined in section 2.5 of the MDP:

- a) To ensure that the Municipal District maintains a safe and efficient transportation network.
- b) To ensure that all development is serviced to the satisfaction of the Municipal District.

2.3 Public Consultation

An ASP must be reflective of the views and concerns of local residents. As part of a grant-in-aid of research agreement, the University of Calgary, Faculty of Environmental Design has been involved in the preparation of this ASP and the public consultation process. Public consultation in Grouard began in September 2006 with initial field research and community questionnaires. In total, 38 questionnaires were completed asking residents for their views on issues such as community services and community identity. Key informants with local expertise were also interviewed to help identify issues to be addressed in the ASP.

The draft ASP and findings from the initial research were presented to a community open house in May 2007. The draft was also presented to Municipal Council for feedback. Input and feedback from the first public open house was incorporated into the final ASP, which was presented to the community at a second open house and Council meeting in June 2007.

3.0 Plan Vision, Goals, and Objectives

3.1 Vision

The Hamlet of Grouard is a unique rural community with a rich history, breathtaking scenery, and an abundance of nearby recreational opportunities. Future growth will be accommodated in an orderly manner to ensure that development respects the rural character of the community. Grouard's natural environment and historical features will be preserved and enhanced to ensure the Hamlet retains its most distinguishing characteristics.

3.2 Goals

The ASP has the following goals:

- To maintain the Hamlet of Grouard as a viable rural community.
- To encourage residential development in the Hamlet by providing an effective land use plan.
- To encourage the enhancement of the community for the benefit of local residents and the attraction of new residents.

3.3 Objectives

The following objectives were identified for the Hamlet of Grouard Area Structure Plan:

- 1) To provide a framework for redesignation, subdivision and development decisions within the Hamlet that supports future growth and development.
- 2) To ensure the protection and encourage the enhancement of historic and cultural resources.
- 3) To maintain the natural and environmental quality of the area by preserving local sensitive natural features important to the community and its residents.

4.0 Description of Plan Area

4.1 Location

The Hamlet of Grouard is situated on Buffalo Bay, Lesser Slave Lake, within the Municipal District of Big Lakes. The Hamlet is located 40 Kilometers east of the Town of High Prairie, 120 Kilometers west of the Town of Slave Lake and 370 Kilometers Northwest of the City of Edmonton. Grouard is accessible by Highway 750, 20 kilometers north of Highway 2.

4.2 Plan Area

The Plan Area is outlined in Figure 1 and includes land within the existing Hamlet boundary. River Lots 18, 19, 20, 21 as well as NW 32-75-14-W5 are also included in the Plan Area as they have common considerations to the community. The proposed inclusion of these lots requires a formal boundary expansion to the Hamlet of Grouard. The Plan Area also includes River Lots 38, 39, 40, and 41 in the northwest. The boundaries of the Plan Area include Lesser Slave Lake on the west and south, the Kapawe'no Band on the north, and sections NE 32, NW 32, SW 32, and NW 29 in Township 75 west of the 5th Meridian on the east.

4.3 Natural Features

4.3.1 Topography

Grouard is subject to a varied topography within its boundary. There is a 2 to 5 percent slope from east to west within the Hamlet boundary. Along the shoreline west of 2nd Street the elevation is 580 m. The elevation within the Hamlet core is approximately 610 m. Along the eastern boundary of the Hamlet, the elevation increases to approximately 630 m.

4.3.2 Vegetation

Most of the area around Grouard is comprised of Boreal Forest. Areas along Buffalo Bay and Grouard Channel have grassy and marshy vegetation in the form of riparian zones. The Canada Land Inventory indicates that Grouard has Class 6 land capability for forestry along shoreline areas. Class 6 is land with severe limitations to the growth of commercial forests. Other areas of the community are designated as Class 4 land for forestry. Class 4 land has moderate to severe limitations to the growth of commercial forests.

4.3.3 Soils

The Canada Land Inventory categorizes the soils around Grouard as predominantly Class 3. Class 3 soils are defined as having moderate to severe limitations restricting the range of crops and requiring special conservation practices. The sloping topography further limits the use of soils within the Plan Area. According to the Alberta Soil Survey, soils within the Plan Area are weakly structured and characterized as gravelly with the presence of loamy sand. There are also poorly drained and peaty areas with sandy loam to clay loam structure.

4.3.4 Wildlife and Waterfowl

The Canada Land Inventory indicates that the area surrounding Grouard has Class 4 land capability for ungulates. On a capability scale of 1-7, Class 4 lands are those with moderate limitations to the production of ungulates. The area is also categorized as having adverse topography with the presence of moose, elk, and deer populations.

The Canada Land Inventory classifies the area surrounding Grouard as Class 7 for waterfowl. Class 7 lands are characterized as lands with such severe limitations that almost no waterfowl are produced. Buffalo Bay, however, is classified as Class 2 lands for waterfowl. Class 2 lands have very slight limitations to the production of waterfowl. The area along Buffalo Bay, Lesser Slave Lake and the Grouard Channel are known to be important bird production and migration routes. As a result, it is important to maintain natural vegetation along the shoreline areas of Buffalo Bay and Lesser Slave Lake. Further, Buffalo Bay, Lesser Slave Lake and the Grouard Channel are critical walleye spawning sites. The floodplain along Grouard's shoreline is therefore very important to the fishery on Lesser Slave Lake.

4.4 Existing Land Uses

Land use designations within the Hamlet are under the jurisdiction of the Municipal District of Big Lakes Land Use Bylaw. The existing land uses are identified in Figure 1. There are three land use designations within the Plan Area: Hamlet Residential, Hamlet Commercial, and Hamlet Urban Reserve. Hamlet Residential and Hamlet Urban Reserve constitute the majority of land within the Plan Area.

4.5 Land Ownership

Land ownership in Grouard is divided between privately owned and M.D. owned. While a large portion of land is privately held, the M.D. maintains significant land ownership in residential properties claimed from taxes as well as for the Fire Hall and water treatment facility. Alberta Social Housing, Alberta Municipal Affairs, Northland School District and the Northern Lakes College are other major land owners in the community.

4.6 Transportation and Access

The Hamlet of Grouard is accessible via Highway 750, 20 Kilometers north of Highway 2. Primary access for the Hamlet is via Mission Street from the south, which is the main street in the community (Figure 4). Access onto Mission Street is also available off Highway 750 in the northeast portion of the Hamlet. Secondary access is also possible from 2nd Street.

The main access onto Mission Street off Highway 750 has a number of safety concerns since it is located in a corner and has no acceleration or deceleration lanes. As future growth and development occurs in the area, the safety concerns of this access will increase with higher traffic volume on the highway. Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation may require future alterations to the entrance onto Mission Street. The results of a future safety study by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation on this intersection should be reviewed when available and may require the revisiting of the transportation and access component of this ASP.

5.0 Land Use Concept

5.1 Future Land Use Scenario

The Grouard Area Structure plan establishes a framework that ensures future growth occurs in an orderly fashion. Although the Hamlet has not experienced growth in recent years, pressure for recreational development in the region could have spillover effect on Grouard. Community beautification efforts combined with the promotion of Grouard's historical and recreational assets could further assist in attracting new residents and tourists to the community.

Residential development is encouraged within the existing Hamlet core to promote infill development and maximize servicing efficiency. Currently, only the hamlet core is serviced with water and sanitary sewer (Figure 2 & 3). Hamlet expansion can be accommodated along a continuation of Park Avenue on NW 32-75-14-W5 (Figure 5 & 6). Given the interest in recreational property in the region, it is expected that there will be demand for land in the southern portions of the Hamlet. Properties owned by the M.D. should be consolidated and resurveyed into larger country residential style lot sizes to help attract recreation-based residential development. These areas have been marked as 'Future Hamlet Expansion' areas. Attracting development in the southern portion of the Hamlet could also make servicing in the area more economically feasible in the future. The area south of Auger Avenue is also envisioned as having the potential for large country residential sized lots. It is recommended that appropriately sized environmental reserve buffers be established between freehold developments and shoreline riparian vegetation in order to maintain the significant resource values associated with Buffalo Bay, Lesser Slave Lake and the Grouard Channel.

Community services such as walking trails, parks and open space should be located within the Hamlet core. A public pathway linking residential areas in the Hamlet core to the church, museum, college and Buffalo Bay is encouraged to provide amenity and recreational connectivity in the community. The pathway will have the potential to connect with the Grouard-Peace River Trail. Open space provisions within the Hamlet can be used for the development of a picnic park, skate park, or other community recreation site and should be located on River Lot 35 next to the Fire Hall.

Small scale commercial development will be permitted and encouraged in the commercial designation along Mission Street. Small scale commercial development will also be permitted in the commercial district along Highway 750 to serve the local community and neighbouring traffic. Home based businesses are supported throughout the Plan Area.

The main access to the community will continue to be Mission Street off of Highway 750 in the foreseeable future. As traffic increases along the highway to serve nearby recreational areas, and further safety studies are conducted on the intersection, it may be necessary to revisit the design of this entrance.

5.2 Population Projection

The Hamlet of Grouard has a population of 436 residents according to the 2002 Municipal Census. Census information for Grouard is inconsistent and therefore population trends are difficult to determine. Based on key informant interviews and M.D. development records, 0 to 1 percent growth is anticipated for the Hamlet of Grouard. Grouard has had 16 residential development permits issued

from 1996 to 2006, however, increased recreational development in other nearby hamlets could warrant optimistic expectations for residential growth in Grouard.

All new residential development will likely take the form of single-family dwellings or mobile homes. Recreational developers will likely locate on larger lots in the southern portion of the community. Any growth in recreational development can be accommodated within vacant land in the southern portion of the Plan Area.

5.3 Opportunities within the Plan Area

5.3.1 Natural Environment

The natural environment surrounding Grouard is one of the community's greatest assets. Fishing is accessible at close proximity to the community at Buffalo Bay, the Grouard Channel, and on the South Heart River, which all flow along the community boundary, as well as on Lesser Slave Lake. The proximity to forest makes the community attractive to hunters, all-terrain vehicle users, and hikers. Bird watching and the presence of the Grouard-Peace River Trail provide the community with recreational opportunities and tourism potential. Community questionnaire results indicate that the relationship to Lesser Slave Lake and Grouard's environment are valued features which residents would like to see preserved. Local initiatives such as the creation of a bird sanctuary would support preservation and provide additional attraction to the community.

5.3.2 Recreational Opportunities

Grouard benefits from existing sports/recreation and playground space offered at the Northern Lakes College and Northland School. Although these features exist, community surveys indicate that residents would like an expansion of recreational opportunities in Grouard. Passive recreational uses are encouraged throughout the Plan Area, especially through the development of pathways that could provide linkages to the Grouard-Peace River Trail network and provide connectivity within the Hamlet. The Police Point Natural Area lies immediately north of Grouard and provides opportunity for hiking, bird watching, and other forms of nature appreciation. The proximity of nature provides opportunity for increased trails and community recreation space or parkland. Development of a campground would further capitalize on tourist potential and bring attention and new life to the community.

5.3.3 Cultural Amenity

Grouard has a rich history and important cultural significance in the region. The Hamlet's history is a unique characteristic which it can use to promote as its identity. Future tourism development may center on the cultural experience offered by the community. Protection of the landmark St. Bernard Church and support for tourism development related to history and culture would benefit the Hamlet. Initiatives such as the Grouard Historical Village operated by the

Northern Lakes College should be supported. Trails linking residential areas of the community with its cultural features and Northern Lakes College would further serve to promote this amenity.

5.3.4 M.D. Owned Land

Land within the Plan Area currently owned by the Municipal District present opportunities for new development in the community. Many of these lots are too small for modern needs. The M.D. should engage in land consolidation in order to resurvey lots into sizes that would attract development. M.D. owned land should be consolidated into larger lot sizes to offer country residential style developments. Further, the official Hamlet boundary should be changed to include River Lots 18, 19, 20, 21 and NW 32-75-14-W5. This would help encourage new development and allow space for future hamlet growth.

5.4 Constraints within the Plan Area

5.4.1 Public Amenities and Services

Grouard lacks stores, restaurants, social services, as well as medical services which creates a necessary dependence on neighbouring communities. The lack of services will affect potential tourism interest and the attraction of future development. Community surveys indicate that services are the most important issue to Grouard residents and most in need of expansion. In addition to community services, residents indicate that more recreational areas in the form of a skate park, ATV park, or public picnic park would provide increased recreational opportunity and serve to build community spirit and pride.

5.4.2 Social Conditions and Policing

Grouard faces a number of social problems. The majority of residents surveyed (58 percent) indicate that social services and programs in Grouard are inadequate. There is also a widely held belief that there is a lack of affordable housing in the community. The M.D. should continue to explore Provincial and Federal programs that could assist the community and improve low-income housing conditions. Since the RCMP is located 20 minutes away in High Prairie, 82 percent of residents surveyed indicate that protective services in Grouard are inadequate. Grouard's crime problem and negative perception should be improved for the safety of local residents and the attraction of new development.

5.4.3 Community Appearance

A community beautification program with resident participation should be considered to improve the visual appearance of the community. Such a program will help instill a sense of pride in the community and make the Hamlet more appealing to tourists and new residents. The M.D. should support and encourage endeavors that promote a community spirit in Grouard (e.g. main street tree and flower planting, walking paths, park benches, Christmas light displays, etc.).

5.4.4 Current Servicing

Servicing is limited to approximately half of the Hamlet. Figures 2 and 3 show current servicing in the community. All land outside of the Hamlet core is unserviced. The cost of integrating into the municipal system may deter future development. The Municipal Water Treatment Facility in Grouard has a current capacity of 600 cubic meters per day. The facility services Grouard and the neighbouring Kapawe'no Band. M.D. staff has indicated that modest future development and integration into the municipal system would not pose a problem for the servicing system capacity. To maximize servicing efficiency, infill development is preferred.

6.0 Area Structure Plan Policies

This section outlines policies that will guide future development within the Hamlet of Grouard Area Structure Plan Area.

6.1 General Policies

General Plan Policies set out a minimum framework for development within the Plan Area. These policies apply to the entire Plan Area, regardless of specific uses proposed for development. All development should meet these guidelines.

- 6.1.1 All subdivision and development applications within the Plan Area shall conform to the policies and intent of this document.
- 6.1.2 Applications for subdivision and development within the Plan Area which deviate from the intent of the land use concept shall be required to seek a formal amendment to the ASP.
- 6.1.3 All subdivision and development applications shall conform with the regulations set out in the Municipal Government Act, the Subdivision and Development Regulations, and any other provincial documents relevant to development.
- 6.1.4 All subdivision and development applications shall meet all municipal regulations and standards set out in the M.D. of Big Lakes Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.

6.2 Hamlet Residential Land Use

New residential development would greatly assist in achieving the goal of maintaining Grouard as a viable rural community. While residential infill development is preferred, most new residential development will likely occur outside the Hamlet core by people seeking recreational property.

- 6.2.1 All new residential development shall be reviewed by M.D. staff to ensure that the rural nature of the community is maintained.
- 6.2.2 All new residential development should be single family housing (including mobile homes), duplexes, or semi-detached dwellings.
- 6.2.3 Notwithstanding 6.2.2, this plan supports the development of social and seniors housing provided that it does not exceed two storeys.
- 6.2.4 Development within the Hamlet core should be encouraged before development of new areas to effectively utilize servicing.
- 6.2.5 Future lots for residential development within the Hamlet core (residential infill area) should have a minimum size of 465 square metres (5,000 square feet).
- 6.2.6 Future lots for residential development outside the Residential Infill area should have a minimum size of 1860 square metres (20,000 square feet).
- 6.2.7 All future residential development in the Hamlet core (residential infill area) shall be required, at the sole expense of the developer, to incorporate municipal servicing.
- 6.2.8 Future residential development outside the Hamlet core in the southern portion of the community may be permitted to establish on-site septic servicing provided that all provincial and municipal requirements are met.
- 6.2.9 Future residential development shall be in the form of one dwelling per lot.
- 6.2.10 Home-based businesses are supported in all areas provided they are compatible with adjacent land uses and consistent with the M.D. of Big Lakes Land Use Bylaw.
- 6.2.11 The M.D. may require a developer, at their sole expense, to delineate the extent of the 1:100 year floodplain to prevent development on lands which are unstable or subject to flooding.
- 6.2.12 Subdivision or development proposed within the 1:100 year floodplain is prohibited.
- 6.2.13 Developments located adjacent to waterways shall have a minimum setback of 7.5 m (25 ft) from the high water mark. In critical areas, the M.D. shall establish an additional environmental reserve buffer to maintain shoreline riparian vegetation.

6.3 Hamlet Recreational Land Use

Small scale recreational development can be located as a discretionary use within Hamlet Residential districts. Campgrounds and bed and breakfast operations should be located within Hamlet Urban Reserve districts. Recreational development is anticipated in the southern portion of the Hamlet given its proximity to the highway and Lesser Slave Lake. This plan encourages recreational development in southern portions of the Plan Area, preferably on areas subject to land consolidation within the Urban Reserve district shown in Figure 5.

- 6.3.1 Recreational development shall occur in 'Hamlet Residential' and 'Hamlet Urban Reserve' Districts.
- 6.3.2 All future tourism related development (taken to include campgrounds, bed & breakfasts and similar) should be encouraged to locate in the southern portion of the Plan Area.
- 6.3.3 Notwithstanding policy 6.3.2, cabins, cottages, or similar recreational dwelling types shall be considered, at the discretion of the M.D., as an appropriate housing type for recreational properties.
- 6.3.4 Properties west of Highway 750 immediately north of Grouard Bridge shall be designated Urban Reserve to permit recreational development.
- 6.3.5 Future recreational development must maintain the rural character of the community and consider adjacent land uses.

6.4 Hamlet Commercial Land Use

There are currently two areas within the Hamlet boundary designated 'Hamlet Commercial'. One is located within the Hamlet core and the other along Highway 750. These two areas are expected to be sufficient for future commercial land use in the community.

- 6.4.1 Commercial uses should be small-scale and offer services to local residents and nearby rural areas.
- 6.4.2 Commercial development shall not exceed a maximum of two storeys (10 m) in height and should be constructed to be respectful of the community's rural character.
- 6.4.3 Onsite parking must be provided in all new commercial developments.
- 6.4.4 Feasibility reports in accordance with municipal standards shall be required from the developer to prove the suitability of land for the proposed use.

6.4.5 Future lots for commercial subdivision or development shall have a minimum size of 400 square metres (4,300 square feet) with the exception of gas bars which shall have a minimum size of 557 square metres (6,000 square feet) in accordance with the M.D. of Big Lakes Land Use Bylaw.

6.5 Servicing, Infrastructure and Utilities

Approximately one-half of the lots in the Hamlet of Grouard are currently serviced. The existing servicing capacity could handle up to a 50 percent increase in usage. The existing system can therefore support the projected growth for the community. Extending water and sewer to unserviced parts of the Hamlet is unlikely given the current population level. Potential growth and development in the southern portion of the community may make servicing in that area more economically feasible. The M.D. will continue to look for provincial and federal funding to assist in the extension of servicing.

6.5.1 Installation of municipal water and sewer shall be at the sole expense of the developer. In such instances where the M.D. provides servicing improvements, a local levy may be charged to affected landowners.

6.5.2 Provision of Shallow Utilities in applications for subdivision and development shall be at the sole expense of the developer.

6.5.3 Stormwater runoff shall remain overland. In the event this cannot be achieved, the developer shall be responsible for the creation of onsite stormwater retention ponds to maintain predevelopment water flow levels.

6.5.4 Subdivisions greater than six parcels on a quarter section shall be required to submit a report addressing household water use for each household within the subdivision in accordance with Section 23(3)(a) of the Water Act. A waste collection system for the proposed development is also required to prevent surface and/or groundwater contamination.

6.5.5 The M.D. shall continue to explore funding opportunities to extend services to unserviced areas of the Hamlet.

6.5.6 The M.D. shall continue to explore the potential for alternative servicing arrangements such as less formal water co-ops to assist current residents with no services.

6.6 Community Services

The M.D. operates an office of the Family and Community Support Services in Grouard which offers social programs to local residents. While fire protection is provided by the Grouard Fire Department, there is no police presence in Grouard.

The community is serviced by the Northern Lakes College, which provides educational opportunities for residents and attracts students to the community. The Northern Lakes College also provides usage of outdoor recreational facilities as well as gymnasium for community events. Northland School provides kindergarten to grade 9 education in Grouard as well as recreational and playground space for the community. The Grouard Museum and St. Bernard Church are also important community features.

- 6.6.1 The M.D. should explore opportunities for partnership with the RCMP on community policing initiatives.
- 6.6.2 The Grouard Volunteer Fire Department will continue to provide fire protection services in the community.
- 6.6.3 The M.D. and Family and Community Support Services should work to expand social and recreational programs for seniors and residents.
- 6.6.4 The M.D. shall continue to explore opportunities with provincial and federal agencies to increase social and affordable housing in Grouard.
- 6.6.5 The M.D. shall continue to search for partnerships with Northern Lakes College and Kapawe'no First Nation Band to increase social programs and services to the Hamlet of Grouard.
- 6.6.6 The M.D. should continue to support Northern Lakes College in their efforts to deliver local programs, community services, and initiatives such as the Grouard Historical Village, which benefit the Hamlet.
- 6.6.7 The use of the Northern Lakes College shall remain institutional (educational) in nature within a Direct Control District.
- 6.6.8 The St. Bernard Church shall maintain its present use as a religious institution within a Direct Control District. The community cemetery shall also be protected under this Direct Control designation.
- 6.6.9 The M.D. and Grouard Community Association should establish a designated Community Hall space to facilitate the development of local initiatives.

6.7 Community Enhancement

While Grouard has a rich history and maintains important cultural landmarks, steps should be taken towards enhancing the overall appearance of the Hamlet and reinforcing a community sense of place. Community-led initiatives to plant trees and flowers within the Hamlet core and at the entrance to the community would serve to develop community pride and make the Hamlet more appealing to tourists and residents alike. A community beautification project with citizen involvement shall be supported by the M.D.

- 6.7.1 Hamlet residential and commercial properties should be maintained aesthetically at the level stipulated within M.D. of Big Lakes Land Use Bylaws.
- 6.7.2 The M.D. and Grouard Community Association shall search for opportunities and partnerships to develop a community beautification project.
- 6.7.3 Trees and flowers should be planted in the Hamlet core and at the entrance of the Hamlet to enhance the appearance of the community.
- 6.7.4 Park benches, preferably community built, should be located within the Hamlet and along the pathway for the enjoyment of residents and tourists.
- 6.7.5 The M.D. should consider a Park Bench Donation Program to allow residents to sponsor benches and receive a built-in commemorative plaque in return. Such a program would assist in funding park benches and instill pride in the community.
- 6.7.6 The M.D. and Grouard Community Association should provide funding and support for an annual community Christmas light campaign.
- 6.7.7 The M.D. should explore opportunities to increase exposure to Grouard by developing more signage to the community and its cultural/historical landmarks. Partnerships for the development of a community website should also be explored to help promote the community.

6.8 Land Consolidation

Land owned by the M.D. in Grouard provides important opportunity for future development. Most of these parcels are too small for the modern property market and require new subdivision plans. The M.D. should consolidate these parcels and resurvey into larger lot sizes to help attract new development to the Hamlet. By consolidating small surveyed parcels of land in the southern portion of the community and resurveying the properties to larger sizes, the M.D. will be assisting in encouraging new investment in the community.

- 6.8.1 The M.D. should consolidate municipally owned land, resurvey, and register new plans which promote a more logical pattern of land use.
- 6.8.2 The M.D. should consolidate all properties west of 2nd Street (Blocks 36 & 37) within Registered Plan 2359 AR and 3367 AY including portions of River Lots 22 and 23. All unnecessary streets and lanes within these lands should be closed to facilitate consolidation. These lands should be resurveyed into larger lot sizes for residential development.
- 6.8.3 The M.D. should consolidate all properties east of 2nd Street (Block 38 and River Lot 24) in Registered Plan 3367 AY excluding privately held lots within this block. These lands should be combined with adjacent M.D. owned land and resurveyed into larger lot sizes for residential subdivision.
- 6.8.4 The M.D. should consolidate all M.D. owned parcels in Block 39 and Lot X located within Plan 2359 AR. These lands should be resurveyed into larger lot sizes for residential subdivision.
- 6.8.5 The M.D. should consolidate lots 1-14 in Block 6 and merge this land with Block X of Plan 1904 V. All unnecessary streets and lanes within these lands should be cancelled to facilitate consolidation. These lands should be resurveyed into larger lot sizes for residential subdivision.
- 6.8.6 The M.D. should endeavour to acquire lots 19 and 39 within Block 30 and lot 29C within Block 29 at fair market value to facilitate consolidation.
- 6.8.7 Further to section 6.8.6, once said lands have been acquired, the M.D. should consolidate Block 29 and 30 into surrounding M.D. owned Lot X. These lands should be used for future recreational development such as campgrounds.
- 6.8.8 The M.D. should consolidate individual titles on River Lot 29 east of Mission Street into a single land title to facilitate sale.
- 6.8.9 In areas subject to land consolidation, parcels should be resurveyed into larger sizes to promote residential property development.
- 6.8.10 Consolidated lots must be resurveyed to a minimum size of 1860 square metres (20,000 square feet).
- 6.8.11 Where feasible, consolidated lots should be resurveyed to a size of 8090 square metres (87,000 square feet).

6.9 Public Open Space and Trails

Grouard has a number of public spaces connected to Northern Lakes College and Northland School. Northland School has a ball diamond and playground, while Northern Lakes College provides an outdoor skating rink, basketball court, and gymnasium facility. Residents have indicated a desire for more recreational opportunities. The M.D. should develop a community trail/pathway to link public spaces and allow for greater connectivity within the Hamlet. Trail development can be combined with community enhancement projects to improve the quality of life in the Hamlet and help attract visitors to the area.

- 6.9.1 The M.D. should provide seed funding to retain and enhance public space and develop a community trail.
- 6.9.2 A community trail should be constructed to link residential areas within the Hamlet core to community recreation sites and neighboring recreational areas such as Police Point Natural Area.
- 6.9.3 The community trail may be gravel and should be of a width suitable to accommodate multiple users.
- 6.9.4 The M.D. should partner with the Northern Lakes College to allow the trail to pass through existing college property.
- 6.9.5 Land for additional trails and open space may be taken from the dedication of Municipal Reserve or Environmental Reserve in accordance with MDP policy and sections 664 and 666 of the Municipal Government Act.
- 6.9.6 The M.D., in partnership with Northern Lakes College and the Grouard Community Association, should explore opportunities to expand open space areas and allow for the development of a picnic park or other community recreation site.
- 6.9.7 Further to section 6.9.6, the development of new recreational areas should be part of a community enhancement project and be built with the participation of local residents.
- 6.9.8 River Lot 35, particularly the area adjacent to the Fire Hall, shall be the dedicated site for future parks and community recreation areas.
- 6.9.9 The M.D. shall endeavour to protect all public space by designating these lands as a Direct Control District.

6.10 Transportation and Access

The main access into the Hamlet of Grouard will continue to be Mission Street off Highway 750. A safety study on this intersection by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation may require alterations to the entrance in the future. The ASP must be amended to conform to the recommendations of this study if the report recommends changes. Mission Street will continue to serve as the primary roadway in Grouard.

6.10.1 The M.D. shall maintain the primary road system to a high level and utilize dust control on arterial non-paved roads.

6.10.2 Mission Street should continue to serve as the main collector road through the Hamlet of Grouard, connecting the Hamlet core with Highway 750.

6.10.3 All internal roads developed to service new subdivisions or development shall be provided at the sole expense of the developer and must be developed in accordance with specific municipal standards.

6.10.4 New subdivisions and developments must provide safe and efficient access for emergency service vehicles.

6.10.5 All approvals and proposals for development adjacent to Highway 750 must meet the standards and specifications set out by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation and the M.D.

6.10.6 Properties adjacent to Highway 750 must provide an acceptable Traffic Impact Assessment to Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation prior to each phase of subdivision, or as required by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.

6.10.7 Future upgrading of the Mission Street Intersection with Highway 750 will be required if deemed necessary by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation. Future improvements to the north access of Grouard will also be required if deemed necessary by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.

6.10.8 The M.D. shall endeavour to close road right of ways within areas subject to land consolidation.

7.0 Phasing

Since limited growth is anticipated within the Plan Area, specific phasing areas are not outlined. Phasing will be subject to market demand. Figures 2 and 3 identify the present municipal servicing area in Grouard. Infill development within the Hamlet core is encouraged for servicing efficiency.

Due to anticipated growth in recreational development, growth will likely occur in the southern portion of the Hamlet. Parts of the southern portion of Grouard have existing development but remain unserviced. Development in this area, including lands consolidated by the M.D. and resurveyed into large sized parcels, should be considered as second priority (areas marked “Future Hamlet Expansion” – Figure 5). A concentration of development within this area could help make future servicing more cost-effective to existing unserviced residents.

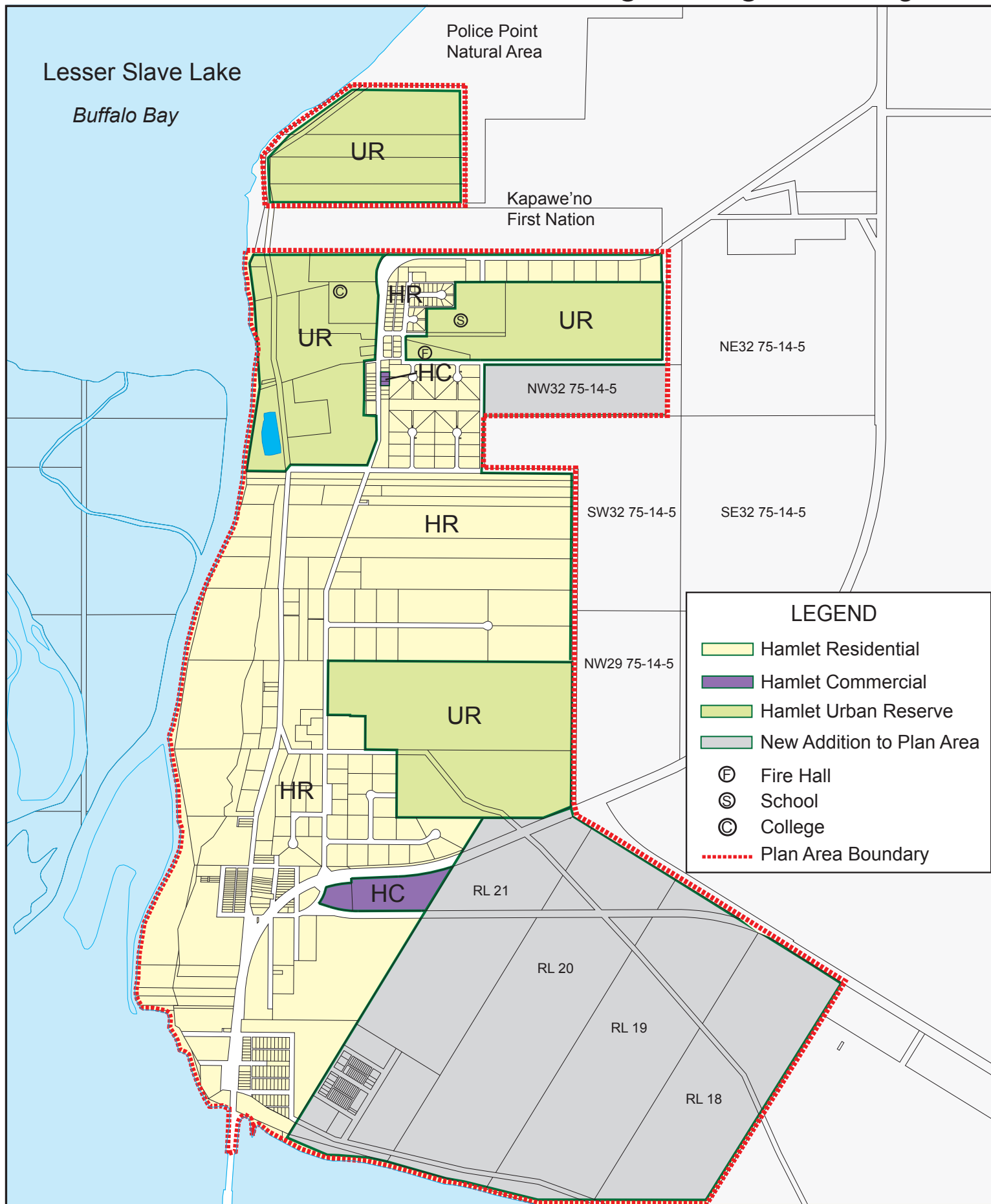
The central portion of the Plan Area, which should also support large rural lots, will likely be the last to attract development.

Development along River Lots 18, 19, 20, and 21 (Figure 1) should be the last priority of the Plan Area and be restricted until demand warrants the financial feasibility of servicing.

8.0 Plan Implementation

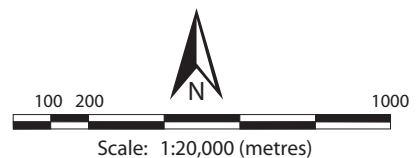
The Hamlet of Grouard Area Structure Plan must be adopted by bylaw at a public hearing in accordance with Part 633 of the Municipal Government Act. Upon adoption, this document would become a statutory document of the M.D. of Big Lakes. The Grouard Area Structure Plan is intended to be a policy guide for future development in the Hamlet of Grouard and is required to be consistent with both the M.D. of Big Lakes Municipal Development Plan and the Land Use Bylaw.

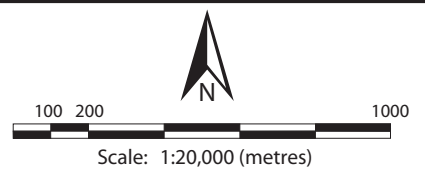
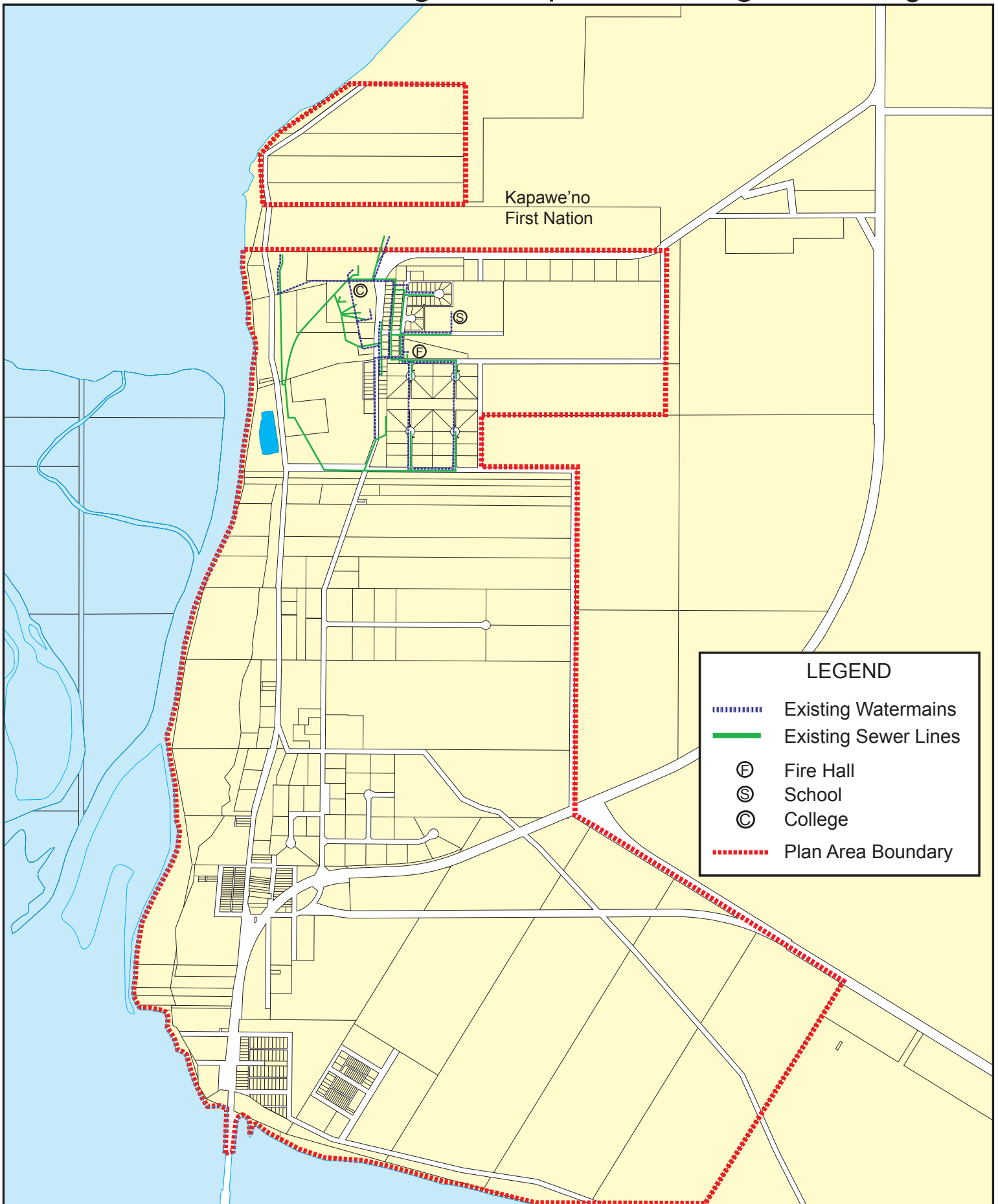
The policies and future land uses outlined in the Hamlet of Grouard Area Structure Plan are intended to provide a long-term planning outlook. Development in the Plan Area should be consistent with the policies contained within the ASP and should be acceptable to the community. As conditions change within the Hamlet of Grouard, it may be necessary to amend the ASP to ensure it continues to meet the desires of the community. The ASP may be subject to review and amendment every five years or when the M.D. deems it necessary.

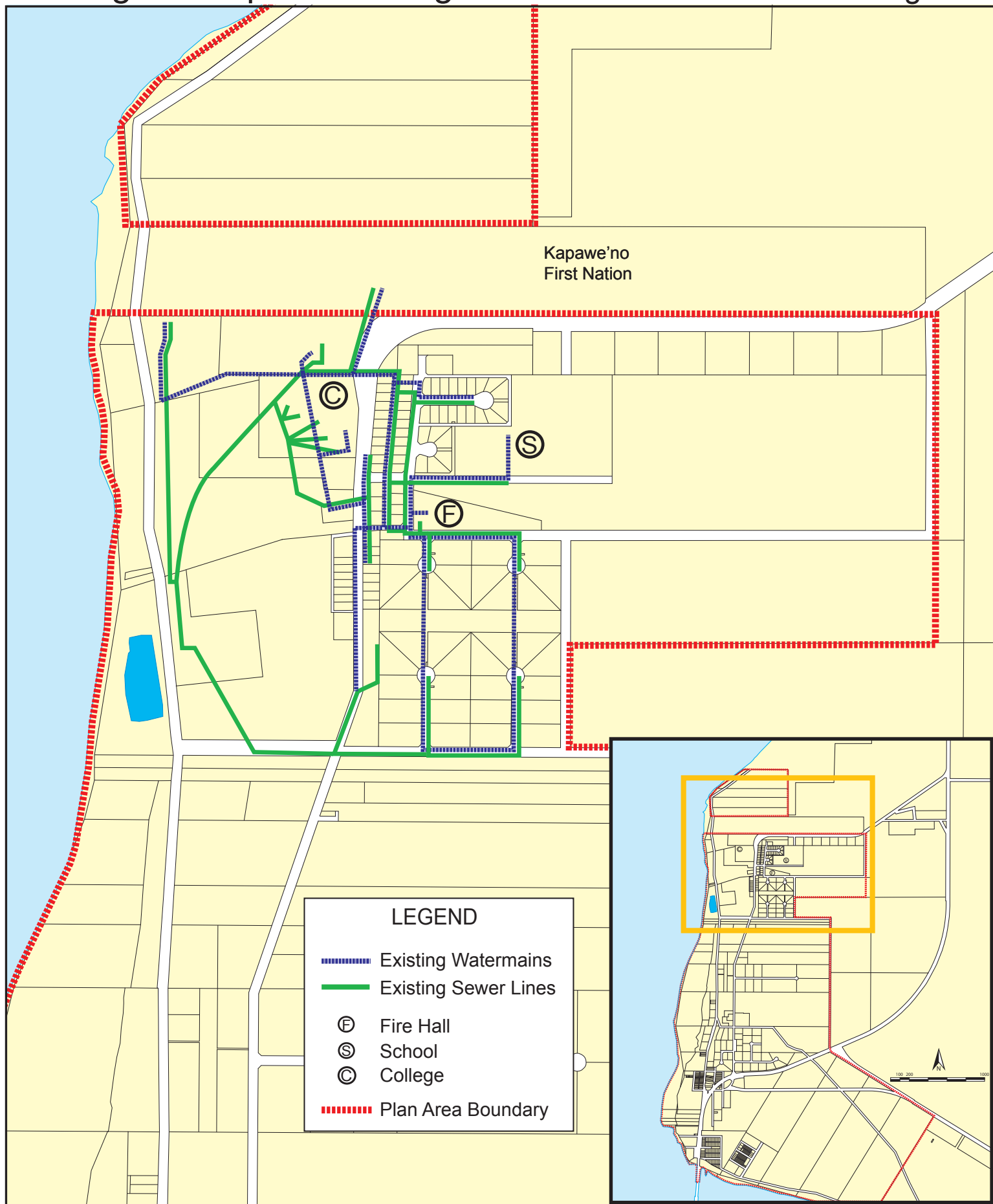


LEGEND

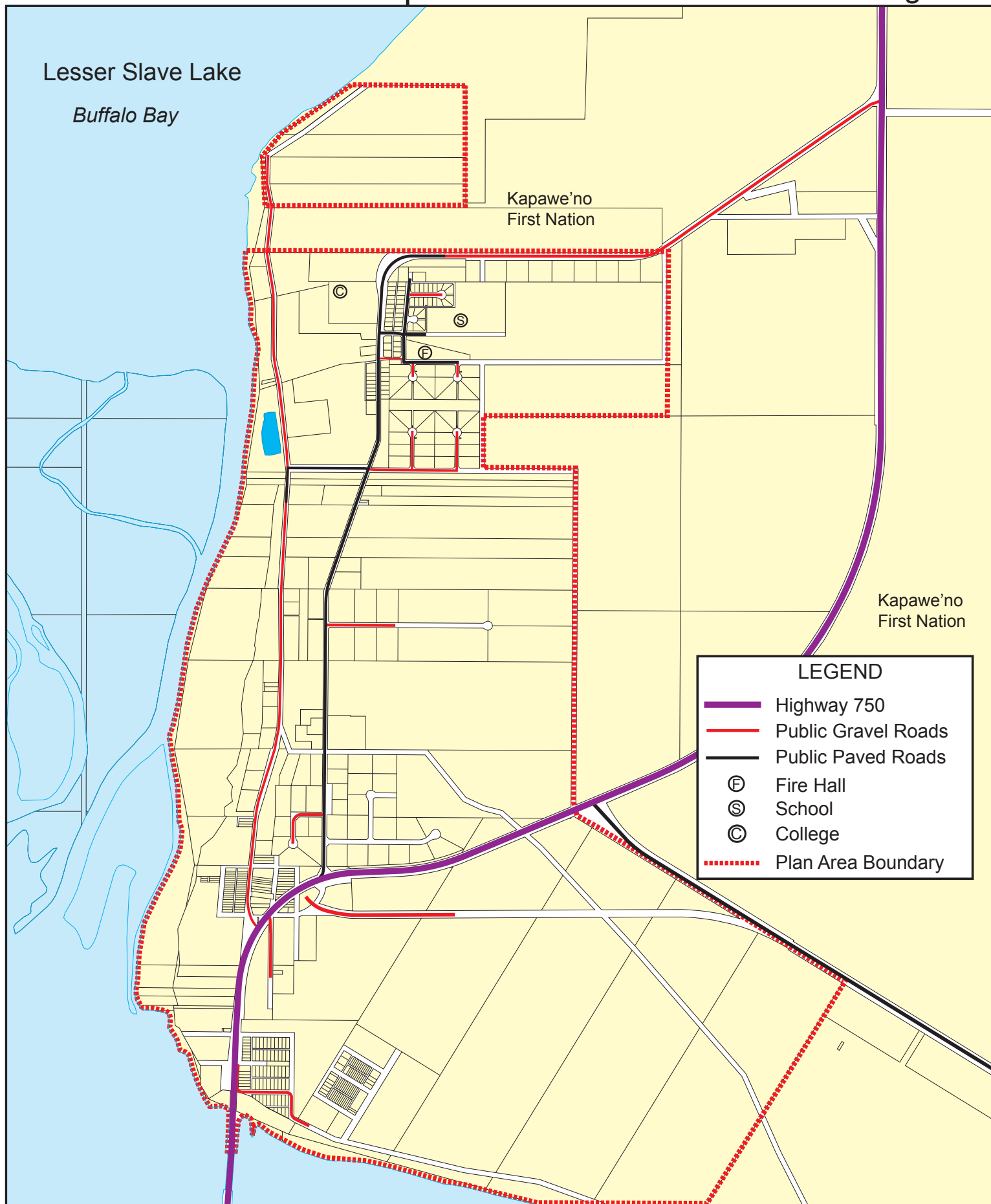
- Hamlet Residential
- Hamlet Commercial
- Hamlet Urban Reserve
- New Addition to Plan Area
- F Fire Hall
- S School
- C College
- Plan Area Boundary





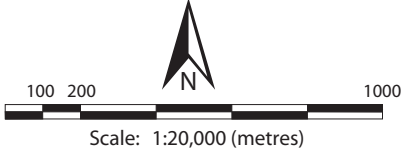


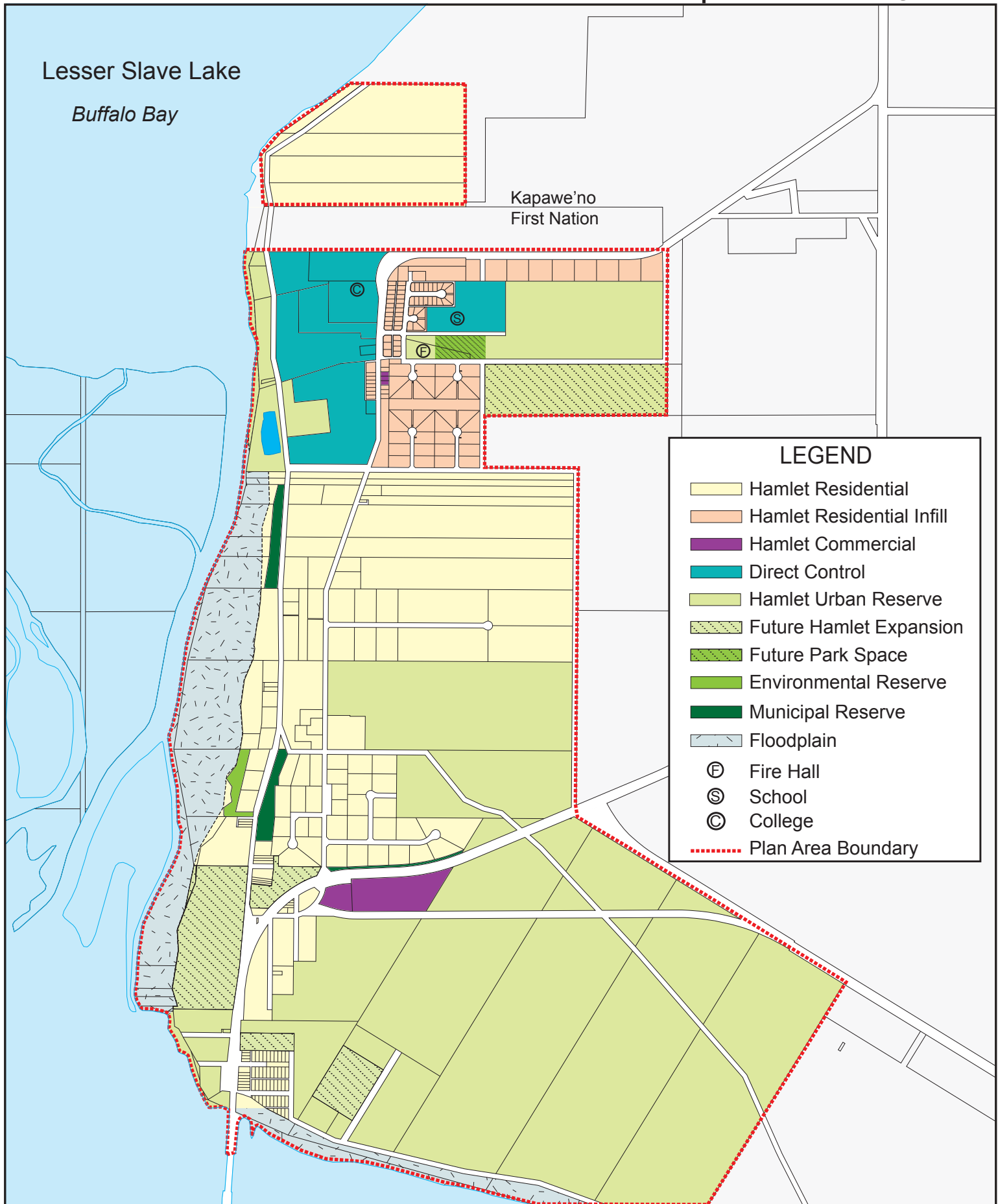
Scale: 1:10,000 (metres)



LEGEND

- Highway 750
- Public Gravel Roads
- Public Paved Roads
- ⓕ Fire Hall
- Ⓢ School
- Ⓒ College
- Plan Area Boundary

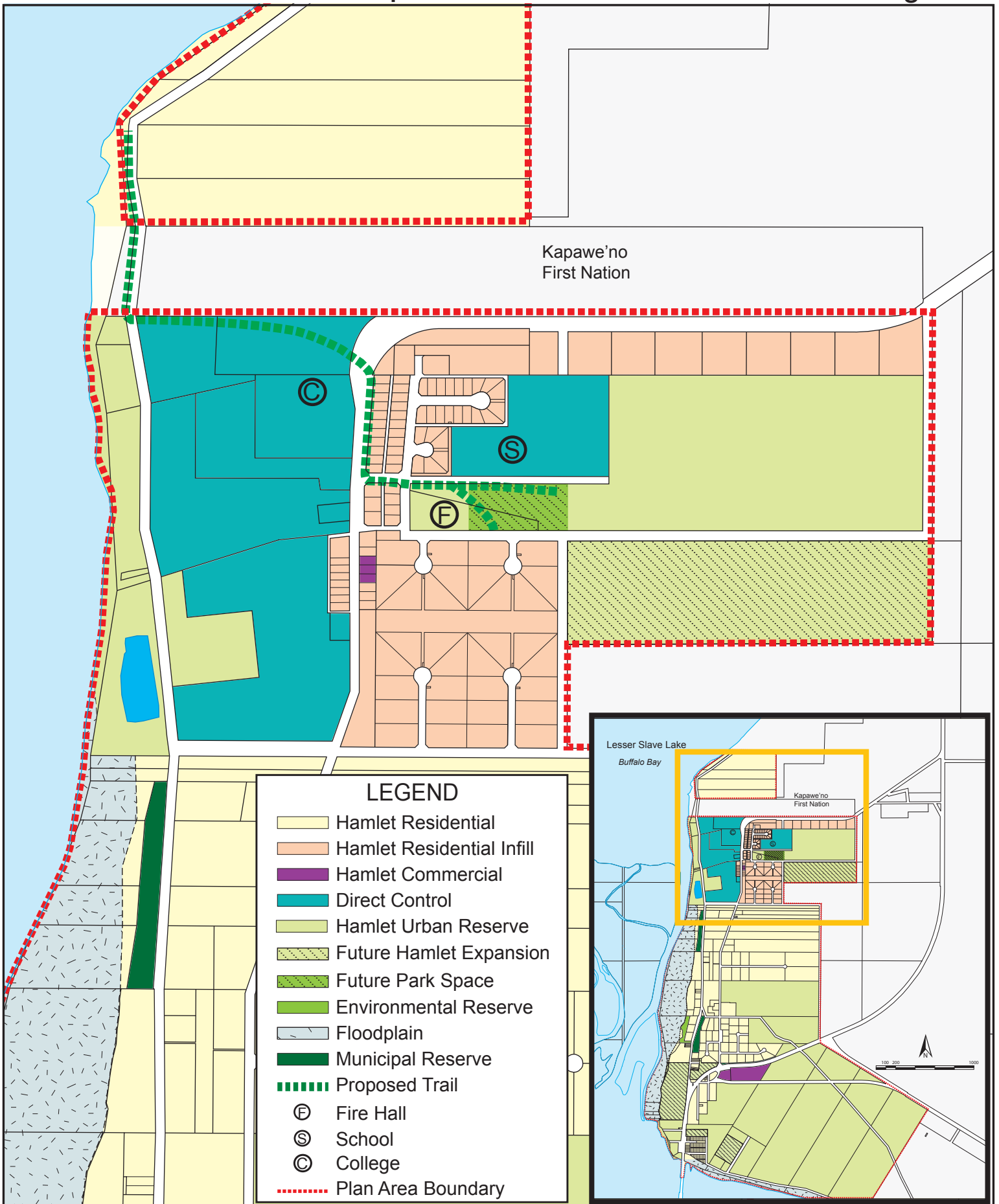




LEGEND

- Hamlet Residential
- Hamlet Residential Infill
- Hamlet Commercial
- Direct Control
- Hamlet Urban Reserve
- Future Hamlet Expansion
- Future Park Space
- Environmental Reserve
- Municipal Reserve
- Floodplain
- (F) Fire Hall
- (S) School
- (C) College
- Plan Area Boundary





Scale: 1:10,000 (metres)