

# Land Use Planning in British Columbia: Mineral Exploration and Mining



## What is land use planning?

The extraction of critical minerals is a generational opportunity in British Columbia, with billions of dollars' worth of investment and growth opportunities anticipated for many regions of the province. How can the responsible development of these and other minerals coincide with respect for Indigenous rights, while also addressing broader socio-economic and environmental objectives? The B.C. government believes that land use planning (LUP) will be foundational to a balanced and sustainable approach to advance prosperity, reconciliation, and conservation. Land use plans will improve clarity for resource operations on the land base and enable collaboration and partnerships between First Nations, the provincial government, communities, and industry.

## Who is involved

The B.C. government is partnering with First Nations rights holders on land use planning to develop a shared vision for resource management and stewardship in B.C. Planning processes include collaboration and engagement with local governments, stakeholders, industry, and communities to consider their interests in the process and to recommend a direction that reflects environmental, cultural, social, and economic values identified in planning areas.

## Planning for different values

Land use planning supports the preservation of cultural values, healthy ecosystems, and economic opportunities by setting high-level strategic direction for plan areas — helping to define “what” can occur and “where” it can occur on land and water. It is a transparent, inclusive process that can be modified over time. High-level and strategic direction on land use helps support the recently announced B.C. Critical Minerals Strategy in the long term by increasing certainty and predictability on the land base for all.

## Mining and exploration in land use plans

Provincial land use planning in the 1990s and early 2000s was largely focused on forestry and protected areas, rather than on mineral exploration and mining. New land use plans may establish new management direction to guide sustainable and responsible exploration and development of mineral, placer, sand, gravel, and coal resources (referred to collectively as “mining” in this factsheet) where appropriate.

Land use planning provides a mechanism for leveraging B.C.'s competitive advantage in mineral development by enabling land use designations that align with First Nations values, creating greater clarity for industry, and minimizing challenges through all stages of mining exploration and development.

## Enhanced clarity and competitiveness

By partnering to develop a shared vision and direction for resource management and stewardship, the B.C. government and First Nations planning partners will work together with all parties, including mining proponents, to provide greater certainty, predictability, and up-front clarity on the land base. Participation in the planning process and the creation of new land use plans can help set up the mining industry for success by developing stronger relationships with First Nations on whose territories they operate. During the land use planning process, exploration related to existing tenures and mining operations can continue.

Ensuring responsible resource development with the support of First Nation partners can also enhance B.C.'s global competitiveness as a destination for mining investment that also focuses on environmental, social, and governance factors.

## Key facts about mining and land use planning (LUP)

- Land use planning incorporates the mining-related interests of local governments, stakeholders, and communities in socio-economic assessments and in the development of new management direction.
- Mineral deposits that can be mined economically are rare, so mineral potential mapping and other geological and sector data products are assessed throughout land use planning processes to ensure that high-potential exploration and mining opportunities, and the economic benefits they represent, are considered in land use decisions.
- The LUP process provides an opportunity to assess, evaluate, and develop management direction within planning areas, including management direction applicable to mining. This can provide increased clarity regarding where and how activities related to mining may occur within planning areas and also improve the effectiveness of the provincial regulatory regime.
- Land use planning processes between First Nations, the B.C. government, industry, and local governments will increase certainty on the land base and set the stage regionally for the growth of the critical minerals sector and the implementation of a modernized Mineral Tenure Act. The Mineral Tenure Act modernization process and LUP processes are happening concurrently and have their own respective mandates.

Learn more online at: [www.gov.bc.ca/landuseplanning](http://www.gov.bc.ca/landuseplanning)