

Land Use Planning in British Columbia: What You Can Expect



What is land use planning (LUP)?

Land use planning is a process of working together with First Nations, local governments, stakeholders, communities, and the public to determine how public land and resources should be managed. The outcome of this process is a land use plan, which defines **what types of activities can happen and where they can happen on the land.**

Land use planning also helps the British Columbia government meet some of its mandated goals, including:

- providing opportunities to grow the economy
- improving the timing and transparency of the tenure process
- transforming land and water management
- advancing the 30%-by-2030 goal (to protect 30% of lands and waters in B.C. by 2030)

LUP also helps meet the needs of an increasing population and growing economy while also promoting ecosystem health, biodiversity, and resilience to climate change and the cumulative impacts of human activity.

Land use plans are developed in partnership with First Nations and shaped by input from industry, the public, stakeholders, and local governments through multiple engagement opportunities. If a land use plan is being proposed in your area, it means that the B.C. government is working with First Nations and communities to set a clear direction for how land and water will be managed — both now and in the future.

How does land use planning work?

Land use planning is a **transparent and inclusive process.** Projects are led by a core planning team and involve multiple engagement opportunities with local governments, stakeholders, communities, and the public.

Each land use planning project is tailored to the area's unique needs and the values that need to be managed, so **no two planning processes are exactly alike.**

A land use planning process can be separated into four broad stages:

- **Initiate planning:** Determine the scope of the project and get ready to begin planning
- **Develop a plan:** Engage with interested parties, develop planning options, engage with partners again, and draft a plan
- **Evaluate the plan and approve it:** Engage with affected parties and evaluate the draft plan, approve the plan, and communicate the results
- **Implement the plan:** Implement the land use plan and assess its effectiveness

Engagement is embedded throughout the planning process, and the resulting feedback helps inform the development of the land use plan. This ensures that land use plans are informed by a wide range of perspectives and balance diverse values that support those who live on and use the land.

Is land use planning the same as shared decision-making?

No. Land use planning is not the same as shared decision-making.

In land use planning, the B.C. government partners with First Nations to:

- develop a **shared vision** for land and resource use
- make decisions **together** about the scope of the plan by setting objectives and reviewing proposed land designations
- ensure that First Nations' **knowledge, laws, and perspectives** are meaningfully reflected and incorporated into the process

The B.C. government and partner First Nation(s) must both agree to initiate a land use planning process, build consensus on deliverables and outcomes, and endorse the final land use plan. However, the **legal authority to approve and implement direction from the plan rests with the B.C. government**. Land use planning may provide opportunities for the B.C. government and partner First Nations(s) to explore the transformation of land and water management in the future.

What happens to private property within a plan area?

Land use plans only apply to public (Crown) land. If you own private property within a planning area, your land is **not** included in the plan, and your rights as a property owner remain the same.

What are the impacts on tenure holders within a plan area?

If you hold a tenure within a planning area (e.g., for forestry, mining, tourism, or other resource use), the planning process does not immediately affect or cancel your tenure. You can continue to operate as usual during the planning process.

If a proposed land use designation may affect your tenure:

- **You will be notified**
- You will have an **opportunity to participate**
- The B.C. government will assess whether the new management direction is compatible with your existing rights

Engagement is a core part of land use planning, and you will have multiple opportunities to share input and stay informed throughout the process.

What happens to the existing management direction in a plan area?

Existing land use plans and management direction remain in effect until a new plan is finalized and implemented. Learn more about existing plans and legal direction at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/crown-land-water/land-use-planning/regions>

Can I still access Crown land during a planning process?

Yes, you can continue to access Crown land for recreational activities, hunting, existing tenures, etc., according to the current management direction.

Learn more and get involved

You can stay informed and participate in land use planning projects by visiting:

<https://www.planningpartnership.ca>

For general information or to read answers to frequently asked questions, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/crown-land-water/land-use-planning/modernizing-land-use-planning>