

PLANNING IS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION:
A CASE STUDY OF RESOURCE TOWN PLANNING -
SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA

by
Ken A. Johnson

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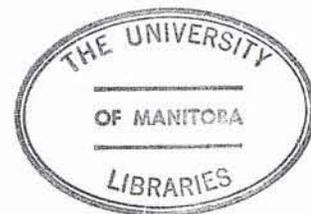
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MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to describe a local planning process for a resource community in the context of rapid and fluctuating growth, and major senior government involvement. The opportunities and limitations of the planning process for Slave Lake, Alberta are reviewed, along with suggestions for more effective local determination. The analysis examines the role of senior governments in inducing and financing the rapid growth and it describes a three and a half year planning process where the planning team adopted a two pronged plan-implementation approach, attempting to first of all obtain financial and political support to implement their Plan in its entirety, and secondly to implement the Plan at the local level despite the lack of senior government support. The analysis outlines the lessons learned from this case study and makes suggestions for future directions for rapid growth town planning.

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INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In May, 1970 the federal and provincial governments established the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area (D.R.E.E.) Program in north-central Alberta. The Town of Slave Lake, which was designated as the primary regional growth centre, was expected to more than double in size within the five year duration of the D.R.E.E. Program. The purpose of this thesis is to describe the planning strategy adopted for this resource community and to examine its effectiveness within the context of rapid and fluctuating growth and major senior government involvement. The opportunities and limitations of local planning in the above context will be outlined along with suggestions for more effective local determination.

Through a case study of a three and a half year planning process in this resource town, this thesis will address the question of how to plan in a volatile political environment. It will test the hypothesis that planners can have an impact in a negative planning situation if they focus on the possibilities rather than the problems, and stress incremental implementation through an evolving, recursive planning strategy.

The thesis will illustrate that in planning situations where politics and/or the uncertainties of rapid growth create major constraints in the planning process (constraints which are beyond the planner's power to control), it is not enough for a planner to prepare a long range plan and leave it for the politicians and administrators to implement. This case study will show that a major function, and quite likely the most critical function of the planner in this type of situation, is to join with the politicians and administrators in the process of plan - implementation. This

became clear to the planning team a few months after the Slave Lake planning process began, at which time the phrase - "planning is in the implementation" - was devised to describe the team's basic philosophy and approach.

This empirical study of the Slave Lake planning process clearly indicates that there is no one particular theoretical planning process model in the literature which would be appropriate by itself for such rapid growth situations. Although the thesis does not propose a new planning process model for resource town planning, it does suggest that the planning strategy adopted for the Slave Lake planning situation - a strategy which embraces parts of different theoretical approaches - is the most appropriate one for rapid growth situations.

B. THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT: LINKING THEORY AND ACTION

1. Relating Action to Theory - An Inside Perspective

The theoretical framework within which the planning team operated during the three and a half year Slave Lake planning process is discussed in the final three chapters of the thesis. In order to focus on the interplay between theory and action, the thesis takes an "inside look" at the planning process as it unfolds, showing how the complex and changing circumstances surrounding the Slave Lake situation forced the planning team to draw upon a number of theoretical planning approaches in the development of the planning strategy.

Through this examination the thesis should give the reader an insight into how planners utilize theory in the "field of action". Too often, it appears, planning processes are studied only at the broad theoretical level and the irrational nature of

planning as it occurs in real life is smoothed over. While much has been written on the general application of planning theory to real world situations there seems to be a definite need for more empirical studies which examine a planner's use of theory as he plans.

While the planning activity was underway in Slave Lake, it was difficult for the participants to withdraw from the process and analyze the quality of the action as it related to planning theory in the broad sense. Throughout the planning process a number of theoretical precepts were articulated by the members of the extended planning team, but these views were strongly affected by reactions to recent events. Although these theoretical precepts were not drawn together and synthesized as the planning process evolved, it is intended that this thesis will now provide this synthesis. Saul Alinsky discusses the value in synthesizing theory and action in the following passages:

When you're in the field of action you have to do your thinking on the run. You don't have time to figure out whether what you're doing really makes sense.¹ You don't acquire what the Greeks call real experience.

Through action, reflection, study, testing, and synthesis I have learned to distill experience from living. Experience is the integrating of the actions and events of life so that they arrange themselves into meaningful universal patterns.²

While the link between theory and action is brought out in the chapters which describe the Slave Lake planning process as it evolved (Chapters II and III), it is in the final chapter of the thesis that the main theoretical principles (or lessons) for planning in resource communities are synthesized. This synthesis is organized under the following topics: the effects of rapid and fluctuating growth on a resource community; the requirements for an effective planning strategy for rapidly growing resource communities;

the problems inherent in major senior governmental involvement in local planning; and suggestions for future directions for rapid growth town planning.

2. Relating Theory to Action - An Overview

In terms of relating the Slave Lake planning experience to the theoretical planning models discussed in the planning literature, the most fundamental lesson which emerged from the thesis was that there is no single normative planning model which can be adopted *carte-blanche* to apply to rapid growth town planning processes. It became evident that to be successful in linking planning, decision-making, and implementation in situations of rapid change, it is necessary to adopt a flexible planning strategy which blends together a number of different planning approaches, such as those suggested by the rational-comprehensive, incremental, advocacy, transactive and radical planning traditions.

The overall planning approach for Slave Lake, which followed two distinct streams of activity - a political negotiation activity and an incremental plan-implementation activity - was somewhat similar to an approach suggested by Amitai Etzioni in his essay entitled "Mixed Scanning - A 'Third' Approach to Decision Making".³

The mixed scanning approach suggests that the rational - comprehensive planning approach be used for making fundamental, "high order" decisions, with an incremental approach being used to follow through on these decisions.⁴ In general terms it appears that in the case of Slave Lake, the plan preparation and political negotiation activities represented the rational-comprehensive, high order activity while the incremental plan-implementation activity represented the incremental, low order planning activity.

In commenting on the blending of the two streams of activity within the mixed-scanning approach, Etzioni states that:

Mixed-scanning reduces the unrealistic aspects of rationalism by limiting the details required in fundamental decisions and helps to overcome the conservative slant of incrementalism by exploring longer-run alternatives.⁵

The strategy combines a detailed ("rationalistic") examination of some sectors - which, unlike the exhaustive examination of the entire area, is feasible - with a "truncated" review of other sectors.⁶

In likening his model to a weather satellite scanning the globe for trouble spots, he suggests that:

A mixed-scanning strategy would include elements of both approaches by employing two cameras: a broad-angle camera that would cover all parts of the sky but not in great detail, and a second one which would zero in on those areas revealed by the first camera to require a more in-depth examination.

While the dual planning strategy adopted for Slave Lake could be generally compared to this mixed-scanning approach, it also incorporated elements of the advocacy, transactive and radical planning approaches from time to time. In essence, therefore, the planning strategy was a blend of at least five different planning approaches. All five approaches - their basic principles, purposes and applications - will be briefly reviewed to illustrate their relative uses within this blended planning approach.

1. Rational - comprehensive planning approach: While the rational - comprehensive approach has been challenged extensively in the planning literature, most particularly since the late 1950's when Charles Lindblom introduced his incremental planning model,⁸ it remains as the dominant and most robust of the planning traditions. The criticism of this approach has

focussed on the fact that, in its purest form, it is basically a centralist or "top-down" planning approach. It is criticized for being too rigid, linear and non-adaptive; for relying too heavily on rationality, efficiency and quantitative analysis; and for creating barriers to effective citizen participation⁹. Despite these shortcomings, however, it seems that most planning endeavours require some application of its five main steps: data collection and analysis; the setting of goals and objectives; the identification and choosing of alternatives; the evaluation of means against ends; and the implementation of policies.

Although the rational-comprehensive approach provided much of the direction to the planning activity in Slave Lake, the fact that a number of other planning approaches were blended into this comprehensive approach provided considerable flexibility to the overall planning strategy. The flexible and conceptual nature of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan (as described in Chapter II) was perhaps symbolic of the planning team's attempts to follow a comprehensive approach which was less than perfectly rational.

2. Incremental planning approach: The incremental planning approach, which is otherwise referred to as the "Science of Muddling Through"¹⁰ suggests that decision-making or planning actually occurs through an ongoing series of small incremental steps. It has been defined as "incremental change aimed at arriving at agreed upon policies which are closely based on past experience"¹¹. While Lindblom's model has been praised for its realistic perspective and the fact that it is more adjusted to human nature and the political arena than the rational-comprehensive approach, it has at the same time been criticized for being too conservative. It has been suggested that by itself, the incremental approach is of little value in situations where high speed change and political uncertainty call for risk taking and the creation of radically new policies¹².

In combination with other approaches, however, the incremental planning approach can be used very effectively, as was shown in the case of Slave Lake. As described in Chapters II and III of the thesis, the planning team relied on the incremental planning approach as its contingency strategy. Even though circumstances would not allow the implementation of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan in its entirety, it was possible to keep the planning activity flowing by implementing the Plan "a little at a time".

3. Advocacy planning approach: Current planning theory has given full recognition to the fact that for planners to be truly effective they must engage in the political process¹³. Paul Davidoff, one of the most well known theorists on the subject of advocacy planning, suggests that planning in a democracy must incorporate open political debate and that "the right course of action is always a matter of choice, never of fact"¹⁴. He expands on this rationale for advocacy planning by stating:

...values are inescapable elements of any rational decision-making process....
 ...values held by the planner should do more than explicate the values underlying his prescriptions for courses of action; he should be an advocate for what he deems proper.¹⁵

As discussed in Chapter II of the thesis the planning team decided at an early stage that in addition to playing a technical and policy advisory role, we would have to become advocates of Slave Lake's position and support the Town Council in their attempts to secure funds for the implementation of the long range plan. We realized that with the provincial government being opposed to the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area (D.R.E.E.) Program on political grounds, it would be impossible for us to divorce politics from the planning process.

4. Transactive planning approach: The transactive planning approach as put forward by John Friedmann in the early 1970's, calls for planners to emphasize dialogue, mutual learning and the development of trusting interpersonal relationships in the incremental plan-implementation process¹⁶. As discussed in Chapter II of the thesis it became clear early on that we would have to develop a strong dynamic planning team, and that we would have to emphasize open and ongoing communication if we hoped to be successful within the complex and fluid planning environment. We understood that a prerequisite for linking planning, decision-making and implementation within the incremental planning framework would be an open, smoothly flowing communication process (dialogue and trusting interpersonal relationships). We ensured that everyone on the extended planning team would be party to the critical decisions and that the diversity of the roles of those on the team would provide the team with its strength (mutual learning).

5. Radical planning approach: Although it was not very clear at the time, it is now evident that the planning team was borrowing from the radical planning approach in the development of the planning strategy for Slave Lake. In supporting action for long term social change in the Lesser Slave Lake Region (through the regional development process) and in supporting social experimentation within the Town of Slave Lake (by proposing that the Town become involved in innovative social/physical/ economic/legal projects such as the multi-purpose downtown regional centre complex), it could be argued that we were involved in a form of radical planning, defined as: "a synthesis of rational action and spontaneity: evolutionary social experimentation within the context of an ecological ethic".¹⁷

The validity of simultaneously blending a variety of contemporary planning approaches is examined in Barclay Hudson's brilliant essay - "Comparison of Current Planning Theories:

Counterparts and Contradictions" where he reviews the shortcomings of the rational - comprehensive planning tradition, sets up a classification scheme of planning approaches, and discusses future directions for blending planning traditions in practise.¹⁸ In the summary of his paper he states:

...The real issue is whether any planning style can be effective without parallel inputs from other complementary and countervailing traditions. The synoptic planning tradition is more robust than others in the scope of problems it addresses and the diversity of operating conditions it can tolerate. But the approach has serious blind spots which can only be covered by recourse to other planning traditions. The world is not all that clear or consistent in presenting problems to be solved. Having planners with the ability to mix approaches is the only way to assure that they can respond with sensitivity to the diversity of problems and settings¹⁹ confronted, and to the complexity of any given situation.

In conclusion, the empirical study of Slave Lake should serve to illustrate that especially in situations of rapid change, a blended planning approach is the most appropriate strategy. As the discussion of the planning process in the remainder of the thesis shows however, there is no clear-cut model to follow when attempting to blend theory into action - it is up to the planners to design their own blend.

C. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The organization of the thesis reflects the chronological ordering of events in the Slave Lake planning process. Beginning with a chapter on background information to the planning process, the thesis examines the initial plan preparation stage, the plan-implementation stage, and finally, the lessons learned from the planning experience.

Chapter I of the thesis traces the evolution of the regional development process which resulted in the emergence of Slave Lake as a regional growth centre. The impact of the rapid population growth on Slave Lake is examined, along with the role of senior governments in this growth.

Chapter II examines the activities and personal reactions/ observations of the planning team during the early stages of the local planning process. A description of the planning team's method of operations is given, including an examination of the roles and responsibilities of the individual members of the team. The manner in which the planning strategy evolved is described, with an examination made of those key factors which shaped the strategy. Finally, the chapter includes a description of the Long Range Plan which the planning team prepared for Slave Lake in its rapid growth situation.

Chapter III describes the attempts to implement the Plan through two separate streams of activity - a political negotiating process, and, an ongoing, incremental plan - implementation process. A chronological review of the key events in both streams is presented along with the reactions of the Planning team and Slave Lake Council to these events. An in-depth look at certain phases of this planning process involving three levels of government illustrates the major role that politics can play in planning processes.

Chapter IV examines those general lessons which can be drawn from Slave Lake planning experience in terms of how resource communities may deal with the impacts of rapid growth in an uncertain, volatile political or economic climate. The thesis examines the successes and losses experienced by the planning team in terms of the three distinct phases of the Slave Lake planning process: the plan preparation, political negotiation, and incremental plan-implementation phases.

D. NOTES AND REFERENCES, INTRODUCTION

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- 2 Saul Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals, New York: (Vintage Books), 1969, p ix.
- 3 Amitai Etzioni, "Mixed Scanning - A 'Third' Approach to Decision Making", Public Administration Review, (Dec. 1967), pp 385-392.
- 4 Ibid., p. 385
- 5 Ibid., p. 385
- 6 Ibid., p. 389
- 7 Ibid., p. 389
- 8 Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through", Public Administration Review, Vol. 19, (Spring 1959), pp 79-88.
- 9 The discussion of the rational-comprehensive approach is probably the most written-about topic in planning literature. Since the early 1960's several top theorists have critically reviewed the approach, suggesting modifications and putting forward a variety of new models which attempt to bridge the gap between comprehensive planning and other approaches such as the incremental approach, advocacy approach and so on. Some of the more noteworthy theorists in this field are Charles Lindblom, John Friedmann, Martin Meyerson, Francine Rabinovitz, Paul Davidoff, Melville Branch, Alan Altshuler, Melvin Webber, and Barclay Hudson.
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CHAPTER I

THE EMERGENCE OF A REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE

A. INTRODUCTION

Chapter I of this thesis will present the background to the development of Slave Lake as a regional growth centre, and will set the stage for the discussion of the planning activity which took place during the period 1973 to 1976.

Section B following presents the geographical and demographic setting of Slave Lake.

Section C discusses Slave Lake's development leading up to the establishment of the "Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Program", a program established in 1970 by way of an agreement between the Federal Government, through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (D.R.E.E.), and the Alberta Government. The historical development of Slave Lake between 1802 and 1962 is described as is its rapid growth period of 1963 to 1970, a growth period based on the development of the Region's petroleum resources. The section examines the socio-economic conditions of the people living in the Region as well as the forestry resource development potential of the Region at 1970. And finally, the grass roots regional development process which precipitated the establishment of the "Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Program" (which will hereinafter be referred to as the D.R.E.E. Program), will be examined.

Section D examines the objectives and growth concept of the D.R.E.E. Program as they were established at the inception of the Program.

Section E presents a summary of the actual results of the D.R.E.E. Program, covering the five year duration of the Program. The results are summarized according to the number of jobs created,

the social adjustment and vocational training programs which were initiated and the regional and municipal infrastructure projects which were undertaken through the D.R.E.E. Program. This section presents a "snapshot" picture of these results as they appeared at the official termination of the Program in 1975 and does not give a detailed picture of the fluctuations which occurred in terms of job creation or funding assistance.

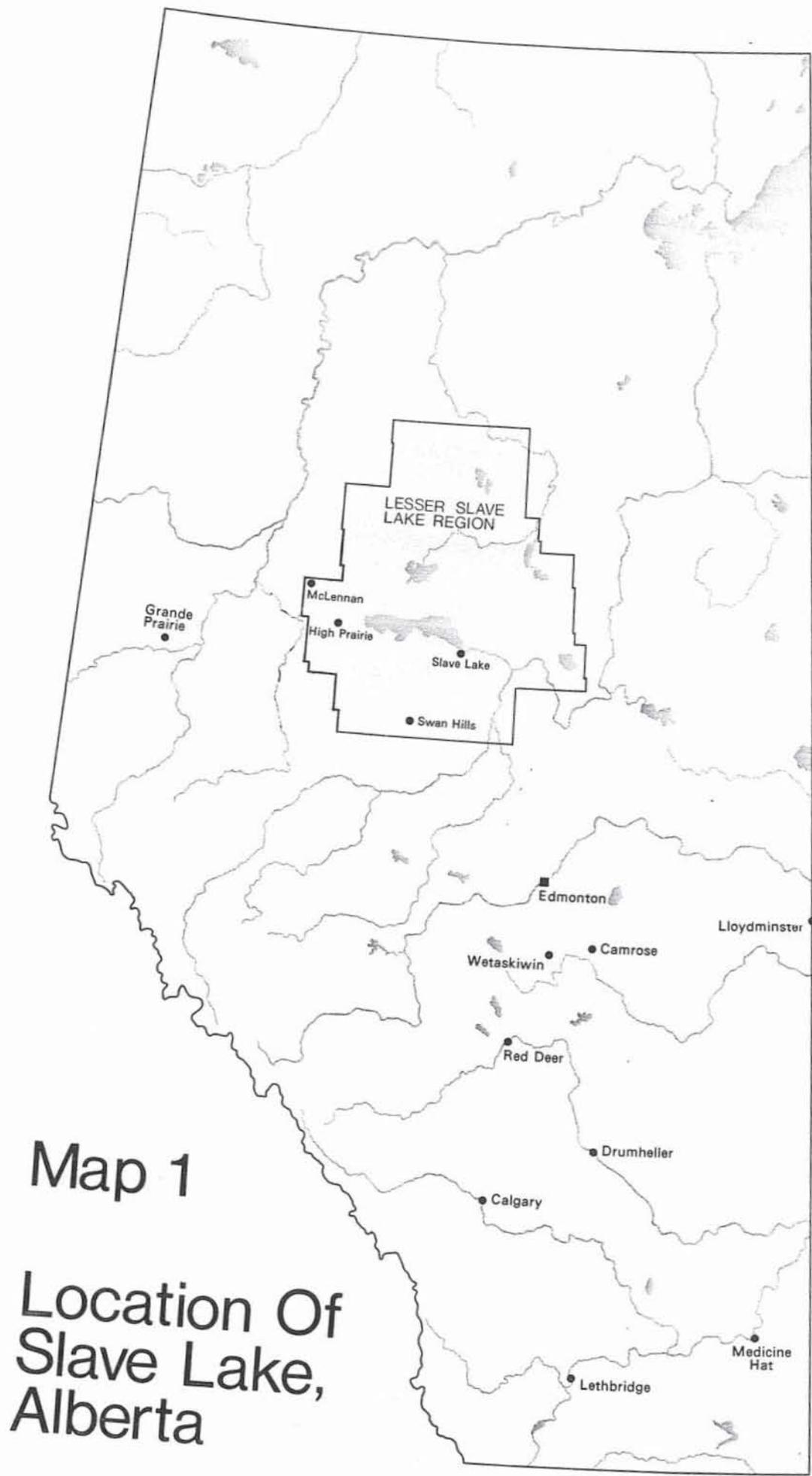
Section F examines the impact of the D.R.E.E. Program on Slave Lake at 1973, the time of the initiation of the planning process which is described in the remainder of the thesis.

B. REGIONAL SETTING OF SLAVE LAKE

The Town of Slave Lake is located in North Central Alberta on Highway No. 2, approximately 250 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. The town is situated on the southeast shore of Lesser Slave Lake at the foot of the Swan Hills, in the midst of the Slave Lake Forest. Its geographical location is: latitude 55⁰, 21 minutes north and longitude 114⁰, 59 minutes west.

Slave Lake serves as a regional centre for a large area in Northern Alberta referred to as the Lesser Slave Lake Region (see Map 1 - "Location of Slave Lake, Alberta"). This Region which covers approximately 52,000 square kilometres contains four incorporated towns: Slave Lake, High Prairie, Swan Hills and McLennan; one incorporated village: Kinuso; and approximately 22 hamlets and settlements with a population of more than 100. There are also two Metis colonies (established in 1939) and sixteen Indian reserves (established in 1899) located in the Region (see Map 2 - "Lesser Slave Lake Region").

The Region has an estimated population of 14,000 to 16,000 people, almost half of whom are Metis or Indian descent. The major concentration of population occurs within a corridor running along the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake. At either end



Map 1

Location Of
Slave Lake,
Alberta

of this corridor are the two focal points of the Region, Slave Lake and High Prairie. The spheres of influence of these two towns as administrative and trading centres extend throughout the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

The settlement pattern of the Region does not resemble any of the more traditional, well defined patterns found in most other areas in Alberta. Due to the lack of a well-developed transportation network, the settlements in the northern part of the Region are isolated and relatively independent of one another.

The western part of the Region, centred on High Prairie, has a relatively dense and evenly distributed population. Agriculture provides a fairly stable economic base for this area, with the major grain delivery point being High Prairie. The eastern part of the Region is dominated by a single centre, Slave Lake, which serves a northern trade area with a smaller, unevenly distributed population. While High Prairie has maintained a moderate level of growth over the years, Slave Lake has emerged only recently as an important regional northern centre due to an unusually rapid growth rate since the mid-1960's, caused by extensive development in the Region's petroleum and forestry industries.

C. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SLAVE LAKE AND THE REGION
PRIOR TO THE D.R.E.E. PROGRAM

1. Historical Perspective of Slave Lake: 1802 - 1962

This section presents a brief historical review of Slave Lake's development, focussing on some of the highlights of the settlement's history, as it evolved from a fur trading post in the early 1800's to a small village in the early 1960's.

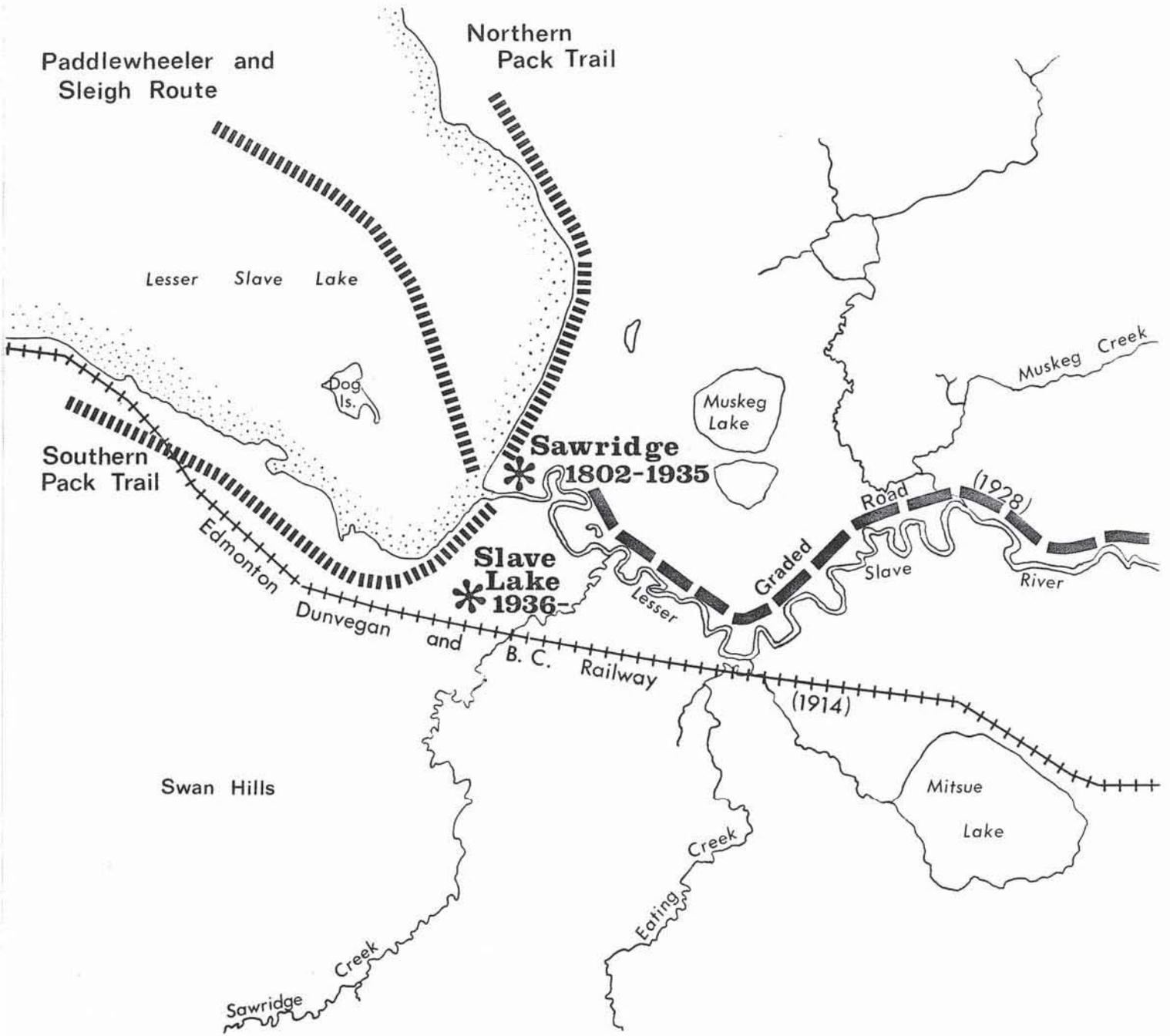
The North Central Alberta Region around Lesser Slave Lake was originally the territory of the Beaver Indians who were later deposed and moved westward by the Cree Indians. The first white

man to pass through the area was David Thompson, exploring on behalf of the North West Company. He reached the eastern shore of Lesser Slave Lake in 1798 and by 1802 a permanent trading post was established on the Lesser Slave River named "East Lesser Slave Lake House". The hamlet which grew up around the trading post was called the Sawridge Settlement, named after the saw-tooth shaped dunes along the eastern shore of the lake. In the years that followed, the area became a most productive fur trade area for the Hudson's Bay Company.

In the late 1890's, during the Klondike Gold Rush, the settlement temporarily gained in importance, serving as a way-station on both an overland and water route connecting up to the Klondike Trail, as indicated on Map 3 - "Historical Development - Town of Slave Lake". Then, in the early 1900's there was a great influx of agricultural settlers who were bound for the Peace River Country. Sawridge again prospered temporarily as a transportation centre for the settlers, while retaining its function as a trading depot for the trappers and traders of the region. By this time Sawridge had developed to the point where it had a trading post, hotel, general store, R.C.M.P. barracks, pool hall, telegraph office and a major docking facility.

The settlement of Sawridge (which was renamed Slave Lake in 1923) maintained a relatively stable population of approximately 200 people through the 1920's and 1930's. During this period, minor developments of commercial fishing, mink ranching and timber harvesting occurred in the region, particularly in those settlements along the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake.

The year 1935 was a critical one for Slave Lake because the Lesser Slave River flooded out the community causing extensive damage to the community buildings and residences. Slave Lake had always been subject to minor floodings and wet springs, so when this major flood hit, the decision was made to relocate the entire community to the site of the railway station, one mile to the south.



Map 3

Historical Development - Town of Slave Lake

Throughout the 1940's and 1950's there was little change in Slave Lake as it grew from 300 to 450 people over the 20 year period. Nevertheless, steady growth did occur and Slave Lake was incorporated as a village in 1961 with a population of 498.

2. Petroleum Resource Development: 1963 to 1970 and Beyond

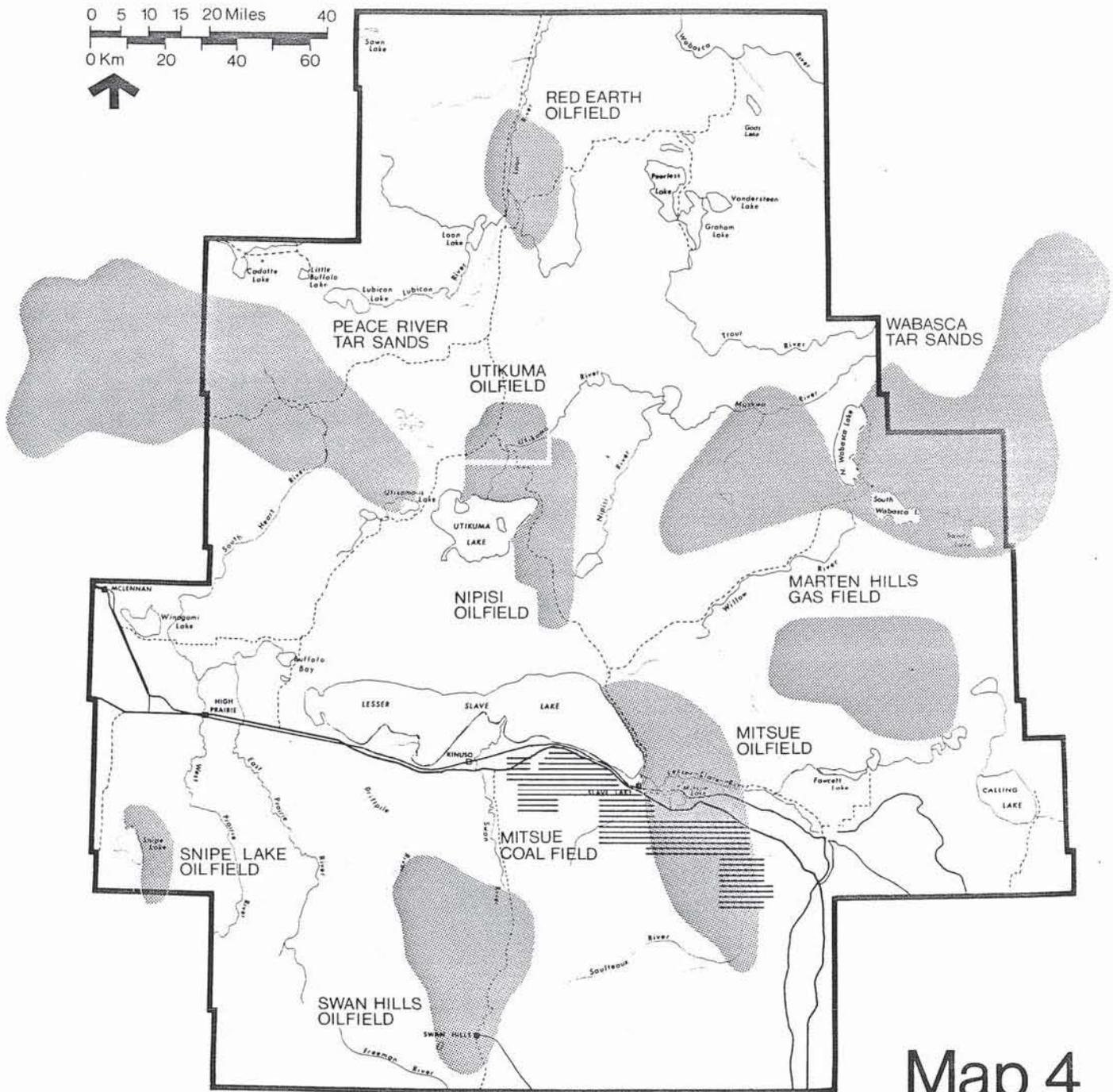
This section describes Slave Lake's first period of "Boom Town" growth which took place in the 1960's. The immediate effects of the petroleum resource development which impacted on Slave Lake will be presented, followed by a discussion of the long-term implications of this industrial activity.

i) Boom Town Growth: 1963 - 1970.

It was the discovery of oil in the region in 1963 that precipitated the first phase of rapid growth in Slave Lake. Utikuma oilfield was discovered in 1963, Mitsue oilfield in 1964, and Nipisi oilfield in 1965 (see Map 4 - "Petroleum Resource Development - Lesser Slave Lake Region"). All three oilfields began production in those same years, and Slave Lake became the major supply centre and dormitory community for this new industrial activity.

By 1964 Slave Lake had achieved town status. The population rose from 498 to 1,716 between census periods 1961 and 1966, representing a 267% increase and fastest growth rate in the Province over this five-year time span. Between the years 1966 to 1971, Slave Lake's population increased by 19.58%. These growth rates can be compared to a 9.8% increase in the Provincial population between 1961 and 1966, and a 10.1% increase between 1966 and 1971.

This rapid town growth caused a severe strain on the town's finances as the demand for residential, commercial, transportation and community services far outstripped the town's ability



Map 4

Petroleum Resource Development - Lesser Slave Lake Region

to pay. During this period, the town's character changed considerably, from a relatively stable transportation service centre to a booming resource town, as 31 new businesses were opened in town.

ii) Long-Term Implications of the Petroleum Resource Development.

At present, petroleum resource exploitation in the Lesser Slave Lake Region is concentrated in the major oil and gas fields of Utikuma Lake, Nipisi, Marten Hills, Red Earth, Mitsue, Swan Hills, Snipe Lake and Sturgeon Lake. These fields contain nearly 25% of Alberta's remaining recoverable reserves of conventional crude oil.

The exploration and construction activities related to these oilfields caused the large influx into the region in 1960's. However, these fields reached peak production in the early 1970's and are dependent upon a small core of operating and service workers. With most of the servicing companies operating out of Slave Lake, these fields will continue to provide a certain degree of economic stability for the Town over the long term.

In the mid-1970's these oilfields became the focus of increased exploration activity as a number of major oil companies increased their budgets for exploration. In addition to this increased activity there is serious consideration being given to the development of the two major Tar Sands areas north of Slave Lake; the Wabasca Tar Sands, and the Peace River Tar Sands. The major oil companies which possess the development rights for these areas are presently studying the viability of exploiting these reserves, which amount for approximately 6% of the Province's recoverable reserves¹. Feasibility studies carried out in the mid - 1970's projected that exploitation of these Tar Sands could possibly be initiated in the mid-1980's.

If present trends continue, Slave Lake will serve an important role as a service centre for these northern oilfields and over the long term will experience slow but steady growth as a result of this industrial activity.

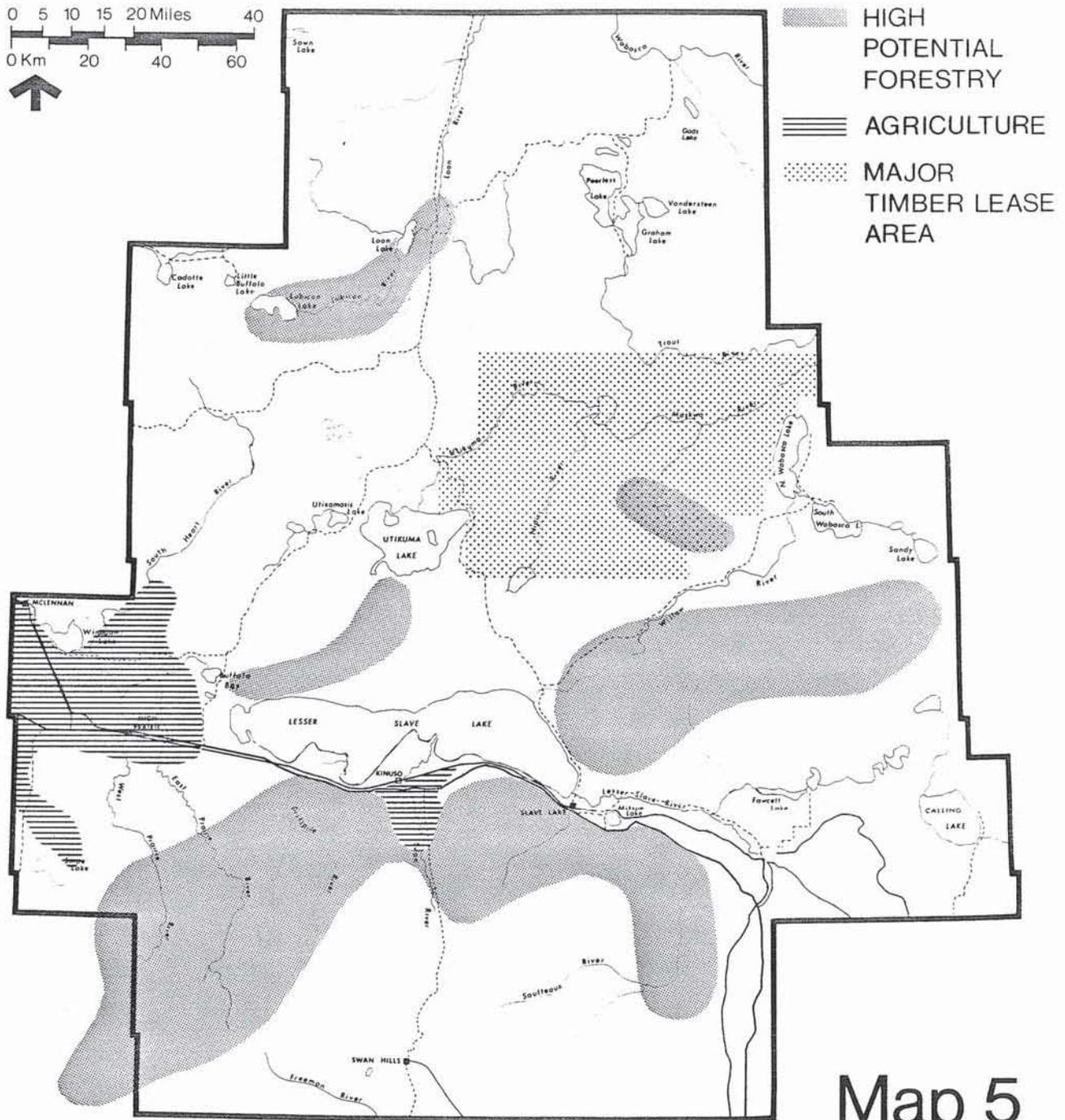
3. Socio-Economic Conditions in the Lesser Slave Lake Region at 1970

This section provides a brief overview of the social and economic conditions which led to the designation of the Lesser Slave Lake Region as a Special Area in 1970.

The population growth which has occurred in Slave Lake since 1970 is primarily a result of expansion in the Region's forestry industry. Prior to the 1960's, the forestry industry consisted of a few saw mills located in the remote areas north of Slave Lake. The industry provided mainly seasonal employment and often relied on local farmers or fishermen for labour. The industry also provided employment for the native population living in the isolated northern communities.

In the 1960's, major sawmills were located at High Prairie, Enilda, Wabasca, Slave Lake, and in Swan Hills. The Lesser Slave Lake Forest which covers most of the Lesser Slave Lake Region contains the highest deciduous and second highest coniferous timber inventory volumes of all the Provincial Forest divisions in Alberta: 37% of the land is classed as productive forest land and a further 18% as potentially productive. Overall, the forest industry in the Region is highly productive, producing over 15% of Alberta's coniferous harvest (See Map 5 - "Forestry Resource Potential - Lesser Slave Lake Region").

In the 1970's the industry was concentrated in the more productive area south of Lesser Slave Lake and in the Pelican Mountains immediately to the east of the Lake, while logging operations were expanding into the more northerly portion of the Region².



SOURCE: Primary data, Lesser Slave Lake Regional Plan:
The Rural Land Use Study, 1975.

Forestry Resource Potential- Lesser Slave Lake Region

Despite the upsurge in the region's oil industry in the 1960's and the productive capacity in the region's forestry industry, the local economy of the hinterland in the latter 1960's was poor. The traditional activities of fishing, hunting, trapping, mink ranching and farming had been declining for a number of years and were clearly incapable of sustaining the area's rapidly growing population. In fact, in the 1960's the Lesser Slave Lake Region was the most depressed region in Alberta with:

- the highest levels of unemployment in the Province;
- the highest incidence of welfare in the Province;
- the lowest per capita income level in the Province; and
- the highest dependence on seasonal employment.³

In summary, while the Town of Slave Lake was experiencing rapid population growth and relative prosperity in the 1960's, the rest of the Region was stagnating, as the overall economic base of the Region continued to decline.

4. A Regional Development Program Ten Years in the Making

The designation of the Lesser Slave Lake Area as a Special Area was actually the result of a wide-spread grass roots movement which began in the Region in the early 1960's. In April 1964, the Alberta Government in an attempt to respond to the glaring social and economic problems of the region, presented a policy paper to the Provincial Legislature, introducing a "Community Development" Program which would apply to all disadvantaged areas in the Province.

The first community development office to be established under this Community Development Program was located at Slave lake in August, 1964. A few months later, a second office was set up in Wabasca, a Metis settlement, 130 kilometres north of Slave Lake.

These community development offices were not the final answer to the Region's problems, however, and in the summer of 1965 the Alberta Government experienced its first protest march on the Legislative Buildings, as the native people from Wabasca and several isolated northern settlements banded together in protest. Over the next few years there was continued social unrest in the Lesser Slave Lake Region as various community groups joined together to demand change.

In July, 1968, a meeting of 125 people from 20 communities was held and the Lesser Slave Lake Development Association was formed. A delegation of 26 people was selected from the Association to meet with the Provincial Government to discuss solutions to the area's problems. Two weeks following their discussion with the Provincial Government, an investigating committee of cabinet ministers and government officials visited the area.

As a result of this field trip and continued negotiations, the Provincial Government, in September 1968, presented a policy paper which outlined their proposal for the establishment of a comprehensive regional development program in the Lesser Slave Lake Region. They recommended that:

1. incentive grants be provided to primary and secondary industry to encourage industry to locate in the Region;
2. financial assistance be provided to key centres in the Region to make them more attractive for future industrial and population growth;
3. government services be co-ordinated on a regional basis from within the Region;

4. social and educational programming in the Region be expanded;
5. communication throughout the Region be improved.

In initiating the Program, the Provincial Government appointed a Task Force of six people who were to work with representatives from various Departments of Government to define the means whereby each Department could facilitate the objectives of the Program. Throughout the spring and summer of 1969, the community associations of every community in the area were active in voicing their needs and concerns to the Task Force.

The Task Force examined other regional programs in Canada and found that the Manitoba "Interlake Program" had many similarities to the proposals being prepared for the Lesser Slave Lake Region. The Program in Manitoba was a joint Federal-Provincial economic development program which was being funded through the Federal Government's Fund for Rural Economic Development (F.R.E.D.) Program. In 1969, however, there was a reorganization of Federal Government Departments, wherein F.R.E.D. was dissolved and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (D.R.E.E.) was created. A study of the D.R.E.E. mandate revealed that the "Special Area" concept appeared to be tailor-made for the development proposals which the Task Force was in the process of defining.⁴

In October 1969, the Provincial Government presented the Task Force proposals to the Federal Government in the hope of obtaining Special Area status for the Lesser Slave Lake Region. Negotiations carried on for several months, and on May 13, 1970, the Provincial Government and the Federal Government, through D.R.E.E., signed the "Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Program" Agreement.

The objectives, the growth concept, a summary of the results and the impact of the D.R.E.E. Program are described in the following sections.

D. THE OBJECTIVES AND GROWTH CONCEPT OF THE D.R.E.E. PROGRAM

1. Objectives of the D.R.E.E. Program

The D.R.E.E. Program which was established in May 1970, was the result of a ten-year process of mobilization and education within the Region. The major thrust of this regional development program which was scheduled to last for five years, was to be the creation of up to 1,000 new jobs in the region's forestry sector.

With the overall objective of the D.R.E.E. Program being "to facilitate long-term economic expansion and social adjustment", the Federal Government was to make incentive grants available to industries to encourage them to locate in this region.

At the onset of the D.R.E.E Program the senior governments established the following objectives⁵:

1. to create long term employment for established area residents;
2. to assist local people in gaining access to the employment opportunities created;
3. to provide assistance for the development of High Prairie and Slave Lake as the major growth centres in the core area;
4. to diversify the economic bases of these centres in order to minimize the effects of cyclical disturbances and structural change;
5. to encourage the development of major industries in Grande Prairie and the Whitecourt area to provide additional sources of employment for people within the core area.

The Program provided for three types of development programming designed to meet the objectives set out above⁶:

1. Incentive Grants for Industry: The Federal Government was to make funding available to industries to encourage them to locate in the Lesser Slave Lake Region through provisions of the Regional Development Incentives Act (1969), which is described as "An Act to Provide Incentives for the development of Productive Employment Opportunities in Regions in Canada Determined to Require Special Measures to Facilitate Economic Expansion and Social Adjustment".⁷
 2. Social Programming: The social programming was to be directed primarily towards the native peoples in the hinterland of the Region. The Programs were to include basic industrial training, educational upgrading, advanced education, social counselling, advisory and information services and mobility grants.
 3. Regional and Municipal Infrastructure: Financial assistance was to be provided by the senior governments for building up the Region's roads, providing municipal services and roads for industrial park development, and for constructing educational and vocational training facilities in the Region. In addition, funds were to be made available for the upgrading and expansion of utilities and services in the key municipal centres in the Region.
2. Growth Concept of the D.R.E.E. Program

It was recognized at the outset that the government's intervention in the Region was intended to "...promote and to a degree concentrate economic activity in industrial growth centres in an attempt to accelerate area-wide economic development".⁸ While the social problems were heavily concentrated in the hinterland, the social programming was to be set up to allow the disadvantaged people of the isolated settlements to eventually move to Slave Lake or High Prairie to take up gainful employment. In a

press release circulated on May 13, 1970, the Federal Government stated that they expected the Town of Slave Lake to more than double in size during the five year time span of the Program:

"The (Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Program) agreement, therefore, focusses on the provision of needed industrial and community services and manpower training facilities in the Town of Slave Lake, whose population is expected to rise from its present level of 2,000 to 5,000 by 1975".

It should be noted that the original growth concept which was adopted for the Special Area did not develop as planned. Although High Prairie and Slave Lake were the two growth centres designated at the outset, only Slave Lake in fact received induced growth. Slave Lake became the primary regional growth centre for three main reasons:

1. Location: Slave Lake was already an established service centre for those depressed settlements in the core area to the north. The Town is situated at the junction of the two major highways serving the Region, Highway No. 2 (east-west) and Highway No. 967 (north-south). As Slave Lake had a major regional airport from which the Forestry Service and a number of other government departments conducted their business, the Town was indeed an important centre to the settlements to the North.

Slave Lake was the main shopping and service centre for the native people living in the hinterland, and most of them had either relatives or friends living in the Town. Because of these social ties to Slave Lake, the Town was a natural migration point for these people, if and when they were ready to make the transition into the urban environment. The fact that there was a large proportion of native people living in Slave Lake (approximately 50% of the population, and the highest proportion of any town in Alberta) was a positive factor for

the regional development program which was geared towards providing employment for native people. A related but more intangible factor which favored Slave Lake as a centre for attracting the native people from the hinterland was that the native population was accepted into the mainstream of the town's social and economic life, a situation which was unfortunately not the case for most other towns in Alberta.

2. Industrial park development: Mitsue Lake Industrial Park, seven miles east of Town was already in the development stages in 1970. The industrial park was well situated in that it was within close commuting distance of Slave Lake, was served by the Northern Alberta Railway and was adjacent to Mitsue Lake, giving it a readily available water supply. In the late 1960's, a gas plant had located there, on one of the eleven industrial parcels. The major regional airport at Slave Lake also contributed to making this industrial park an attractive location for future development.
3. Growth momentum: Slave Lake had recently taken on the role as a growth centre for the oil and gas boom of the mid-1960's. As a result of this recent growth the local business and government leaders had developed quite an active stance in promoting their town as a growth centre for the Region. At the same time, the townspeople had adopted a progressive attitude towards accepting the changes which accompanied the growth. In a general sense, the Town was geared up and ready to accept the growth anticipated through the D.R.E.E. Program.

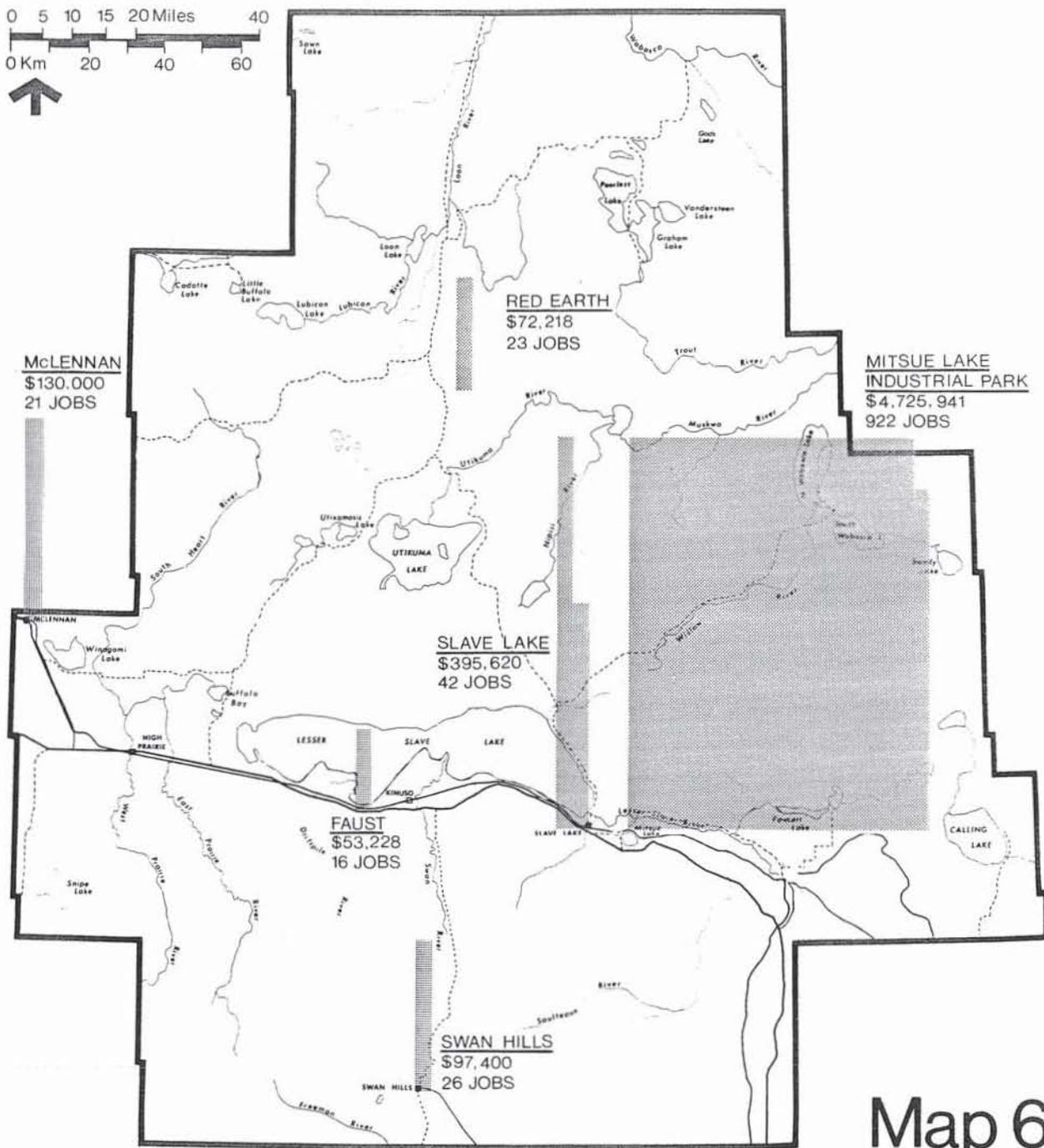
E. RESULTS OF THE D.R.E.E. PROGRAM: 1970 - 1975

This section will provide a general overview of the implications of the five-year regional development program on the Region and will provide the background to the next section which will focus on the impact of the industrialization process on the Town of Slave Lake.

1. Job Creation Through the D.R.E.E. Program: 1970 - 1975

Between 1970 and 1975 there were 1,238 new direct jobs created through the D.R.E.E. Program, with 452 jobs occurring at Grande Prairie (as a result of a temporary extension of the Special Area boundaries in 1971) and 786 jobs occurring in the core area of the Lesser Slave Lake Region. In addition to the 786 direct in-plant jobs, 230 associated logging jobs were created in the hinterland of the Region. While a number of the jobs have been lost since 1975 due to factories closing down temporarily or permanently, the maximum job creation factor of 1,016 jobs (786 plus 230 jobs) will be used in this thesis in order to present a picture of the full impact which the Town of Slave Lake felt at the greatest extent of the Program.

A sum total of \$5,474,407 in incentive grants was committed to various wood products industries at Slave Lake, Mitsue Lake Industrial Park, Swan Hills, Red Earth, Faust, and McLennan as indicated in Table 1 - "Industry Induced Under the D.R.E.E. Incentives Program 1970-75". The major proportion of the incentive grant funding (\$5,121,561) was awarded to industries located at Slave Lake and Mitsue for reasons mentioned in the preceeding section. Map 6, "Incentive Grant Funding - Job Creation 1970 - 1975" illustrates graphically the impact of the incentive grant funding on the Town of Slave Lake.



Incentive Grant Funding/ Job Creation: 1970-75

TABLE 1

INDUSTRY INDUCED UNDER THE D.R.E.E. INCENTIVES PROGRAM 1970-75

Firm ¹⁰	Type of Activity	Location	Capital Investment	Incentive Grant
North American Stud Co.	Studmill	Mitsue Lake Industrial Park	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 1,200,000
Vanderwell Contractors	Sawmill/ Planer Mill	Mitsue Lake Industrial Park	132,241	83,448
Zeidler Plywood Co.	Veneers/Stud and Chip Plant	Mitsue Lake Industrial Park	2,506,932	853,330
Arcom Systems Ltd.	Modular Housing Plant	Mitsue Lake Industrial Park	808,315	545,663
Alberta Aspen Board	Wafer Board Plant	Mitsue Lake Industrial Park	5,834,000	2,043,500
SUB TOTAL (Mitsue Lake Industrial Park Industries)			\$12,181,488	\$ 4,725,941
Sawridge Enterprises Ltd.	Motel/ Restaurant	Slave Lake	902,250	348,063
Noral Manufacturing Ltd.	Door Manufacturing	Slave Lake	103,714	47,557
SUB TOTAL (Slave Lake Industries)			\$ 1,005,964	\$ 395,620
Northwest Fishing Co-op	Fish Processing Plant	Faust	88,187	53,228
Vanderwell Contractors	Sawmill	Red Earth	76,088	72,218
Swan Valley Sawmills	Sawmill	Swan Hills	324,000	97,400
Medsun Peatmoss	Peatmoss	McLennen	300,000	130,000
SUB TOTAL (Regional Industries)			\$ 788,275	\$ 352,346
TOTAL			\$13,975,727	\$ 5,474,407

SOURCE: D.R.E.E., Regional Office, Edmonton, 1976.

The new forest-based industries at Slave Lake and Mitsue Lake produced wafer board, veneers, studs, dimension lumber and certain secondary products such as doors and modular housing components. These firms, when taken together, formed a unique, diversified industrial concentration of small Albertan owned enterprises. Rounding out the industrial concentration at Mitsue was a major gas plant with a capital investment of 6 to 7 million dollars.

The industries which located in the core area received grants amounting to approximately \$7000 per job, with the breakdown being: Mitsue Lake Industrial Park, \$7,182 per job; Slave Lake, \$9,419 per job; and the other regional industries, \$4,102 per job, as indicated in Table 2 "Employment Induced Under the D.R.E.E. Incentives Program 1970-75."

2. Social Adjustment and Vocational Training Programs

One of the most significant factors associated with the D.R.E.E. Program is the success with which the native population of the Region has been integrated into the work force of the forestry industry. This success is due to the variety of social adjustment and vocational training programs which were established to enable local people from within the Region to take advantage of the newly created job opportunities. Since 1970 there has been a gradual movement of people from the isolated northern communities, particularly Wabasca and Desmarais, to Slave Lake.

The program which has been most responsible for allowing a relatively smooth transition of the native people into the "white man's society" and into jobs is the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program.¹¹ This Program, which began in 1970 is administered from Slave Lake by the staff of the Alberta Department of Manpower and Labour. While the Program originated in Slave Lake, it has been used as a model and was extended in 1976 by the Alberta government to two other northern Alberta towns, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie.

TABLE 2

EMPLOYMENT INDUCED UNDER THE D.R.E.E. INCENTIVES PROGRAM 1970-75

Firm	In Plant Employees	Associated Logging Jobs	Total Jobs Created	Grant Per Job
North American Stud	175	50	225	\$ 5333
Vanderwell Contractors	18	25	43	1940
Zeidler Plywood	65	50	115	7420
Arcom Systems	50	15	65	8395
Alberta Aspen Board	120	90	210	9730
<hr/>				
SUB TOTAL (Mitsue Lake)	428	230	658	\$ 7182
<hr/>				
Sawridge Enterprises	35		35	9944
Noral Manufacturing	7		7	6793
<hr/>				
SUB TOTAL (Slave Lake)	42		42	\$ 9419
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Northwest Fishing	16		16	3326
Vanderwell Contractors	23		23	3139
Swan Valley Sawmills	21		21	6190
Medsun Peatmoss	26		26	3746
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SUB TOTAL (Regional)	86		86	\$ 4120
<hr/>				
TOTAL	556	230	786	\$ 7042

SOURCE: D.R.E.E., Regional Office, Edmonton, 1976.

In Slave Lake there are five social counsellors who are of native origin who specialize in employment placement and family adjustment counselling. These counsellors work with families and individuals from outlying communities who have chosen to move to Slave Lake to seek employment. The Program stresses most emphatically that the choice to move into the new jobs is completely voluntary. The native counsellors have a great deal of contact with the families prior to their relocating to Slave Lake, making sure that they are prepared for the move.

At Slave Lake, the Program centres its activities around 65 "transitional housing" units owned by the Alberta Housing Corporation. The new families receive subsidized rent for the first few years, during the transition stage, after which they are encouraged to purchase the homes and become permanent residents of Slave Lake. In one of the houses which is called the "Family Life Centre" a series of lessons which focus on basic life skills and good housekeeping are carried out under the direction of the counsellors and the District Home Economist. Various resource people with expertise in such areas as alcoholism counselling, family planning, and banking participate in the program at the demonstration unit as well.

While the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program was critical to the successful transition of these native people into the new jobs created at Slave Lake and Mitsue, there were at the same time, a number of complementary programs in operation throughout the entire Region. Other programs which originated as a result of the D.R.E.E. Program were Manpower Corps and Opportunity Corps by the Alberta Department of Health and Social Development; Outreach and General Guidance, Upgrading and Training, and Productivity Upgrading by the Alberta Department of Advanced Education; and Family Opportunity Investigation and Retention by the Alberta Department of Manpower and Labour. Table 3 - "Social Program Funding Under the D.R.E.E. Agreement 1970-75", on the following page

TABLE 3

SOCIAL PROGRAM FUNDING UNDER THE D.R.E.E. AGREEMENT 1970-75

Social Program	Provincial Department	Federal Grant	Federal Loan	Agreement Total
Manpower Corps	Health & Social Development	\$ 200,000	\$	\$ 200,000
Outreach and General Guidance	Advanced Education	850,000	850,000	1,700,000
Opportunity Corps	Health & Social Development	800,000	800,000	1,600,000
Upgrading and Training	Advanced Education	300,000	300,000	600,000
Family Opportunity Investigation	Manpower and Labour	64,000	64,000	128,000
Productivity Upgrading	Advanced Education	250,000	250,000	500,000
Retention	Manpower and Labour	174,000	174,000	348,000
TOTAL		\$2,638,000	\$2,438,000	\$5,076,000

SOURCE: D.R.E.E., Regional Office, Edmonton, 1976.

outlines the funding applied by both Federal and Provincial governments towards all social programming in the Region between 1970 and 1975.

While there is now underway a gradual process of educational and vocational upgrading of the native population in the Region as a whole, the results in terms of assisting natives into jobs at Slave Lake and Mitsue has been obvious and immediate. At the termination of the D.R.E.E. Program in 1975, the employment figures for the new forestry industries at Slave Lake and Mitsue indicated that approximately 70% of the employees in those industries were from the Lesser Slave Lake Region, with the majority of the employees being of either Metis or Indian descent. The figures also indicate that over 50% of the jobs were filled by people who were previously unemployed or working only seasonally¹².

3. Regional and Municipal Infrastructure Upgrading

Through the D.R.E.E. Program, the Federal government provided a mixture of grants and loans to the provincial government to enable the upgrading of the regional and municipal infrastructure in the Special Area.

Out of an agreement total of \$5,947,000 provided for regional facility upgrading, \$4,000,000 (or approximately 2/3 of the total) was invested in the upgrading of the Northern Industrial Road, Highway No. 967. The improvement of this road between Slave Lake and Fort Vermillion has provided better access to the forest and petroleum resources of the hinterland, and eventually will provide a north-south link to the Mackenzie Highway.

Table 4, "Regional Infrastructure Funding Under the D.R.E.E. Agreement 1970-75", shows the types of projects which were funded through the Special Area Agreement, indicating those provincial departments which received the funding.

TABLE 4

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING UNDER THE D.R.E.E. AGREEMENT 1970-75

Infrastructure Project	Provincial Department	Federal Grant	Federal Loan	Agreement Total
Mitsue Lake Industrial Park	Municipal Affairs	\$ 216,000	\$ 274,000	\$ 490,000
By-Pass Road	Highways	141,000	141,000	282,000
Grouard Vocational Training Centre	Advanced Education	20,000	20,000	40,000
Wabasca Vocational Training Centre	Advanced Education	28,000	28,000	56,000
Portable Training Facilities	Advanced Education	69,000	69,000	138,000
Oppportunity Information Centre	Advanced Education	127,000	127,000	254,000
Northern Industrial Road	Highways	2,000,000	2,000,000	4,000,000
Airport Redevelopment Slave Lake	Lands & Forest	188,000	188,000	376,000
Industrial Vocational Training Centre	Advanced Education	68,000	68,000	136,000
Sandy Lake - Desmarais Road	Highways	110,000		110,000
Information Communication Equipment	Advanced Education	25,000		25,000
TOTAL		\$3,012,000	\$2,915,000	\$5,947,000

SOURCE: D.R.E.E., Regional Office, Edmonton, 1976

In line with the D.R.E.E. Program's growth concept, the major proportion of the funding was applied to the Slave Lake-Mitsue Lake growth node. The inducement of industry into this area necessitated major improvements in regional roads, in the industrial park at Mitsue, and in the airport facilities of the Alberta Department of Lands and Forests at Slave Lake. The remainder of the funding was used to provide facilities throughout the Region in support of the various social adjustment and vocational training programs.

By designating Slave Lake as the regional growth centre for the Special Area, the senior governments obligated the Town to provide services and facilities which would support the adjacent industrial development at Mitsue Lake Industrial Park. In order to soften the effect of this induced growth on the Town, the two senior governments agreed to apply certain funds to the improvement of town infrastructure components for a period of five years. Towards this end the Town received a total of \$978,400 (or approximately \$345 per capita¹³) in grant funding from the federal government and a total of \$557,600 (or approximately \$196 per capita) in guaranteed loans from the province (see Table 5, "Municipal Infrastructure Funding Under the D.R.E.E. Agreement: Town of Slave Lake 1970-75"). In addition to funding received by the Town directly, Slave Lake benefited from a grant of \$443,000 which was provided to the High Prairie School Division for the construction of two schools in the Town of Slave Lake.

TABLE 5

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING UNDER THE D.R.E.E. AGREEMENT¹⁴:

TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE 1970-75

INFRASTRUCTURE	FEDERAL GRANT	PROVINCIAL LOAN	MUNICIPAL LOAN
Water System	\$ 117,600.	\$ 176,400.	
Sewer System	114,000.		
Water Treatment	136,000	136,000.	
Servicing:			
Water	121,000.		
Sewer Lift Station	112,800.	75,200.	
Storm Drainage:			
Fifth Avenue	72,000.		\$ 72,000.
South Main Street	46,000.		46,000.
Slave Lake Water Intake	28,000.		28,000.
Access Fifth Avenue	102,000.	54,000.	48,000.
North West Industrial Subdivision			250,000.
Airport Access	129,000.	116,000.	13,000.
TOTAL	\$ 978,400.	\$ 557,600.	\$ 457,000.

SOURCE: D.R.E.E., Regional Office, Edmonton, 1976.



F. THE IMPACT OF THE D.R.E.E. PROGRAM ON THE TOWN OF
SLAVE LAKE AT 1973

The major impact of the D.R.E.E. Program on Slave Lake was reaching a peak during the years 1972 and 1973, at the time when the planning process, (as described in the following chapters) was initiated. In order to set the context within which this planning process occurred, this section will present an overview of the potential impact of the D.R.E.E. Program on Slave Lake, as it was viewed at the beginning of 1973. Both the growth potential and the financial/political situation of the Town as at 1973 will be discussed.

1. Growth Potential of Slave Lake at 1973

When the build-up of industrial activity was occurring at Slave Lake and Mitsue during 1971 and 1972 many government agencies became involved in programs related to the growth, and during those years various population projections were carried out by these agencies. In 1971 the assumption was that up to 1,000 basic industrial jobs could be created through the D.R.E.E. Program. Using this assumption, many of the agencies were predicting that Slave Lake would eventually grow to reach a population of 10,000.

However, by 1973, more information was available about the potential industrial development and the long term population projection was based on the possible establishment of 700 new basic industrial jobs at Slave Lake and Mitsue. Table 6 - "Timing of Industrial Activity at Slave Lake and Mitsue Lake" illustrates the point that the major impact of the industrialization program was felt during the years 1972 and 1973.

In calculating the long term effects of the industrialization program the standard demographic multipliers were used. For the sake of clarity a simplified population projection was

TABLE 6
TIMING OF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY AT
SLAVE LAKE AND MITSUE LAKE

Company	Location	Construction Started	Production Started	Total Jobs Created
North American Stud Co.	Mitsue	1970	1972	225
Vanderwell Contractors	Mitsue	1971	1972	43
Zeidler Plywood Ltd.	Mitsue	1972	1973	115
Arcom Systems Ltd.	Mitsue	1972	1973	65
Sawridge Motor Hotel	Slave Lake	1972	1972	35
Noral Manufacturing Ltd.	Slave Lake	1972	1973	7
Alberta Aspen Board Ltd.	Mitsue	1973	1975	210
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT CREATED				700

SOURCE: D.R.E.E., Regional Office, Edmonton, 1976.

prepared, leaving out detailed reference to the effects of natural increases, natural decreases, fertility ratios and female/male ratios¹⁵. Using a basis of 1.1 service sector jobs being established for every new basic industrial job created¹⁶, it was assumed that a total of 1,470 new jobs would be established in the long term at Slave Lake and Mitsue as a direct result of the Special Area Program. The calculations for this simplified population projection are presented below:

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} 700 & & + & & 700 \times 1.1 = 770 & & = & & 1470 \\ \text{basic jobs} & & & & \text{service sector jobs} & & & & \text{total new jobs} \end{array}$$

The increase in Slave Lake's total population was calculated using the standard of 3.5 people per family¹⁷. Assuming that 1470 new jobs would eventually be established the overall impact of the industrialization program on Slave Lake would be a potential 5,145 new residents. The calculation is shown below:

$$\begin{array}{rccccccc} 1470 & & \times & & 3.5 & & = & & 5145 \\ \text{new jobs} & & & & \text{average family size} & & & & \text{total new people} \end{array}$$

The population of Slave Lake at the time of the industrialization program was introduced to the Region was approximately 2,500 people. By adding the projected population figure of approximately 5000 to the basic figure 2500, the total population which was projected for Slave Lake as a result of the industrialization program was 7500 people. While the population projection for Slave Lake was 7500 people for the long term, it was recognized that this projection was conditional upon a number of major outside influences, namely:

- decisions of industries to expand, cutback, and so on.

- external market forces such as the cyclical nature of the lumber market.
- decisions by governments to encourage or discourage decentralization of industry to locations other than the major centres of Edmonton and Calgary.

In general, the expected pattern of growth over the 5 to 10 year period following the industrialization program was expected to be characterized by:

- continued gradual expansion and fluctuation in the industrial sector; and
- the growth and eventual stabilization of the supportive service section.

It was recognized that the service sector always lagged behind the development of the industrial base, a pattern which is prevalent in most northern resource town situations. This lag is due mainly to the fact that most small businessmen and their financial backers are particularly cautious in situations of accelerated growth, where market forces are so uncertain. However, it was expected that over the long term the service sector would eventually take hold as the industrial activity stabilized and as there was more certainty in the regional industrial base and the town's future.

Despite the uncertainties mentioned above, most agencies associated with the D.R.E.E. Program felt by 1973 that for planning purposes it would be expedient to base planning proposals on the expectation that Slave Lake could be impacted by an additional population of 5,000 people as a result of the Program. While shut-downs in the industries in the future could reduce the impact on the Town, it was just as reasonable to assume that additional industries could come on stream causing a more severe impact than predicted at 1973.

2. Slave Lake's Financial Situation at 1973

In order to examine what an additional 5,000 people could mean for Slave Lake's future, it was necessary to review the Town's historical growth pattern, including the Town's most recent rapid growth phases which began with the oil and gas boom of the 1960's. A comparative analysis was made of Slave Lake and 22 similar sized Alberta communities in order to study the dynamics of rapid growth in terms of a community's ability to cope financially with growth. Comparisons were drawn between Slave Lake and 18 towns in Alberta with populations within the range of 3000 to 6000 people; and 4 new towns in Alberta with populations within the range of 3000 to 6000 people.

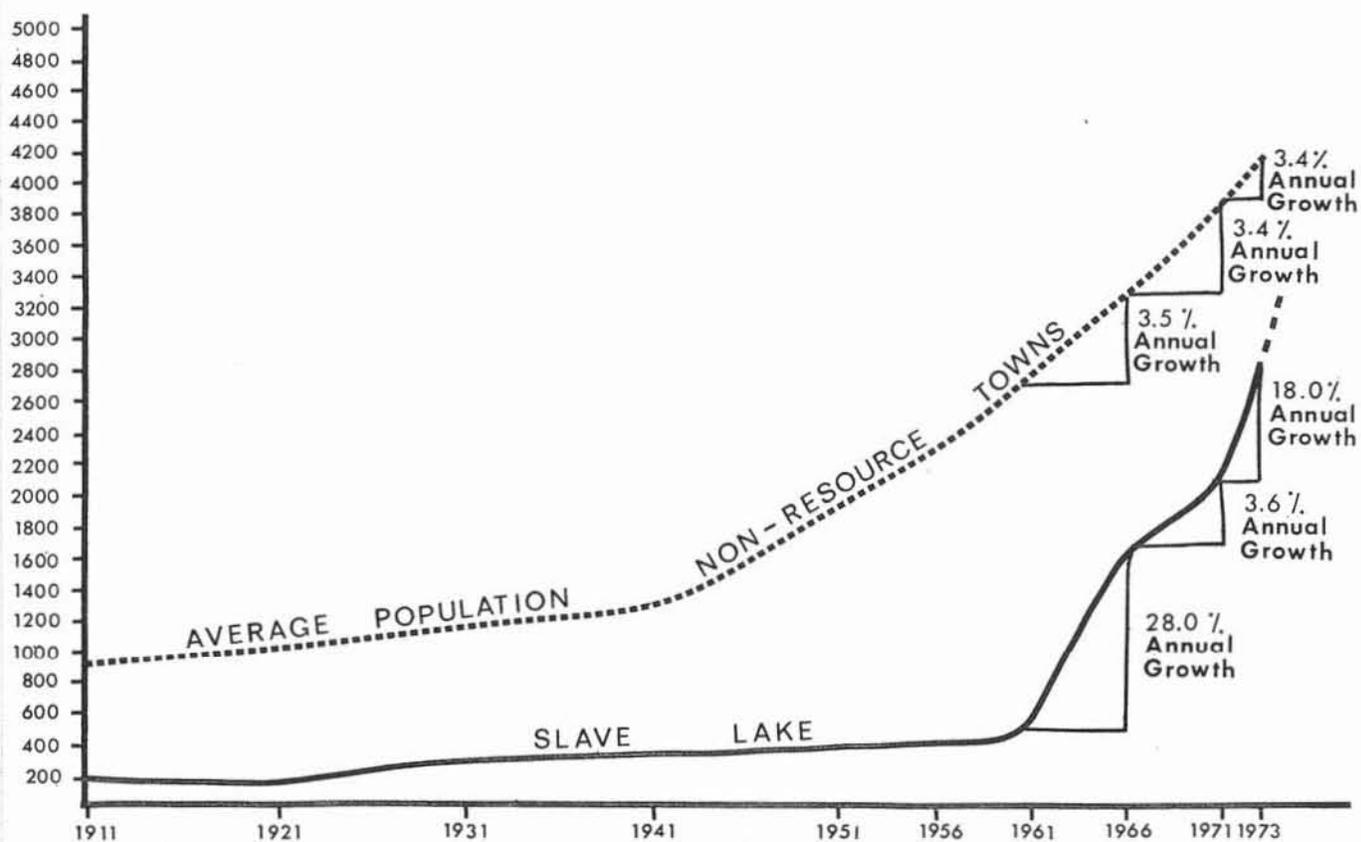
i) Non-Resource Towns Compared to Slave Lake

Of the 22 towns in Alberta with populations within the range of 3000 to 6000 people, the 18 towns listed below could be categorized as non-resource towns. Their 1973 populations are shown in brackets¹⁸:

Brooks (4,177), Claresholm (3,200), Drumheller (5,888),
 Edson (4,095), Lacombe (3,436), Leduc (5,271), Olds (3,466),
 Peace River (5,071), Pincher Creek (3,421), Ponoka (4,414),
 Rocky Mountain House, (3,141), Spruce Grove (4,256),
 Stettler (4,168), Saint Paul (4,187), Taber (4,765),
 Vegreville (3,867), Wainwright (3,872), Westlock (3,524).

Since it would be too unwieldy to superimpose 18 growth patterns onto a graph, the average population for all 18 towns are calculated and shown on Graph 1 - "Growth Patterns - Non-Resource Towns/Slave Lake" as one consolidated growth curve.

GROWTH PATTERNS — NON-RESOURCE TOWNS / SLAVE LAKE



Graph 1

In looking at Graph 1 the fundamental difference in growth patterns between resource and non-resource towns can be seen. The comparison shows that the average population of the non-resource towns at 1961 was approximately 2500 people whereas Slave Lake had only 498 people at the time. For over 20 to 30 years therefore, the non-resource towns had a population base (and a tax base) of from 1000 to 2500 people while Slave Lake had a population base of 200 to 500 people for that same time period.¹⁹

Graph 1 and Table 7 - "Slave Lake Town Growth: 1961-1973" indicate that Slave Lake was a small village until 1961 when its growth accelerated to the point where it had grown to become a moderate sized town of 3,240 people within a 12 year time span. During this 12 years, Slave Lake experienced two consecutive and dramatic growth phases related to the development of the Region's petroleum and forestry resources.

TABLE 7

SLAVE LAKE TOWN GROWTH: 1961 - 1973

YEARS	BASE POPULATION	NEW POPULATION	PERCENTAGE INCREASE FOR TIME PERIOD	AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH ²⁰
1961-66	498	1,716	244.58%	28.0%
1966-71	1,716	2,052	19.58%	3.6%
1971-73	2,052	3,240	57.90%	18.0%

Between the years 1961 to 1966, 1966 to 1971, and 1971 to 1973, the Town grew at average annual rates of 28%, 3.6%, and 18% respectively. The non-resource towns on the other hand grew at average annual rates of 3.5%, 3.4%, and 3.4% over the same time periods and were able to slowly build up their infrastructure without putting undue strain on their financial resources. While these slow growth towns were able to develop over an extended period of several decades, Slave Lake was required to provide similar if not better facilities within a few short years. Experience has shown that under normal circumstances no town can withstand annual growth rates of 28% for five years followed by annual growth rates of 18% for another four years and hope to provide a high quality of environment.

ii) New Towns Compared to Slave Lake

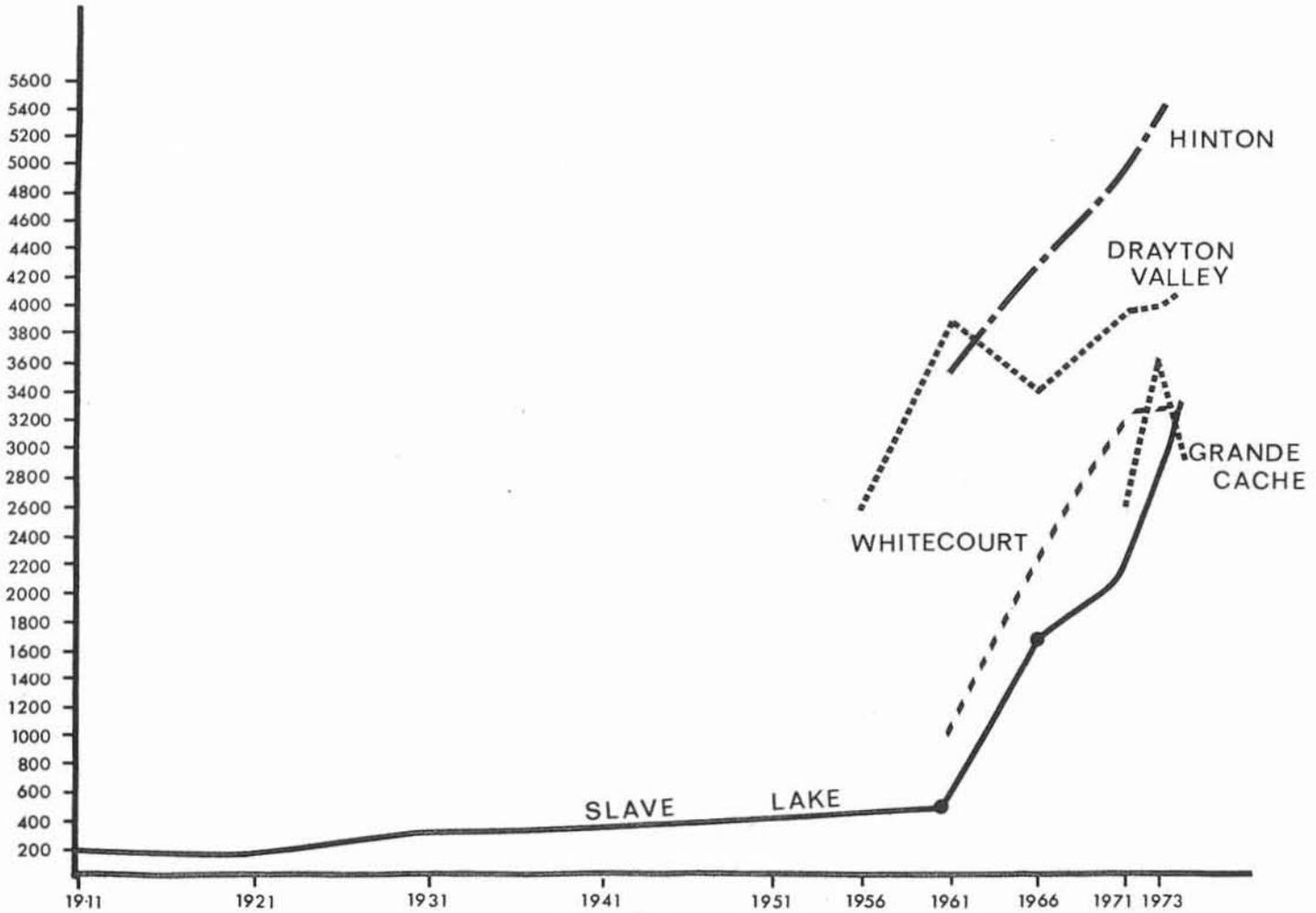
Of the 22 towns in Alberta with 1973 populations within the range of 3000 to 6000 people, there are 4 New Towns. The towns in this rapid growth category are listed below with their 1973 population shown in brackets²¹:

Drayton Valley (3,954), Grande Cache (3,580),
Hinton (5,326), Whitecourt (3,230).

Of these four New Towns, three had subsequently reverted to full town status, with Grande Cache (which became a New Town in 1966) being the only community of the four which was still being administered under The New Towns Act (1969)²². Other Alberta New Towns at 1973 were Fort McMurray, High Level, Rainbow Lake, and Fox Creek.

Graph 2 - "Growth Patterns - New Towns/Slave Lake" indicates the similarity in the growth patterns between Slave Lake and those New Towns of similar population size at 1973. It was assumed at the time that Slave Lake did not require New Town status because it would be receiving financial assistance through the

GROWTH PATTERNS — NEW TOWNS / SLAVE LAKE



Graph 2

D.R.E.E. Program and would therefore be able to cope with the growth for the five year duration of the Program.

3. An Overview of the Impact on Slave Lake at 1973

The comparative analysis between Slave Lake and other Albertan towns of similar size was one way of illustrating the fact that it is the rate of growth which is the main determinant of whether or not a town can maintain a stable financial position. In a further analysis of these Albertan communities carried out during the planning process in 1973 it was revealed that Slave Lake was, at 3,000 people, one of the few towns in Alberta without a library, a swimming pool, and a proper town meeting place. Other needs identified were day-care facilities, a health care clinic, and a greater range of shopping facilities. In addition to being deficient in the area of recreational, cultural, health and commercial facilities, Slave Lake had to meet other basic needs of an expanding community such as road improvements, land acquisition for roads, improvements to its water and sewer systems, and other related planning and engineering projects.

The potential impact of further growth through the D.R.E.E. Program meant that Slave Lake would have great difficulty in developing a strong enough financial base upon which to build adequate community facilities and infrastructure. It was expected that further growth would create considerable pressure on the Town Council to provide a wide range of community facilities and infrastructure, and that it would accelerate the demand for land, housing and a variety of goods and services. Where a town is forced to cope with those rapid growth physical development pressures it usually requires significant assistance from senior levels of government throughout the growth period.

Although Slave Lake would normally qualify for financial and administrative assistance under The New Towns Act (1969), it was assumed that it was not necessary to invoke the provisions of this Act during the time which the Town was to receive assistance through the D.R.E.E. Program.

While the summary of the results of the D.R.E.E. Program described in Section E of this chapter represent the overall results covering the period 1970-75, the funding for regional and municipal infrastructure and the federal portion of the funding for the social adjustment and vocational training programming was essentially curtailed in 1973 due to the fact that the provincial and federal governments did not sign any further agreements after 1972 which would provide for continued financial assistance²³.

The initial D.R.E.E. (Lesser Slave Lake Special Area) Agreement signed in 1970 committed the two senior governments to reviewing the financial picture of the towns and agencies involved in the Program on a yearly basis and to creating an updated D.R.E.E. Agreement annually. This did not occur after 1972 however, due primarily to the fact that the 1972 provincial election brought a new provincial party, the Progressive Conservatives, to power and the new government was committed to re-evaluating the D.R.E.E. Program in the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

Unfortunately, as described earlier, the impact of the D.R.E.E. Program was just peaking in 1973 and with a new government taking over the reins of power, the uncertainty over whether or not the new government would support the program amounted to a very critical political impact with which the Town would have to deal in 1973²⁴.

While Slave Lake had received \$1.5 million in grants and loans from the senior governments for town infrastructure projects up to the end of 1972, the Town had to appropriate \$4 million of its own revenues to finance new infrastructure projects between

1970 and 1973. This had left Slave Lake with a per capita debt of \$621 per capita, with the third highest per capita debt in the province in 1972 (for communities over 2,000 population) after Grande Cache and Edmonton. Given the projected population level of 7,500 people over the short to medium range, and the fact that the new provincial partner involved in the D.R.E.E. Agreement was to review its commitment to the D.R.E.E. Program, the Town was placed in a difficult situation at 1973.

The Town found itself in a position where it really had little control over its own destiny, a situation which was compounded by the fact that the majority of the industry which came on stream through the D.R.E.E. Program was located outside of the Town's taxation jurisdiction. The initial decision to locate the industry 7 miles away from the Town, at Mitsue Lake Industrial Park, was based on sound environmental principles. However, this locational decision meant that the Town received only an indirect tax transfer on a yearly basis according to a formula created by the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs. This tax transfer was subject to change from year to year and thus did not provide the Town with a sound basis from which to make long term financial plans. In any case, with the annual tax transfer being in the range of \$70,000 at 1973 (or roughly \$22 per capita), it seemed a small amount in comparison to the \$621 per capita debt of the Town.

Another factor which affected the financial situation at Slave Lake was the fact that the industries at Mitsue Lake were smaller Albertan based companies which lacked the "traditional capital" required to contribute significantly towards housing or recreational and social facilities. Therefore, in contrast to other northern resource towns in Alberta which had major Canadian or multi-national companies associated with them, such as the New Towns of Fort McMurray, Grande Cache, Drayton Valley and Whitecourt, the Town of Slave Lake could not rely on private financial support from its industries.

And finally, another factor which heightened the impact of industrialization on Slave Lake at 1973 is the fact that its growth was reaching a critical stage at a time when inflation in the Canadian economy had just begun to escalate. And, if there were problems in building infrastructure and community facilities in towns in the 1950's and 1960's, the inflationary trends in the construction industry in the 1970's made the situation that much worse for towns going through periods of rapid growth.

The chapters following will describe how the Town reacted to this situation in 1973 and will examine in detail the planning process which was initiated in 1973 and which carried through to the official termination of the D.R.E.E. Agreement in 1975.

G. NOTES AND REFERENCES, CHAPTER I

- 1 "Lesser Slave Lake Regional Plan Interim Report: Oil and Gas Impact Study", Research Planning Section, Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs, 1974.
- 2 The information on the forestry resource potential was compiled from data from the Timber Management Branch, Alberta Forest Service, October, 1975.
- 3 "The Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Planning Overview 1969-1975", Planning Division, Western Region, Department of Regional Economic Expansion, (Unpublished Report prepared for the D.R.E.E./ Alberta Joint Planning Committee), 1975.
- 4 "Internal Evaluation of Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Program", May 1973, p. 9.
- 5 "The Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Planning Overview 1969-1975", D.R.E.E., 1975.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Regional Development Incentives Act, Statutes of Canada, Chapter 56, 1969.
- 8 "Assessment of the Regional Development Incentives Program", Department of Regional Economic Expansion, (1973), p. 3.

- 9 News release entitled "Canada-Alberta Development Agreement", Government of Canada, May 13, 1970.
- 10 The Proctor and Gamble Pulpmill near Grande Prairie is not included in this table because this thesis is dealing primarily with the industrial development which took place in the core area of the Lesser Slave Lake Region between 1970 and 1975.
- 11 For a more thorough review of this Program, consult the report - "The Employment and Relocation Counselling Project", Mike Cardinal, Alberta Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, February 1976, 43 pages.
- 12 Statistics supplied by the Alberta Department of Manpower and Labour, Slave Lake Regional Office, October, 1975.
- 13 An average population figure of 2,840 people was used to estimate the per capita debt figure for the period 1970 to 1975.
- 14 The Town of High Prairie also received grants and loans for improvement of town infrastructure, totalling \$309,000 (\$182,000 federal grant; \$127,000 provincial loan) even though it received no growth through the D.R.E.E. Program.
- 15 For a much more detailed analysis of Slave Lake's population growth consult: "Lesser Slave Lake Regional Plan Interim Report: An Analysis of Population Growth", Research Planning Section, Provincial Planning Branch, Department of Municipal Affairs, January 1974, 68 pp.
- 16 A range of 1.5 to 2 service workers to every basic worker is a norm ratio suggested for planning purposes in Urban Land Use Planning, Chapin, Stuart, F., University of Illinois Press, Urbana U.S.A., 1965 p. 144. However, to account for the sparsely populated trading area of Slave Lake, the ratio was decreased by 40% to a 1.1 ratio.
- 17 It was assumed that the Canadian average of 3.5 persons per family applied to Slave Lake's population.
- 18 The Alberta Municipal Census data were used to calculate the 1973 intercensal populations for the 22 towns in the survey. Statistics Canada data were used to determine the populations of these towns for the period 1911 to 1971.
- 19 Another disadvantage which many northern resource towns must cope with is a depressed and/or a sparsely populated hinterland where residents have little disposable income. Most of the slow growth towns included in the comparison have strong trade areas which bring about substantial spin-off benefits to the town's tax base.

20 The formula used to calculate the average annual rate of growth is: $S=P(1+r)^n$

S = final population
 P = initial population
 r = percentage rate of growth
 n = number of years

21 The Alberta Municipal Census data were used to calculate the 1973 intercensal populations for the four towns in the survey. Statistics Canada data were used to determine the populations of these towns for the years 1956, 1961, 1966 and 1971.

22 The New Towns Act of Alberta was first enacted in 1959 to allow the provincial government to react to the pressures created by the oil and gas boom in Alberta which resulted from the discovery of oil in Leduc in 1947. The Act was established in response to three types of town growth situations: new towns springing up around the nucleus of existing hamlets; ordinary towns becoming New Towns; and New Towns being created on undeveloped virgin land. Since 1959 there had been a total of 12 communities which had at one time been New Towns.

Under New Town status a town may receive extraordinary financial and administrative assistance from the provincial government during periods of rapid town growth. To become a New Town, the council of an existing town may make application to the Provincial Planning Board which studies the application and then makes a recommendation to the Cabinet of the provincial government. The Cabinet may, by order, establish a New Town in accordance with those provisions in the Act.

23 D.R.E.E. Incentive Grants to industries continued to be awarded after 1972 however (to Alberta Aspen Board Ltd.) as these grants were provided solely by the federal government and were not part of the provincial-federal D.R.E.E. Agreement.

24 A full explanation of how the planning team addressed this political constraint is presented in Chapter II in the discussion of the planning strategy adopted for Slave Lake.

For a detailed review of the impact of the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area Program on income and employment in north-central Alberta, refer to: I. Mellor and R.G. Ironside, "The Incidence Multiplier Impact of a Regional Development Programme", The Canadian Geographer, XXII, 3, 1978. Another report which addresses the impact of the Special Area Program on north-central Alberta is: D. Webster, "Final Report on the Creation of Employment Under the Regional Development Incentives (R.D.I.A.) Program in the Special Area of Lesser Slave Lake in Northern Alberta", Program Evaluation Division, D.R.E.E., January, 1975.

CHAPTER II

DESIGNING THE PLANNING STRATEGY, PREPARING THE PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the events which took place during the first eight months of the Slave Lake planning process, a process which would carry on from 1973 to 1976. It was during this initial eight month period that the planning team was formed, the planning strategy was developed, and the physical plan for the Town was created. The key events and circumstances which shaped the planning process for Slave Lake are presented, along with some of the author's personal observations on the process as it evolved.

Section B following describes the reasons why, in the Spring of 1973, the Slave Lake Town Council requested that the Provincial Planning Branch assign a full-time planner to assist them in the creation of a long range plan for their Town.

Section C highlights some of the key events of the early stages of the planning process, focussing on those factors which contributed to the development of the future planning strategy for Slave Lake.

Section D describes how an extended planning team came into being for the Slave Lake project. The manner in which the planning team functioned is presented, along with a description of the roles of each of the actors on the team.

Section E examines some of the planning team's early experiences in interacting with the various government agencies operating in Slave Lake, and describes how these experiences influenced the future planning strategy.

Section F examines the planning strategy which was adopted for Slave Lake after the initial eight month period of involvement in the Slave Lake planning process.

In Section G a summary of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan as presented to the public in November, 1973 is examined. It is this Plan and the planning strategy as described in the preceding section which were to provide the foundation for the 3 year plan - implementation process which followed.

B. THE MANDATE TO PLAN

Those factors which impacted on Slave Lake at 1973 were discussed at length in the preceding chapter. During the years leading up to this critical year for Slave Lake, the Town had been involved in a number of planning and engineering projects as a result of the start-up of the D.R.E.E. Program.

Between the years 1970 to 1973 the D.R.E.E. Program helped finance improvements to the water and sewer systems, the construction of two schools, improvements to the airport facilities, and the construction of a highway by-pass. In addition, the Alberta Housing Corporation had begun developing the first phase of a 600 lot residential subdivision, and the Alberta Department of the Environment had constructed a flood control channel at the south end of the Sawridge Creek.

In spite of all this activity, the Town had fallen far behind in the provision of a wide range of community facilities and infrastructure. The problems associated with housing, parks, recreation, the commercial sector, light industry, and the transportation systems were widespread. At 1973 the Slave Lake Town Council began to realize that they were becoming overwhelmed with attempting to cope with the ever increasing day-to-day administrative problems associated with the growth.

The Town was at the stage where the population growth associated with the industrial development program was accelerating too fast for them to manage. The Town Council recognized this and realized that under the circumstances they alone did not have sufficient resources to develop a long range plan for their town. It was in early 1973 that they decided to seek additional planning assistance in order to create a fresh start and a new perspective on the possibilities of their town. Since Slave Lake, like all incorporated municipalities in Alberta, contributed to the Alberta Planning Fund, it was eligible to receive the planning services of the Provincial Planning Branch of the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs.¹

During the 1960's and early 1970's the Provincial Planning Branch of the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs had provided Slave Lake with general planning advice on an irregular basis, but there had never been any detailed plans prepared for the town as a whole. In April, 1973, the Slave Lake Town Council made a request to the Provincial Planning Branch that a full time planner be assigned to the Town to carry out comprehensive long range planning. In May of that year the author was assigned the function.

Prior to the Provincial Planning Branch's involvement in the planning of Slave Lake the Town Council had already been through several years of planning activity in attempting to cope with rapid growth and therefore it was not necessary to educate the Council as to the potential benefits which planning could bring to their community. As a result of Council's positive attitude towards planning, conditions in general were very favourable for planning with the community.

When I was assigned to Slave Lake I was encouraged by my Director to consider bold planning concepts for the Town since it would be undergoing such significant growth. This mandate to plan and to take bold action made for a very favourable atmosphere within which to begin the planning process.

In my first few weeks as planner for Slave Lake I kept a low profile and spent my time reading reports on the town, undertaking preliminary data collection, meeting and talking to local people, and trying to think out a future planning strategy for the Slave Lake situation. The Town Council was in the process of talking to a number of groups who were planning private development projects, the majority of which were to take place in the downtown area. Since most of these proposals were still in the preliminary stages, there was still some time to carry out research and interact with the various actors involved in the Slave Lake situation. I felt that the situation was potentially volatile and that I had better familiarize myself with the facts before making any public statements on the future plans for the downtown or for the Town as a whole.

C. SHAPING A FUTURE PLANNING STRATEGY FOR SLAVE LAKE

This section presents some of the key events which took place during the first few months of the Slave Lake planning process and highlights those factors which contributed to the development of the planning strategy for Slave Lake. Both the activities and personal reactions of the author are presented in terms of how these came together to shape the future planning strategy.

Within the first three weeks as planner for the Town I attended a meeting which helped me considerably in developing a planning strategy for Slave Lake. The meeting involved the presentation of an extensive report on Slave Lake's housing needs², prepared as a joint effort of Alberta Housing Corporation (A.H.C.), the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (C.M.H.C.) and D.R.E.E. The report was presented in Edmonton at A.H.C.'s headquarters to an audience consisting of representatives from A.H.C., C.M.H.C., D.R.E.E., and two representatives from the Provincial Planning Branch (a regional planner for the Lesser Slave Lake Region and the author).

As the Slave Lake situation was explained at this meeting the Town faced an extreme housing crisis in the upcoming months: two new major industries were just starting up their operations and the majority of the housing stock in Slave Lake was priced too high for the wage structures of the workers entering these new jobs. While the A.H.C. researcher who prepared the report admitted that there was a serious problem, he suggested that it was quite likely that the provincial government's Assisted Home Ownership Program (A.H.O.P.) could be applied in Slave Lake's case to solve the problem. Although the statistics in the report proved that the wages of the incoming workers in Slave Lake would be too low for the A.H.O.P. subsidy formula to apply, the A.H.C. researcher suggested that he hoped this formula would be changed in the near future.

The representative from D.R.E.E. who helped prepare the report had a different viewpoint and recommended a direct solution to the problem. He said that D.R.E.E. was willing to spend \$2,000,000 towards reducing the cost of housing lots (amounting to a subsidy of approximately \$3000 per lot) and that if this were done, the overall costs would be reduced to a level which would enable the employees to purchase housing. This pragmatic solution was not supported by the representatives from C.M.H.C. or A.H.C. however, because they felt that housing was their responsibility and that the A.H.O.P. funding would eventually solve the problem.

My interpretation of their discussion was that the housing problem of Slave Lake could not be "pigeonholed" into one of the housing agencies' existing programs and as a result, no action would be taken. I could see that no real solution would be found due to the jurisdictional jealousies and ivory tower attitudes of a few bureaucrats who were in the position to effect the final decision on the problem.

This meeting highlighted an important factor which would have to be taken into account in developing a future planning strategy for Slave Lake. It became readily apparent that the inflexibility of government programs, policies, and people would cause particular problems in a town undergoing rapid change. It was apparent that most government bureaucrats who deal with one specific aspect of a community, do not have a good understanding of the total environment and they often lack empathy towards the practical problems at the grass roots community level. There are exceptions of course, as exemplified by the D.R.E.E. person who felt the urgency to act. It seemed that the solution offered by him was the correct one in this particular situation, since the Town was at the time involved in the Special Area agreement with D.R.E.E., and since this type of funding assistance would definitely fall within the terms of reference of that agreement.

Another lesson to be gained from this experience was that government agencies tend to study communities from the outside and tend to be very secretive and possessive with their information. It was notable that there was no representation from the Town of Slave Lake invited to this meeting. Even more notable was the fact that the researchers never did present this important housing report to Slave Lake Council, nor did they seem concerned over the complete lack of communication with the Town.

My reaction to the report itself was that it was grossly academic and statistical and did not address itself adequately to possible solutions. I began to form the opinion that in Slave Lake's fast growth situation, we would have to develop more issue oriented reports, offering solutions. Also, it seemed that the solutions would not likely be found within existing programs. This suggested that we would have to develop new, unique solutions to problems. This meeting seemed to support my understanding that within the provincial and federal governments there was a definite lack of effective solutions to the array of unique problems facing

the northern resource town going through periods of boom town growth. I was beginning to get the message that there would be vast communication and co-ordination problems in the months ahead, due to the involvement of the three levels of government (municipal, provincial, and federal) in the regional development process.

After a month on the project it was becoming apparent that with the number of private development projects being planned and with the wide range of other development, social and political problems facing the Town, it would soon become necessary to secure more resources for the planning program. I believed that we needed more resources to keep ahead of development, to diffuse the control of the private development interests, and to allow the Town Council to take a strong leadership role in shaping a good future for their community.

Faced with a number of commercial development proposals for the downtown area, it was evident that the Town needed to act quickly in drawing up a complete development scheme for the town centre. Having heard of a successful downtown redevelopment project which was recently undertaken in the Town of High River, Alberta, I arranged an interview with High River's architect-planner, Arni Fullerton. We toured the High River downtown redevelopment area and the economic and physical design aspects of the joint public-private redevelopment process were explained. The strong degree of public involvement in the redevelopment project was unique for small towns, and the results proved that a town council could effectively co-ordinate private redevelopment of their downtown by using strong local participation, public land banking, and community land development.

My reaction was that Slave Lake could follow a similar strategy and use the land which they owned in the downtown area as a mechanism to provide public leadership in the planning and development of their downtown. My second reaction was that if High

River's process could be a model for Slave Lake, then we should try to hire for the Slave Lake planning program, the architect-planner who led the High River process for three years. I realized that this was a unique opportunity to add a great deal of strength and credibility to the planning program, and that it would be particularly helpful to have a second planner on the team at such an early stage in the program.

Within two weeks I had secured the approval from my Director to hire Arni for the Slave Lake project. He would work part-time on a contract basis for the Provincial Planning Branch and assist me in creating a long range plan for Slave Lake. With the addition of Arni to the project we now had a planning team of two members, and I had gained what I believed was adequate time and resources to carry out an effective planning program.

While we would both be involved in the plan preparation activity for the downtown area and the Town as a whole, we would also be able to devote half of our energies toward developing a long range planning-implementation strategy for the Town. The first sign of this strategy was to be a vigorous co-ordinated assault on what we thought were the town's most crucial immediate problems. In other words, our first strategy was to act quickly.

Meetings were set up with the developers who were in the process of drawing up development proposals for their properties. Both Arni and I focussed in on planning the downtown area and we set out to establish co-operation with the developers, trying to achieve a delay in their plans in time for us to develop a long range planning concept for the downtown. Our immediate goal was to establish credibility with the Council and the business community that we were committed to providing an implementable plan for the downtown core and the Town as a whole. While our first priority in the early stages was to establish a measure of control over private downtown development we were simultaneously working on three other important aspects:

- setting up communication links with Town Council, the Town administration, the local public and with those government agencies involved in the development aspects of Slave Lake
- finding solutions to immediate development problems
- piecing together the Town's needs in the form of the first draft of a long range plan.

In order to establish credibility with Council we assured them that we would be involving them fully in the planning process and in the preparation of all plans for the Town. Council formed a three member Planning Committee of Council and we were assured that very close communication links could be set up between us, Council (through the Planning Committee), and the Town administration. It was decided that we would communicate daily by telephone with the Town Manager and Development Officer on specific planning issues. We arranged to make weekly field trips to the Town (commuting by car or airplane from Edmonton), and meet with the Planning Committee at least once every 2 weeks. As discussed in the following section, we now had established what we referred to as the extended planning team, a team consisting of two professional planners, members of the Town Council and members of the Town Administration.³

We felt fortunate that the Town Manager had already established a public information process on Town issues through a weekly column entitled "Report to Residents" in both town newspapers, The Northland Free Press and the Slave Lake Scope. We were therefore able to work with the Town Manager in informing the public about the evolving planning process. We were able to inform the public gradually about changes which we were proposing in the community through this medium. By publishing progress reports on an ongoing basis we felt that we were providing the public with accurate information so that they could comment on the planning

proposals to a councillor, the town office or us at any time during the planning process. We used plain language so that they would have the understanding to comment on the proposals. The following excerpt from the May 22, 1973 issue of the Northland Free Press illustrates the style and content of this communication:

Land use problems arise

The matter of land use in the Town of Slave Lake began to present a problem in 1972. At first, it was thought that this could be handled within the existing guidelines. However, by the end of 1972 it was found that something would have to be done, and very quickly, to resolve the problems being experienced. We were receiving requests to use land zoned for other purposes, and there did not appear to be provision anywhere for some of the types of development.

Provincial Planning called in

At this time the Provincial Planning Branch was requested to undertake a study of the Town as a "crash" program, with emphasis on immediate problems such as land use in the southwest area, better downtown business use, provision of mobile home subdivisions. This was immediately started and a great deal of work has been carried out by the Planning Branch.⁴

Although we were later to develop a planning strategy which focussed more on the long term possibilities of town development, our time in the early stages of the planning process was largely spent on problem-solving. We felt that it was necessary to deal with these immediate problems before moving into a more positive, long term planning stage.

My first exposure to the Slave Lake public was a result of one such problem, involving the rezoning of a mixed housing-industrial area of town from an industrial category to a residential category. At the public hearing it was explained that the purpose of the rezoning was to curtail any new development of light industry in this Southwest area and retain the area as a residential neighbourhood for the long term. Council felt that there was adequate

provision of light industrial land in the northern part of Town and that in the long term this southwest area would be needed for residential purposes.

In my function as planning advisor to the Town, I had to explain at the public hearing the need for strict land use planning due to the projections that indicated that the town could double or triple in size within the next few years. Although much of what I said had already been presented to the public in the Town Manager's "Report to Residents" column, it was not an easy task to inform these people at the public hearing of our planning decision which placed a new restriction on the properties of 40 Slave Lake residents. I began to see that my role on the planning team demanded that I take much of the responsibility of some of the unpopular regulatory decisions, along with Council. From the negative reaction of some of the residents I could see that although the Town had experienced rapid change for a number of years, many of the residents could not understand the significance of a possible doubling or tripling of population within the next five to ten years. On the positive side, I felt that Council was willing to act boldly in taking steps to ensure that long term community goals would not be sacrificed for short term political expediency.

During this initial period in the planning process we were also involved in the data collection and analysis stage for the Town's long range plan. We had initiated a number of small studies, including research into the potential impact of the industrial growth on the Town, research into the financial status of the Town, and surveys of land use, land ownership and commercial activity.

D. AN EXTENDED PLANNING TEAM EMERGES

Part of the process of piecing together a planning strategy for Slave Lake was the development of a strong planning team.

Those involved directly in the planning process after the 3 month start-up phase were: the author, representing the Provincial Planning Branch; a specialist freelance architect-planner; a three member planning committee of Council; the Town Manager; and the Town Development Officer.

While the author and Arni Fullerton were acting in the capacity of planning consultants to the Town, the other five people in the process, together with ourselves formed what could be referred to as the extended planning team. The additional five members of the planning team would become involved in the process at irregular intervals, as circumstances dictated. While the arrangement by which we made decisions did not require that everyone on the extended planning team had to be party to the decision, it was agreed that it was important to keep all parties informed of planning decisions and events as they occurred. It was felt that if everyone understood the role which they were playing in the process, and information kept flowing steadily, then the planning and decision-making process would operate smoothly.

We realized that we all had to work in close communication with one another and that the diversity of roles provided the team with its strength. In a process where we tried to link the planning, decision-making and implementation activities, the participants had overlapping but separate functions: we, as the two planners were to provide technical planning assistance and an outside perspective on events; the Planning Committee was to provide the main decision-making input, particularly with regard to major decisions; and the Town Manager and Development Officer were to be primarily involved in implementation and providing the local, pragmatic perspective to the team. A more detailed description of the roles of each of the actors in the planning process is presented below.

1. Planning Co-ordinator: My role, as a planner within the government system, was to be a co-ordinator of the overall planning

team, providing the communicative link between the local decision-makers and those involved in carrying out the technical planning function. My central function was to initiate and co-ordinate the dialogue of the process, to keep the communication effective through meetings, letters, phone calls and so forth. Due to my position within the government system it was my role to fight for resources for the Town and advocate the views of the community within the various government departments. As project leader I was responsible for the production of a long range plan for the Town, for the preparation of various special planning studies and for the communication of these planning proposals to the public. I was also required to carry out the regulatory planning work such as preparing zoning by-laws, commenting on subdivision applications, and generally advising on a wide range of land use questions.

I felt that in my communication with specialist planning consultants working within the process, it was important that I create an environment for them to carry out innovative planning. As they did not have to become involved in the more mundane, regulatory aspects of the planning process they could focus their energies on the more positive, innovative aspects.

Arni and I were determined that the planning process should not become bogged down in the bureaucracy of the Provincial Planning Branch. We discussed at length our desire to operate as independently as possible so that the innovative aspects of our planning proposals would not be quashed or watered down by a close scrutiny of my superiors in the Provincial Planning Branch.

As it turned out, the managers above me allowed us to act very independently and were quite supportive of our planning strategy. I was able to operate without close supervision because the project came to be considered as a special project in the office, since there were no other projects with such urgency.

In addition, the presence of an outside consultant on the planning team effectively transferred some of the control over the project to someone outside the Planning Branch's direct jurisdiction. This situation created a more dynamic atmosphere to the planning team's operations and gave the project a higher profile within the Planning Branch.

2. Specialist Architect-Planner: The role of Arni Fullerton, as the specialist architect-planner, was to provide an innovative thrust to the planning process. Because he was an independent consultant he could be more openly critical of government policy and could advocate the needs of the community in a forceful way. Having an architectural design strength and an ability to politicize, his role was to lead the way in finding a way to implement the planning proposals.

3. Planning Committee of Council: The Planning Committee was primarily responsible for the final decisions on plans and the plan implementation strategy. The committee had the major say in these decisions throughout the planning process and would report their activities to the rest of Council on a regular basis at Council meetings. For any major decisions such as the approval of the Town's long range plan or the purchase of a parcel of land, Council as a whole would make the final decision.

The Committee represented Council in discussions regarding negotiations with the senior levels of government and was also responsible for communicating with the townspeople and passing on the local feelings to the planners.

4. Town Manager: The Town Manager's role was to make minor decisions on planning and development according to the mandate given to him by Council. He was the local co-ordinator of information and provided the local planning committee members with technical material necessary for them to make their decisions. One of his functions was to inform the planners of the Town's priority projects, the local political atmosphere, and the financial situation of the Town. He also had the responsibility of informing the Slave Lake residents as to the progress of the planning process, through his weekly newspaper column and through his daily contacts through the town office.
5. Development Officer: The Development Officer was a local town employee who was responsible for processing development applications. He also acted as the engineering advisor and building inspector for the Town. His main role was to monitor development and communicate to the development interests, the planning concepts and requirements as set out by the Town Council and the planning team. He was in the position to provide detailed technical input into private development projects, ensuring that the development would be designed to fit in with the Town's planning proposals.

E. AGENCY INTERACTION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

After the planning process had been underway for three months it became increasingly clear that one of the most important and time consuming functions of the planning team would be the establishment of effective communication links with the various government agencies operating in Slave Lake. This section will examine both a positive and a negative example of how the planning team interacted with these agencies. The author's reactions to these situations will be presented in light of how this experience influenced the development of a planning strategy for Slave Lake.

In many cases where the Town was experiencing difficulty in resolving a problem, the difficulty could be related to a lack of communication with one of the government agencies involved in the planning and development of the Town. One of the functions of the planning team therefore was to try to get the Town in touch with the correct person and department within the government system. We had varying degrees of success in establishing communication with the different departments.

One of our most positive experiences was when we initiated talks with the Alberta Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation to discuss the need for areas and facilities planning for Slave Lake. Within a week of our contact with that department, a representative of the department met with the Town Council to advise them as to the feasibility of undertaking a Parks Master Plan. This initial contact was to evolve into a long term communication link with that department and we felt that the people in the department who were helping with the recreation planning of Slave Lake were in one respect another extension of the Slave Lake planning team.

The biggest communication problem that the Town had was in dealing with the Alberta Housing Corporation who were heavily involved in Slave Lake's development process. The provincial crown corporation had begun a major residential land assembly and development program two years earlier and was also involved in public housing subsidy programs in the Town. The Corporation was in the process of developing a residential subdivision which contained 600 single family lots, or one-third of the Town's supply of residential lots. Because of their involvement at many different levels it was difficult to find the right person to contact when a problem cropped up. However, when we suggested that they assign one person to co-ordinate their varied activities and take the responsibility for the overall decision-making, they could not accept the reasoning behind this idea. We felt that since they had millions of dollars invested in the Town, they would see the logic in spending about \$30,000, for a one man staff operation to oversee their multi-million dollar investment and facilitate the selling of lots, provide financing advice to prospective home buyers and so forth.

The people at A.H.C. were very defensive about their role in Slave Lake and used the same answer whenever we tried to get them to step up their efforts to solve a problem - "But - we're already heavily involved in Slave Lake."

I could see that the breakdown in communication between A.H.C. and the Town of Slave Lake was costing the Corporation thousands of dollars in lost sales of residential lots because of a lack of information and because the prospective buyers could not buy a lot in the Town, but had to deal with A.H.C.'s head office in Edmonton. The Town itself was suffering as well, because the Town Council was already overtaxed in trying to deal with the vast problems of rapid development, and they could see that this disruption in the housing market was causing instability in their Town and the adjacent industrial park.

One of the lessons this experience taught me was that when public agencies become involved in the private development field there must be careful safeguards to ensure that they perform as a private company would and be responsive to the people they serve, the market.

The difficult experiences with certain key agencies made us feel that ideally, some organization such as the Provincial Planning Branch should be charged with the authority within the government system to officially co-ordinate the activities of the various government agencies operating at the municipal level in Slave Lake during the period of rapid growth. However, it was becoming clear that the conditions in Slave Lake were far from ideal and furthermore, that in an unofficial capacity as co-ordinator, the Provincial Planning Branch did not have a great deal of influence with other government agencies. We realized that because of the rapid growth situation we were faced with a highly irrational process and that we had better adopt an incremental planning strategy to deal with all the systems operating within the process.

At the personal level I had to learn to cope with the frustration of operating in the slow reacting bureaucratic system. In dealing from a relatively weak position in the negotiations with other government agencies, it became clear that we would have to build as strong a planning team as possible to strengthen our impact within the slow moving, cautious government system. Although we would have preferred to find ways to go around some of these government agencies we realized that the rapid growth situation meant that we had no choice but to be persistent and keep trying to establish good working relationships with these agencies.

F. A PLANNING STRATEGY FOR RAPID GROWTH

In the early stages of the planning process we were relying mainly on a problem-solving incremental planning strategy. However, we were not satisfied with this approach which meant that we were just reacting to events. We felt the need to develop a creative planning process and to act quickly in establishing a measure of control over the wide range of factors affecting the Town so that Council could provide better leadership through the unstable rapid growth period.

As the planning strategy was evolving I was able to relate my theoretical conception of planning process to the real world situation of Slave Lake. My own understanding of planning in the most fundamental sense was that it was a heuristic process where activities take place in a dynamic, open system as against a linear system. This notion of planning as a heuristic planning process was first introduced to the author in 1971 in a Planning Theory course at the University of Manitoba City Planning School. The heuristic planning process was defined by Dr. John Page in this planning theory course as:

... probing and searching continuously in an open manner with a systems type of awareness in such a way that the activity is self-correcting. Flexibility is achieved through this active effort to continuously monitor change. The heuristic planning process provides a foundation upon which self-criticism may be fostered.⁵

The planning strategy which we were to develop was based on our understanding of the planning process as being a cyclical, ongoing process which was continuously changing as we proceeded. Since the planning process is cyclical and dynamic, it allows both planning and implementation activities to occur simultaneously. Due to the fact that Slave Lake was in a catch-up position in terms of providing a wide range of recreational, cultural, health and commercial facilities, it was necessary to stress the implementation activity to the point where hopefully the planning and implementation activities could be merged into one or at least be very closely linked. Therefore, given the uncertain commitment of future provincial-federal assistance to the Town, it was decided that we should follow a two pronged approach: first of all, we would develop a comprehensive long range plan, with the hope that if we were successful in obtaining solid federal-provincial support, it could be implemented in its entirety; the second stream of activity would allow for an incremental approach to plan implementation, where priorities would be set and an attempt would be made to implement parts of the plan over an extended period of time, as the existing town resources allowed.

Despite the fact that the principles upon which our planning strategy was based do not fall into any linear sequence, I will describe some of the key principles we had decided to adhere to after approximately eight months of involvement in Slave Lake's rapid growth situation. It seemed that by that time a consensus had formed as to the planning strategy which we should follow. Agreement on these principles evolved out of months of discussions amongst members of the extended planning team as we interacted in the process of preparing Slave Lake's Long Range Plan. These common principles, values and ideas provided a communication link between the participants and allowed for effective interpersonal relationships to take place.

It is not proposed that an examination of the planning strategy for Slave Lake will suggest a complete, new planning style which could be used for planning in any rapid town growth situation. It is proposed, however, that there are certain elements within the planning strategy which could be drawn out and applied to resource town planning situations, particularly where some or all of the following conditions exist: rapid or fluctuating town growth; substantial outside (senior governmental or corporate) involvement in the development process; the inducement of significant industrial growth into a rural region with a depressed economy; and an uncertain, volatile political and economic climate.

While any strategy is both a science and an art by definition,⁶ it appears that the strategy adopted for Slave Lake more closely approximated an art, since there were so many uncertainties in the process and since the political element was such an important factor. Due to the fact that the planning process was an open ended activity and continually changing our planning strategy cannot be defined in narrow, precise terms. Instead, I will present the highlights of the strategy - those principles which we thought were the most important as we were in the midst of the planning activity.

While the elements of the planning strategy are presented as four separate points, it was apparent that these key points were closely tied and mutually interdependent. In brief, the key principles which were highlighted in the planning strategy were:

- a recognition of the political realities
- a commitment to plan implementation
- the development of a theme to the planning process
- an emphasis on innovation and bold action.

Each of these points will be discussed separately, below, with an explanation of why they were important, how they evolved, and how they were interrelated with other elements of the strategy.

1. A Recognition of the Political Realities

From the beginning of our involvement in Slave Lake we were aware that politics would play a critical role in the success or failure of the Town's planning process over the next few years. As the Town was expected to grow from 3000 people to approximately 7,500 people within the next few years it would need considerable financial assistance from the senior levels of government to provide the necessary range of town facilities and expansion of infrastructure. Officially, the senior levels of government were committed through the "Lesser Slave Lake Special Area D.R.E.E. Agreement" to cooperate with each other and fully support the regional development program, and the Town, until March 1975. However, those arrangements were made in 1970 by a Social Credit provincial government, and the Socreds were defeated by the Progressive Conservatives in the 1972 provincial election. With the government changing hands right in the middle of the 5 year regional development program we could not determine what level of continued support would be offered to the Town. These political uncertainties loomed large at a time when the major impact of the new industrial growth was just hitting the Town of Slave Lake.

Realizing that we may become involved in a rather controversial political process where the new provincial government may be changing the direction of the regional development program, we nonetheless decided that we should support Slave Lake in its bid for continued financial support. Although our official mandate in the narrowest sense was to provide a physical plan for Slave Lake, the Town was growing so fast that Town Council asked us to do more than just plan the Town's layout; they wanted us to help negotiate for the funding of the plans. We felt therefore, that as Slave Lake's planning consultants, it would be our responsibility to advocate Slave Lake Council's position in future political negotiations, where we would be negotiating the funds to implement the plans.

Given the rather considerable political constraints which the planning team would be facing in the Slave Lake planning activity, we realized that we would have to adopt heuristic methods, or exploratory search procedures (as opposed to standardized problem-solving procedures). Barclay Hudson defined heuristic methods as "more open-ended search procedures which apply to fuzzy problems" and suggested that they are typically adopted by those engaged in "trouble shooting, where neither the problem nor the solution is well defined, and the client is more likely to be open-minded about surprise findings and unorthodox recommendations for action".⁷

At the time, we described the planning team's activity as being analogous to a "pathfinder", referring to someone who finds the right path for the group to follow as it proceeds. While in the pioneer days these pathfinders led people on a physical level, we saw that we would be leading people through the political maze.

Looking at the long term however, we were actually newcomers to a process that started back in the early 1960's as a region-wide grass roots movement to upgrade the social conditions of the region. We believed in the objectives of the regional development program and we saw that Slave Lake, as a growth centre, had a key role to play in the program. Since the whole program was dependent on the creation of new jobs in the area of Slave Lake town, it was clear to us that the community support system to industry had to be strengthened as much as possible during this period of industrial expansion.

The basis of the political argument which we were to develop in the negotiations with the senior governments was that the planning of Slave Lake had a critical influence on the economic stability of the industries in that the industries depended on the Town to provide a good, stable place for their employees to live.

We presented the case that job turnovers in the industries would be more costly in the long run than providing a wide range of social-recreational facilities for the community in conjunction with the development of industry. As we stated in the planning report - "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta":

it costs \$1000 per employee to hire a new employee and place him in work ... rate of turnover of some mines is 400% ... implies an extra cost per employee year of \$4000.

One wonders whether the \$4000 might not often be better used in providing some of the amenities which would be required to reduce the rate of turnover.

It was to be a great source of frustration to us that many decision-makers in the provincial system could not see or just refused to admit this fundamental economic principle involved in this community-industry interdependency. While we felt that first class community facilities were a basic necessity for northern resource towns, most government people felt that our expectations were too high, and that the facilities (or the quality of development) which we were proposing in our plans were too extravagant.

With reference to the discussion of the D.R.E.E. Program and its impact on Slave Lake, as presented in Chapter I, there were a number of reasons why in 1973 we believed that, as planning consultants to the Town, we should support the Town in its quest for funds from the senior governments. These reasons may be summarized as follows:

1. We believed that the senior governments had a legal and a moral obligation to support the Town's growth up to the termination of the D.R.E.E. Agreement in March 1975.

2. We believed that for strictly economic reasons, the Town's facilities should be built up in the early stages of the industrialization process in order to help reduce job turn-overs in the new industries.
3. We believed that the D.R.E.E. Program had already shown that it was successful, and had the potential for growing success, in helping to solve the social problems of the Region.
4. We believed that the industrialization program had the potential for establishing a new long term economic base for this region. The fact that the program was based on the development of renewable resources made the prospects for the long term seem that much brighter.
5. We believed that if the provincial government were to put its political support fully behind the regional development program, then the social programming, industrial development and physical planning aspects of the program had the potential to become models for other similar projects in Alberta and Canada. We felt that in terms of the physical planning of resource towns especially, Alberta was in desperate need of a model.

While we felt that there were several good reasons for the provincial government to support the Town and our planning process, we were at the same time aware that the government was hesitant about supporting the Town for the following reasons:

1. Since the D.R.E.E. agreement was negotiated at the time the current provincial government was the party in opposition and since they had spent 2-3 years voicing strong opposition to the D.R.E.E. Program, we realized that it would take a strong argument and a certain period of time before the government would change their position on the program, if indeed they would change their position at all.

2. The provincial government disagreed with the administrative approach taken in the regional development program, where a considerable amount of decision-making power had been decentralized to the government offices in the region. A special agency had been set up in Slave Lake, called the Office of Program Co-ordination, which had an annual budget of approximately \$5 million and had the mandate to co-ordinate the services of all those provincial and federal line departments involved at the regional level in the regional development program. Guidelines for expenditure were much more flexible than for other government departments in order to allow the regional authority the ability to react to changing priorities in the program. However, since this administrative approach had been established by the previous government, and since it was felt that too much credit or power was being given to those working in the regional authority rather than the line government departments, the current provincial government was wary of this approach.
3. Within the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area there are two towns of similar size which at the initial stages of the Program, in 1970, had expected to receive growth as a result of the D.R.E.E. Program-the towns of Slave Lake and High Prairie. However, the major industrial complex had been established just outside of Slave Lake due to the fact that Slave Lake was the natural regional centre for most of the native population in the region, both in terms of being geographically central and functionally central. As it was clear that Slave Lake could become the new leading growth centre in the region, the provincial politicians were going to be hearing complaints from the town of High Prairie that Slave Lake was receiving a disproportionate amount of economic benefit from the program. This political pressure, no matter how petty it may have seemed, was another political factor which would influence the government's position towards Slave Lake.

2. A Commitment to Plan Implementation

As described above, it was early on in the planning process that we made the decision to adopt the contemporary viewpoint that as planners we should become involved in taking the plans beyond the drawing board, into the political arena, and into the implementation stages. From the outset of the plan preparation activity in June 1973, we had decided that our long range strategy should be one which focussed on the possibilities and not the problems of Slave Lake.

We took the position that to create anything new and worthwhile, one should simply ignore most of the problems and begin: then, as the problems occur, they can be addressed in the context of definite, positive goals and objectives. As expressed by Harry Lash in "The Great City Debate" in August, 1970:

When one starts to talk about things that ought to be done, the immediate tendency is to start talking about problems that have to be solved. I'm very suspicious of the problem-solving approach to the setting of objectives. It's better to set positive objectives, something you are trying to attain, and then the "problems" are the things that are in the way of your attainment of those objectives. Otherwise, the problem-solving approach can easily create other problems.

By setting out positive goals and objectives we hoped that we would be able to provide a better sense of leadership in the planning process and take control of events before they took control of us. If we focussed in on the overwhelming variety of minor problems in Slave Lake, we felt that we could not have had an open, creative planning process.

We believed that the problem-solving approach would just create other problems, a lot of "busy work", and we did not want to become too closely associated with the role of the town administrators. We wanted to try to streamline our planning activity so that we could be more effective in the implementation stages. It was understood by the Slave Lake Council that our role at the beginning was primarily to develop not only a creative plan, but one which was implementable.

We were fortunate that because of the pressure of rapid growth there was a sense of urgency that forced us to develop an implementable plan within a short period of time. Because of this fast pace we did not have the time or the resources to undertake an extensive, detailed analysis of all of the components in the existing urban situation. We had to look more into the future, and our clients, Town Council, did not expect us to provide exhaustive statistical background for the planning study.

In formulating the plans we were able to utilize the findings of various studies relating to Slave Lake which had recently been completed, or were still underway. There was considerable information available on the topics of housing, population projections, recreation program and facility needs, engineering capacities, and the regional economic base.

Given the need to stress implementation in the planning process we realized that it would be important to build up support for the plans in the community at large. Since we had neither the resources nor the time to include a large percentage of the Slave Lake population in an intensive citizen participation program, we relied quite heavily on the Planning Committee of Council to provide us with the local perspective in the planning process.

We believed that the small size of Slave Lake allowed for a democratic and responsive local political process where these councillors would be well informed as to the peoples' needs and would be held accountable for their planning decisions.

The primary channel for the dissemination of information was the regular progress reports in the Town Manager's "Report to Residents" column in the two local newspapers. Another main aspect of the public participation component was to be the ongoing reaction to the plans following the public presentation of the plans at a meeting in November 1973.

As discussed earlier, the uncertain political and economic climate surrounding the Slave Lake project required that we stress the urgency to implement our plans. While publicly we emphasized the need to implement the Long Range Plan in its entirety, we also had a contingency strategy of incremental implementation in case senior governmental support was not forthcoming.

Through the Long Range Plan we were proposing rather innovative plans for the Alberta scene (refer to section 4 following), and with the uncertain future of the industrial growth at Slave Lake and Mitsue Lake, we knew we were taking quite a gamble in our aggressive approach to implementation. We realized, however, that the plan preparation activity was simply the first step in the overall plan-implementation process, and that the follow-up activity was to be most important. John Friedmann expresses this notion in the following quotation:

... Primarily, it would appear, a plan serves as a means for co-ordinating a series of complex decisions. But, indeed, such co-ordination may be achieved in other ways as well: through circulation of information, social pressure, personal contacts and so forth. And in any case, any plan is only a working paper of but momentary importance; by the time it is published in print it may already be out-of-date.¹⁰

During the plan preparation stage we were attacking vigorously, hoping to get results within a short time span. In the planning report were clear recommendations that the Town attempt to receive a commitment of support from the provincial and federal governments within about 3-4 months' time of the public presentation of the plan, so that the phasing of the implementation could begin during the upcoming summer, in 6 month's time. The following excerpt from the report on the proposed Downtown Regional Center complex illustrates this emphasis on implementation:

As planning consultants to the Town, we recommend that the Town pursue the following course of action to obtain financing for this regional center:

- (1) Obtain recognition of the obligation on the part of the industries in the region (or their funding agency-D.R.E.E.), to share the cost of the social, recreational and cultural facilities; facilities which are urgently required to support rapid growth and needed to attract and retain workers (with their families) over the long term.
- (2) Obtain recognition by the Province, of their constitutional responsibility to 'adopt' Slave Lake as a Pilot Project and enable the implementation of the community infrastructure so necessary to the continued success of the industrial growth in this region.
- (3) That a first basis for Provincial consideration be funding under the New Provincial D.R.E.E. Agreement.
- (4) That an alternative for Provincial consideration be a direct tax levy transfer from the I.D. to cover a 20-year debenture on the community facility portion of the complex.

Further on in the report even more specific direction was recommended, as indicated in the following excerpt:

Recommendation One - Government Awareness

- that the Town request a meeting through Mr. W. Isbister, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, to include the Deputy Ministers of Northern Affairs, Industry and Commerce, Intergovernmental Affairs, Health and Social Welfare and Municipal Affairs to:

- make them aware of the town's situation
- to prepare a "Request for Decision" to go to the provincial cabinet.
- to request support for senior level government funding in the form of guaranteed loans and grants.¹²

Through the proposal for a multi-purpose regional centre for downtown Slave Lake we were aiming high with a slightly utopian vision of the Town. By aiming high we in a sense became obligated to follow through on implementation. Furthermore, by setting high ideals we hoped to at least achieve some small successes along the way.

3. The Development of a Theme to the Planning Process

Given the need to promote the planning proposals for Slave Lake both locally and provincially we realized that we had to develop a popular theme to the planning process. In creating this theme we began by examining what was unique about Slave Lake as a resource community. We knew that we were involved in image-making, both for our own understanding and to be able to better promote the Town. As expressed by Harry Lash in the following excerpt from "The Great City Debate", we were looking for a theme which would provide a strong direction to the planning process:

What I am trying to find is an ideal or an objective which is good enough to get us stirred up in the first place. An idea which can make us say "yea, by God, we can base a five-year program on that", and about which we can remain enthusiastic.¹³

In reference to his involvement in the preparation of a plan for Montreal, Mr. Lash continued:

Well, we ought to think about selling something! People, you know, need worthwhile goals; we need them. They have to be goals that you believe in. In the popular presentation of the Montreal demonstration plan we came right out and said that what we had to do in building the City of the Year 2000, was to build a city that a man could love. ¹⁴ In Montreal, you could say that; people responded well to that.

The popular theme which we decided upon within the first few months of the planning process revolved around the idea that Slave Lake should become a "Warm Spot in the North." The theme was developed in the planning report - "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", a major planning document presented to the public, along with the Slave Lake Long Range Plan, in November 1973. We suggested in this planning report that our wealthy society has a moral obligation to create warmer, better environments (Warm Spots) for the workers living in the isolation of the cold northern resource towns.

We suggested that if Slave Lake was to become a "Warm Spot" in the Lesser Slave Lake Region, it would require an acknowledgement by the senior governments that the Town was truly a regional growth centre. And secondly, it would require a strong commitment on behalf of all levels of government to strive for a high quality environment in the Town. The focal point of Slave Lake's high quality environment was to be an innovative multi-purpose complex in the centre of the downtown. The complex which was referred to as the "Downtown Regional Centre" was to stress culture, recreation, health and diversification of opportunity. It was to be a stimulating place to be, a place for all age groups to socialize and recreate, while at the same time be a sound economic project in support of the Town's small businessmen. If the complex were built, it could accommodate the majority of Slave Lake's recreational, cultural, health and commercial facility needs under one roof, in the centre of the downtown core.

Basically, we were presenting an image of warmth and vitality in a cold land, in the belief that it was a fundamental, down-to-earth image that people could visualize. This imagery which was central to the theme for the planning process is evident in the covering letter which accompanied the planning report on downtown Slave Lake, the text of which is presented below:

If we choose to recognize the cold, hard facts of Slave Lake's situation, we need only to focus our vision on a rapidly rising growth curve and a gross debt approaching \$800 per person - a Boom Town.

However, in peering beyond the persistent vagaries of a boom town we might envision the humble beginnings of a new human environment for the oil worker, the fisherman or logger, or for the man who toils ten hours a day over a noisy machine in a chipboard plant and the homemaker, isolated by the cold and lack of a second car: we could conceive of a series of 'Warmspots' in the north where a person could gravitate -

to buy a cup of coffee and kindness or eat a hearty meal,

to purchase from a wider choice, a Christmas present or year-round fresh vegetables,

to relax in an indoor garden with tropical plants,

to see a specialist offering advice for a recurring health problem,

to soothe ones body in a warm steam bath or swimming pool,

to read a book or see a movie,

to stay a night at the inn,

to learn of previously unknown opportunities or just to walk around in an indoor environment and feel good about being at the center.

We should ask of a wealthy society such as ours to make life a little more amenable for those who endure the relative hardships of extracting our resources from the more isolated northern regions. This proposal for a Regional Community Centre in Downtown Slave Lake embodies some of the ingredients of a Pilot Project, a 'Warmspot'. It could demonstrate to people that a northern resource community can offer a more meaningful choice as a place to live.

If we are going to offer the choice of a 'new' living environment in the North, we will need to build it a little at a time.¹⁵

By emphasizing Slave Lake's function as a regional centre we were not trying to create a new role for the Town. Rather, we were trying to make people recognize the close interdependency between the Town and Region, particularly as a result of the impact

of the D.R.E.E. Program. We were suggesting that the Town was as much of a social centre for the Region's people as it was an economic service centre. We took the position that since the regional development program had widespread support of the people in the Region, we should identify the Town's objectives with those of the Region. We believed that the planning and promotion of Slave Lake was simply a way of continuing on with this successful regional development process which had begun as a strong grass roots movement 10 years earlier.

It is apparent that we were supporting a certain ideological point of view that the laborers, the poor, the Native people in this northern region deserve a better life style and a larger share of the social and economic benefits of regional development. We stressed, as did the regional development program, the need to strengthen and diversify opportunities for the individual. We felt it important that our theme had a positive, human or social dimension to it, and as expressed by Harry Lash in "The Great City Debate":

The difference between such an approach and that of the Chamber of Commerce, which is just one of growth and publicity, is the concern with opportunities for the individual's fulfillment.¹⁶

In order to reflect the human dimension of the theme in our planning reports, we were careful to write the reports in language that the layman could understand. We felt that if the text was too academic or laden with planning jargon, the planning proposals would lose their impact. The combination of layman language and very powerful but simple graphics would allow the Town to promote the planning proposals to a broad audience. Furthermore, we reasoned that the use of bold graphics would create a bold, confident image for the Town as it approached the senior levels of government for financial support. Even the bright

colours used in the reports were chosen specifically to enhance the theme of a warm spot in Slave Lake.

Illustration No. 1 - "Slave Lake Region"¹⁷, No. 2 - "A Regional Center..."¹⁸, No. 3 - "Town Hall Information Center"¹⁹, and No. 4 - "Main Street Mall"²⁰ which follow, reveal the style and content of the graphics used in the "Regional Center" report and the Slave Lake Long Range Plan.

4. An Emphasis on Innovation and Bold Action

In the early stages of the Slave Lake planning process we realized from dealing with certain government agencies that a number of problems encountered in northern resource towns cannot be solved within the framework of existing government programs. The reason for this is that most of these programs are designed to address problems associated with normal growth situations in the bigger cities. We realized that although there was no existing government program(s) which directly answered Slave Lake's comprehensive and unique needs, the Town's role as a designated growth centre under the D.R.E.E. Program meant that if we came up with new proposals which answered the Town's unique needs, then the funding could be negotiated. With this in mind, we began to formulate a planning strategy which would stress innovative planning as a way to solve problems wherever possible.

As mentioned in the section which describes the roles of the participants in the planning process, we were aware that the structure of the extended planning team was very conducive to carrying out innovative planning. Having a planning consultant on the team who, although being on contract to the Provincial Planning Branch, was otherwise independent of the provincial bureaucratic structure, allowed us extra freedom in introducing innovations. In addition to having more freedom to develop innovative physical plans, Arni also had more freedom to act in an advocacy role on



Illustration 1

A REGIONAL CENTER...

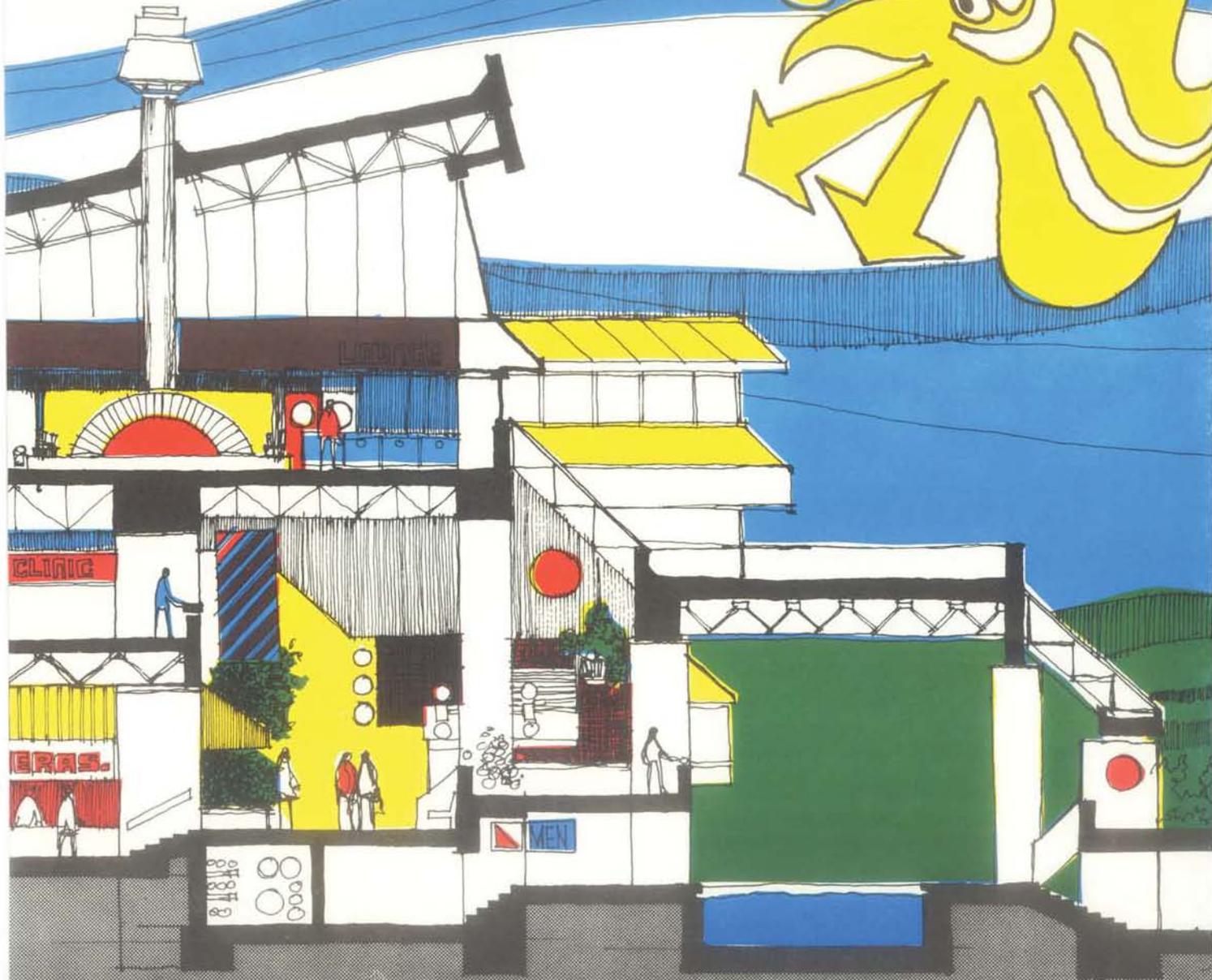
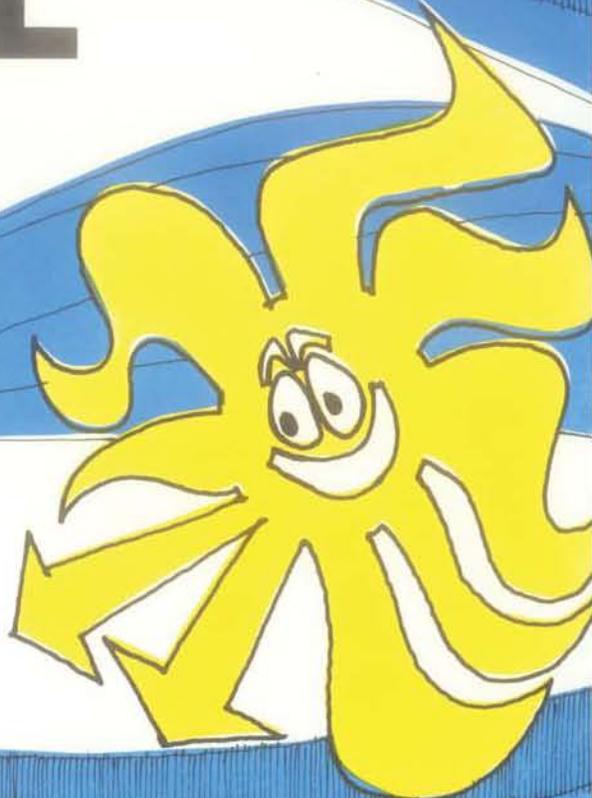


Illustration 2

IN DOWNTOWN SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA



TOWN HALL INFORMATION CENTER

TOWN FORUM
TOWN OFFICE

INFORMATION

BALCONY

5th AVE

SPECIAL MEETING
TODAY
1:00 PM

TODAY

1:00	COUNCIL MEETING. FORUM.
3:00	BLOOD DONOR CLINIC.
5:00	
7:00	FAMILY SWIMMING.
9:00	

2

Illustration 3



MAIN STREET MALL

3

Illustration 4

behalf of the Town of Slave Lake. John Friedmann sheds some light on this phenomenon in the following passage:

... Planning in society is, to a large extent, institutionalized: it forms part of the huge bureaucracy of government. As such, it is subject to the dynamics of bureaucratic structure. One simple generalization that one may venture to make with regard to bureaucratic institutions is that they gradually lose their ability to deal creatively with new questions; they lose their ability to innovate. Bureaucracies are essentially conservative, whereas the big problems of social change require bold new approaches of which a bureaucracy is usually incapable. The important innovations will therefore, almost always be introduced from outside the bureaucratic structure.²¹

As Arni was both an architect and a planner, his presence on the planning team gave us the capability to use elements of architectural design as an innovative tool in developing the physical plans. Since he had a number of years' experience in planning projects which had had considerable success in being implemented, he brought a valuable planning philosophy to the team. This philosophy, which coincided with the author's belief in the need to stress implementation and innovation in the planning process, was to provide the core of our evolving planning strategy.

Since an important element of our planning strategy was that we should create a plan which stressed implementation, the planning proposals which evolved were sufficiently detailed to indicate how they would be financed, managed, phased-in and so on. While most of the town infrastructure needs identified in the Slave Lake Long Range Plan could be implemented as part of the Town's existing public works program, two proposals could not be part of this program. The Downtown Regional Centre, which addressed the Town's cultural, recreational, health and commercial facility needs, required a new implementing mechanism. The Long Range Plan also proposed a new solution for meeting some of Slave Lake's housing problems, with a proposal for a "Service Housing" complex

which would house incoming workers on a transitional basis. This proposal also required a special implementing mechanism.

We felt, however, that we were in a good position to develop an implementation program for both of these proposals since the Town owned the key undeveloped parcel of land in the downtown area - a 3 acre triangular parcel in the centre of Main Street which was currently underutilized as a parking lot. Furthermore, the Alberta Department of Lands and Forests occupied an 8 acre site adjacent to the town centre and the Town understood that the Department was willing to consider making a trade with the Town, and moving to property which the Town owned, next to the airport. We suggested that if the Town was to hold on to its own land in the town centre and to acquire this additional property, then it would be possible for Slave Lake Town Council, with "seed money" from the senior governments, to develop implementing mechanisms for these two projects.

The implementation of the Downtown Regional Centre proposal was the first priority as it was seen as being the key to Town Council playing a strong leadership and management role in the planning of their Town. As described in the "Regional Centre" planning report, this proposal called for some form of partnership arrangement between the public and private sectors in the financing, development and management of the Centre, with the Town using its land and financing from the senior governments to build a range of cultural, recreational and health facilities, and with the private sector being responsible for the Centre's commercial space. Jacob L. Crane, a City Planner of over 50 years' experience in the United States in the following passages provides some insight into the merits of a community becoming involved in land ownership and what he refers to as "planned city building":

... the great American outdoor sport of private land speculation blocks sensible city building, like the "front four" of the Los Angeles Rams blocking a play through the line...²²

Planned city building requires that considerations, very complicated considerations, other than the opportunity to make a killing, must be taken into account in deciding where development or redevelopment should take place, what the development should be, when it should be undertaken, and how it should be serviced. We don't know how to do all of this very well now, but we do know that the humane and beautiful city cannot be created by greed as the principal motive.²³

Somewhere we hope to find a formula which will weave successfully between the virtues and vices of private enterprise and the virtues²⁴ and vices of much greater participation by government.

The Netherlands, I have seen, do extremely well in their planned city building by having public agencies buy up all the land that is designated for urban development, lay it out, put in the public improvements and services, and then, when it is needed, transfer it back for private building and use.

It appears that these various arrangements in Europe go a long way toward checking land speculation and toward bringing land into urban uses at the right time and place, and at more nearly the right prices. To a greater or lesser degree they also recapture the unearned increment for the community.²⁵

We felt that if the Town was to receive financial support from the senior governments for its Long Range Plan, then it would be possible during the plan-implementation process, to establish a downtown redevelopment program which combined the strengths of both the public and private sectors. We realized that because of the rapid growth pressures facing the Town, it would be especially important for the Town to provide strong leadership in the implementation of the Long Range Plan and it would also be important to keep land speculation to a minimum.

In proposing these innovative solutions to the Town's most central problems we were suggesting that they be adopted as pilot projects. As we stated in the "Regional Centre" planning report:

There is a unique need for more specific urban policies oriented to "Boom Towns". In the interim they can be adopted as "Pilot Projects" for all to learn from.²⁶

One important function of pilot projects is that politically they can be sponsored by a government as experiments and they do not have to fall within the realm of a government's existing programs. We reasoned that we would be offering the provincial government the opportunity to become directly involved in innovative solutions to urban planning problems.

Indeed, we opted for pilot projects for Slave Lake's most pressing needs because we felt it necessary that the Town Council present a bold stance in order to break down the barriers of the uncertain political situation with the province. The bold planning approach would show the provincial government that Council was serious, and because they were aiming high they had more to lose by giving in to the province's opposition. This attitude of challenge provided the impetus for the political oriented planning strategy.

The theme of our planning process and the image presented through the Slave Lake Long Range Plan was in a sense, utopian. It was this utopian vision that was to provide a focal point around which we could carry out our ongoing planning and political negotiating activities. As John Friedmann suggests:

... planners are pre-eminently concerned with practical Utopias, with approximations to the social good, Utopias that are realizable and which are a part of the Great Utopian Tradition making for cohesion in any society. Imagining practical Utopias is a creative act of the first order, and their translation into concrete action involves the whole problem of introducing innovations.²⁷

We believed that we had designed a physical plan and a planning strategy which combined practicality with a utopian vision. Although this utopian vision was present in our planning strategy

it is not to say that we believed in trying to achieve a state of utopia in the classic sense. We felt that through the planning process we would be striving for improvements in Slave Lake's environment with the understanding that the process was continuous, with changes happening simultaneously and incrementally. In other words, by our definition of planning, the end goal was not to strive for that static vision of the "best" environment for Slave Lake, but was to develop a process of amelioration which could carry on for a number of years.

G. PREPARATION OF THE LONG RANGE PLAN

From June to November, 1973, the planning team undertook the preparation of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan, focussing on the innovative proposal for the redevelopment of the downtown area. The planning team carried out research in the areas of population projections, housing, recreation program and facility needs, engineering capacities, and the regional economic base. We undertook data collection and analysis in these areas and undertook a comparative analysis of all other Albertan communities of similar size to Slave Lake. Solutions were sought for problems in the areas of: cultural, recreational and health facilities; commercial expansion; housing; transportation systems; pedestrian-park systems; industrial expansion; and public works projects.

The Town found itself in a highly dynamic situation during the plan preparation stages, both in terms of industrial growth and the political circumstances which affected this growth. As a result of these dynamics it was decided to present the Long Range Plan as a flexible plan which would be revised as conditions changed.

While the map/poster entitled - Slave Lake Long Range Plan (see Map 7 - "Slave Lake Long Range Plan")²⁸ outlined the optimal physical development pattern for the Town, it illustrated this development pattern in conceptual terms only. It was presented

in conceptual terms because it was intended that the map be used as a guide for the plan implementation process, and that follow-up studies be undertaken to provide the specifics as to how this general physical concept could be implemented. For example, while the Long Range Plan established the overall development pattern for the parks system, it did not provide details on the recommended phasing of development, the cost of land and facilities and so on. It was recommended, however, that as part of the Long Range Plan implementation process, a Parks Master Plan be undertaken in order to provide such details.

Another reason for building flexibility into the Long Range Plan was that a number of its specific components, because of their innovative nature, were either dependent upon receiving government funding assistance or were subject to change depending upon the outcome of a particular feasibility study. The innovative proposals which were part of the Plan included the Downtown Regional Centre proposal, the long term proposal to relocate the railway from the centre of Town, the proposal to relocate major industries to a town owned industrial park, and a housing proposal referred to as the "Service Housing" concept.

In light of the strategy to keep the planning process flexible, the Plan which was created was quite different from most General Plans²⁹ in that it more closely approximated an implementation program than a detailed comprehensive land use plan. Indeed, the Plan was purposely not written up as one major comprehensive "final" document, but was presented as a map/poster and a series of separate reports on the downtown, the Service Housing concept, community infrastructure, the roadway system and so on.³⁰ As the planning process evolved, and some new or updated planning reports were produced, there were minor changes made to the Plan, with components being added, deleted or modified, and with cost estimates rising in accordance with general inflationary trends.

Only the Downtown Regional Centre proposal was written up in considerable detail in the planning report made public at the November, 1973 Town meeting - "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta". As explained in the preceeding section on the planning strategy, we intentionally focussed most attention on the innovative Downtown Regional Centre proposal with the hope that we would be able to create a higher profile for the overall Plan and foster publicity both locally and with the various provincial people involved in or related to the D.R.E.E. Program.

A summary of the main components of the Long Range Plan will be presented in this chapter to provide background to the discussion of the planning activity which occurred between 1973 and 1976. The Plan's components are grouped under the following headings: A Downtown Regional Centre; Community Infrastructure Requirements; Service Housing Proposal; and Planning, Architectural and Engineering Projects. The basic concept, rationale and cost implications for each component of the Plan is presented below.

1. A Downtown Regional Centre

From the beginning of the planning process, the planning team was involved with the Slave Lake Town Council in examining the key question regarding the long term development pattern of the Town, namely: should the Town Council encourage a strong and compact central core or should it plan for decentralization of future commercial growth to peripheral shopping centres. In addition to determining the pattern of future commercial growth, the answer to this question would, of course, also set the pattern for the future development of the Town's transportation and parks systems.

In seeking an answer to this question two alternative growth concepts, the Decentralized Model (refer to Map 8)³¹ and the Centralized Model (refer to Map 9)³², were evaluated. An overview of this evaluation is presented below, followed by a complete description of the Downtown Regional Centre proposal.

i) Decentralized Model

The advantages of dispersing the commercial and community facilities around the town are listed below:

- It would be easy to accomplish on new, under-developed land.
- It would provide an easy solution to parking.

The disadvantages of the Decentralized Model are listed below:

- It would leave the existing downtown area in a chaotic state with little incentive to redevelop.
- The development of one major shopping centre usually involves outside entrepreneurs, who with more perspective on the town's potential, are willing and able financially to move more quickly.
- The development of one major shopping centre usually requires a large development enterprise which would lease franchise retail and service outlets back to local people to manage, but not own.
- The existing residents inevitably subsidize growth peripheral to the Town's existing built up areas through infrastructure costs such as service access roads and storm sewer improvements.

DECENTRALIZED MODEL

PROPOSED RING ROAD

SHOPPING CENTER AND HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

EXISTING DOWNTOWN

SHOPPING CENTER AND HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

SHOPPING CENTER



ii) Centralized Model

The advantages of reinforcing the existing town centre and of developing a multi-purpose Downtown Regional Centre in the core are presented below:

- It would provide a more rewarding central focus for the community and its region. This would be more in keeping with the people of the "loosely knit" region who need a strong centre.
- The existing community and its business people would receive most of the benefit from the Town's growth. (The small business is a vital institution within a town and requires special attention where there are undue economic pressures being applied).
- It would utilize the existing road and service infrastructure.
- It would utilize town owned land and thus give the community a measure of control over unreasonable land speculation.

The disadvantages of the Centralized Model are listed below:

- It would require a major initial investment by the community to ensure that social and cultural facilities are included in the Centre. (This centre should be much more than a retail outlet for consumer goods).
- It would require a major initial investment by the community to consolidate land for efficient parking.

CENTRALIZED MODEL

PROPOSED RING ROAD

HIGHWAY
COMMERCIAL
no 2

DOWNTOWN
PERIPHERAL
SERVICES

NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES

DOWNTOWN

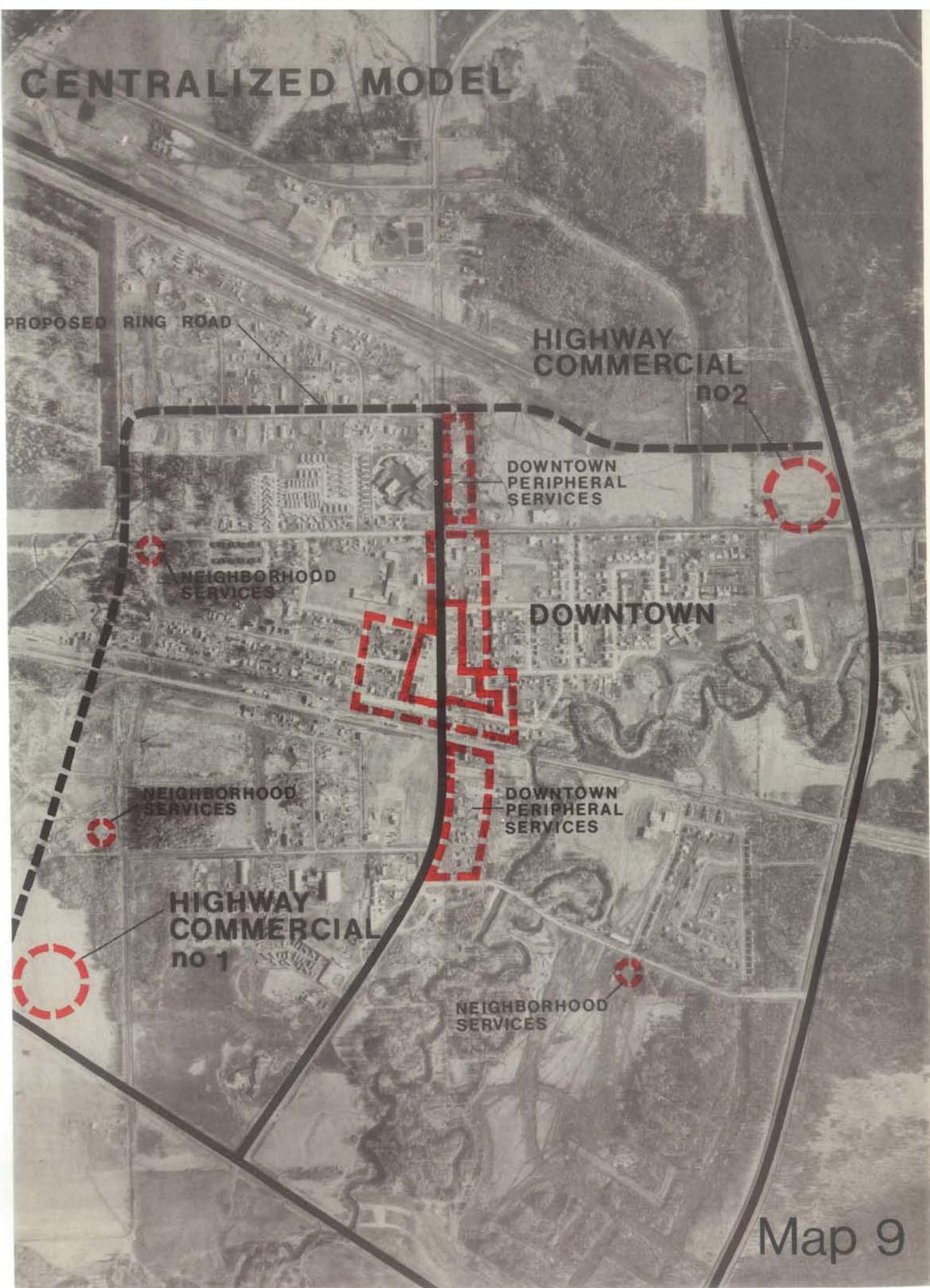
NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES

DOWNTOWN
PERIPHERAL
SERVICES

HIGHWAY
COMMERCIAL
no 1

NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES

Map 9



iii) Downtown Regional Centre: Rationale

The decentralized and centralized alternatives were voted on by Town Council in July, 1973 and it was decided to reinforce the existing downtown centre.

Due to the fact that the expansion of the downtown business district of Slave Lake was restricted by the railway line on its southern boundary and new housing surrounding its eastern, western and northern boundaries, there was no choice but to develop a planning scheme which provided for intensive development of the core. It was proposed that one multi-purpose structure, located on 3 acres of town owned land in the town centre, be built to accommodate most of the Town's recreational, cultural, and health facility needs as well as provide space for a major proportion of the commercial growth which was expected to impact on the Town.

The proposal, initially referred to as a "A Regional Centre" and a "Community Centre" came to be referred to finally, as the Downtown Regional Centre. This Centre was to accommodate all of the above needs under one roof with one new major structure being built on Main Street which would link up to a number of existing commercial buildings on the east side of Main Street, between First and Second Avenues (refer to Maps 10 and 10a - "Long Range Plan: Downtown Slave Lake").³³ Given the diverse needs which Slave Lake was facing as a result of the D.R.E.E. Program, it was determined that it would be more economical to build one major structure than it would to build a number of separate structures.

Having carried out a comparative analysis of all Alberta communities in the 3,000 to 6,000 population range, the planning team recommended that the Downtown Regional Centre provide approximately 100,000 square feet of flexible space to accommodate:

- a library (7,000 sq. ft.),
- a swimming pool (10,000 sq. ft.),

LONG RANGE PLAN

109.

SCHOOL



DWNTOWN SLAVE LAKE

Map 10

110.

Map 10a



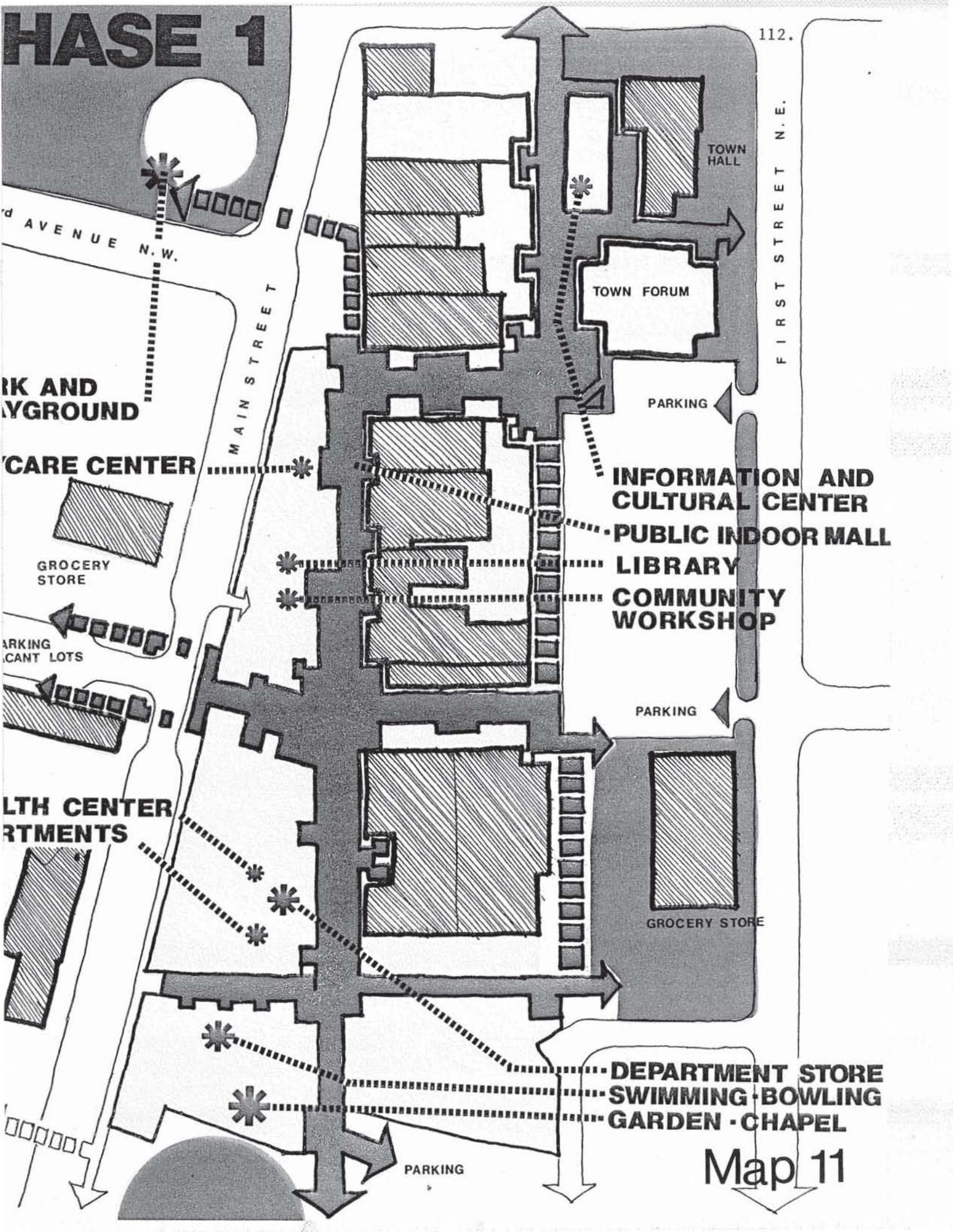
- bowling - billiards (5,000 sq. ft.),
- a town forum (8,000 sq. ft.),
- a day care centre (4,000 sq. ft.),
- a community workshop/flexible space (7,000 sq. ft.),
- a department store (25,000 sq. ft.),
- government and private offices (10,000 sq. ft.),
- specialty shops (5,500 sq. ft.),
- a snack bar and restaurant (7,000 sq. ft.), and
- professional, financial institutions (5,000 sq. ft.).

Other possible uses suggested for the Centre were an interdenominational chapel, a regional cultural-information centre and apartment units. The conceptual design of the Centre is presented in Maps 11 and 11a³⁴ and Illustrations No. 5 - "A Regional Center: Downtown Slave Lake: Section North - South"³⁵ and No. 6 - "Community Center: Downtown Slave Lake: Section East - West"³⁶ which show the site layout and cross-sectional views of the Centre, respectively.

The plan called for the creation of an enclosed pedestrian mall which would link the existing retail outlets on the east side of Main Street with the central structure described above. It was also planned that pedestrian walkways would link the central structure to surface parking lots located to the rear of the existing retail establishments.

A preliminary cost analysis carried out in June, 1973 by a Project Management firm³⁷ indicated that the construction cost of the Centre, excluding the cost of land and consultants fees, would be \$2,203,000. It was proposed that the funding of the public facilities be supported through the D.R.E.E. Program while the private components of the Centre be privately and independently financed.

PHASE 1



112.

AVENUE N.W.

MAIN STREET

FIRST STREET N.E.

PARK AND PLAYGROUND

CARE CENTER

GROCERY STORE

PARKING (CANT LOTS)

HEALTH CENTER DEPARTMENTS

TOWN HALL

TOWN FORUM

PARKING

INFORMATION AND CULTURAL CENTER

PUBLIC INDOOR MALL

LIBRARY

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

PARKING

GROCERY STORE

DEPARTMENT STORE
SWIMMING-BOWLING
GARDEN-CHAPEL

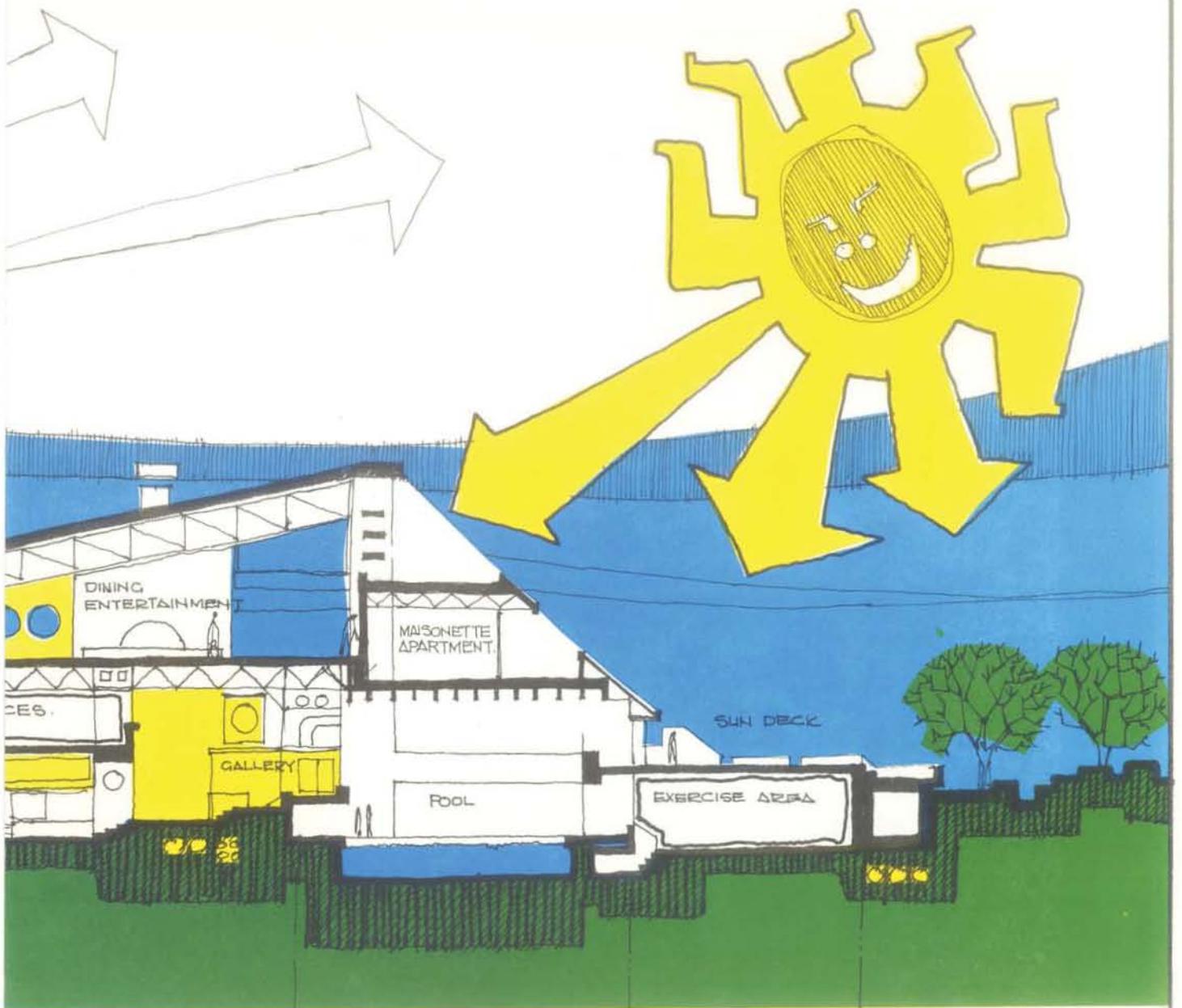
PARKING

Map 11



113.

Map 11a



NIGHT CLUB

MALL

POOL

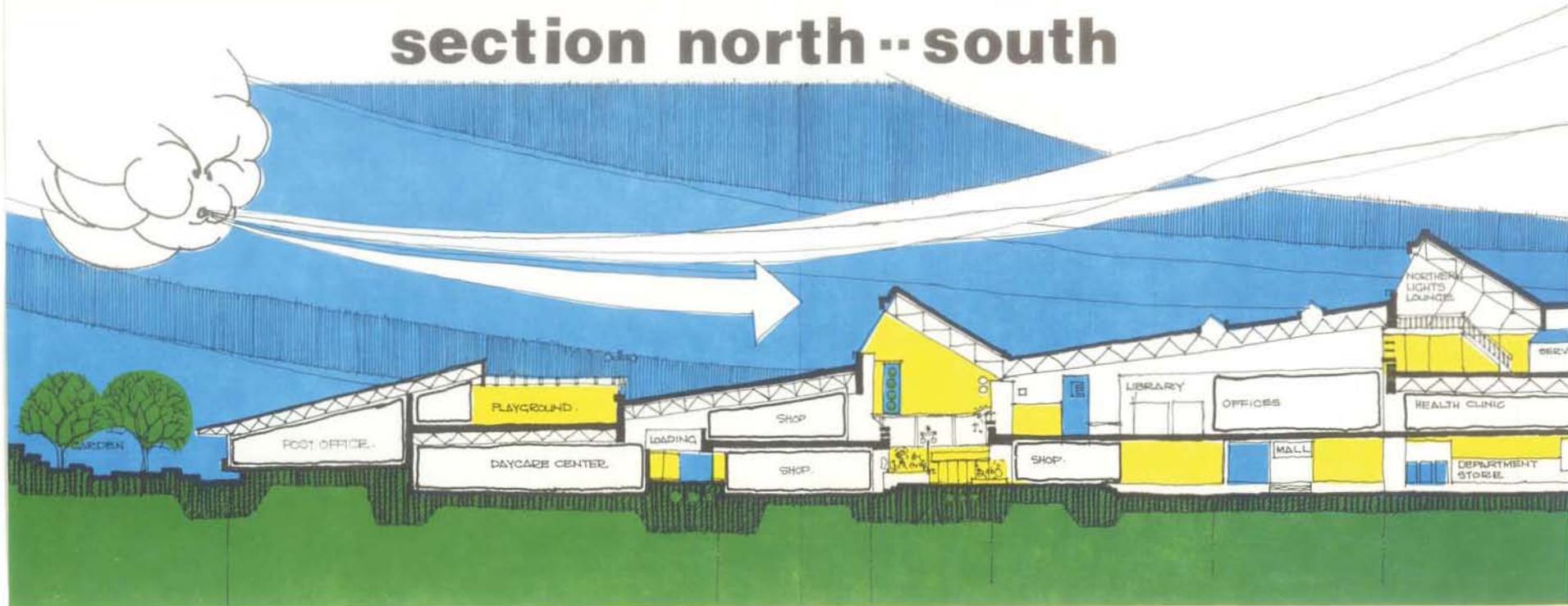
PLAZA

GARDEN

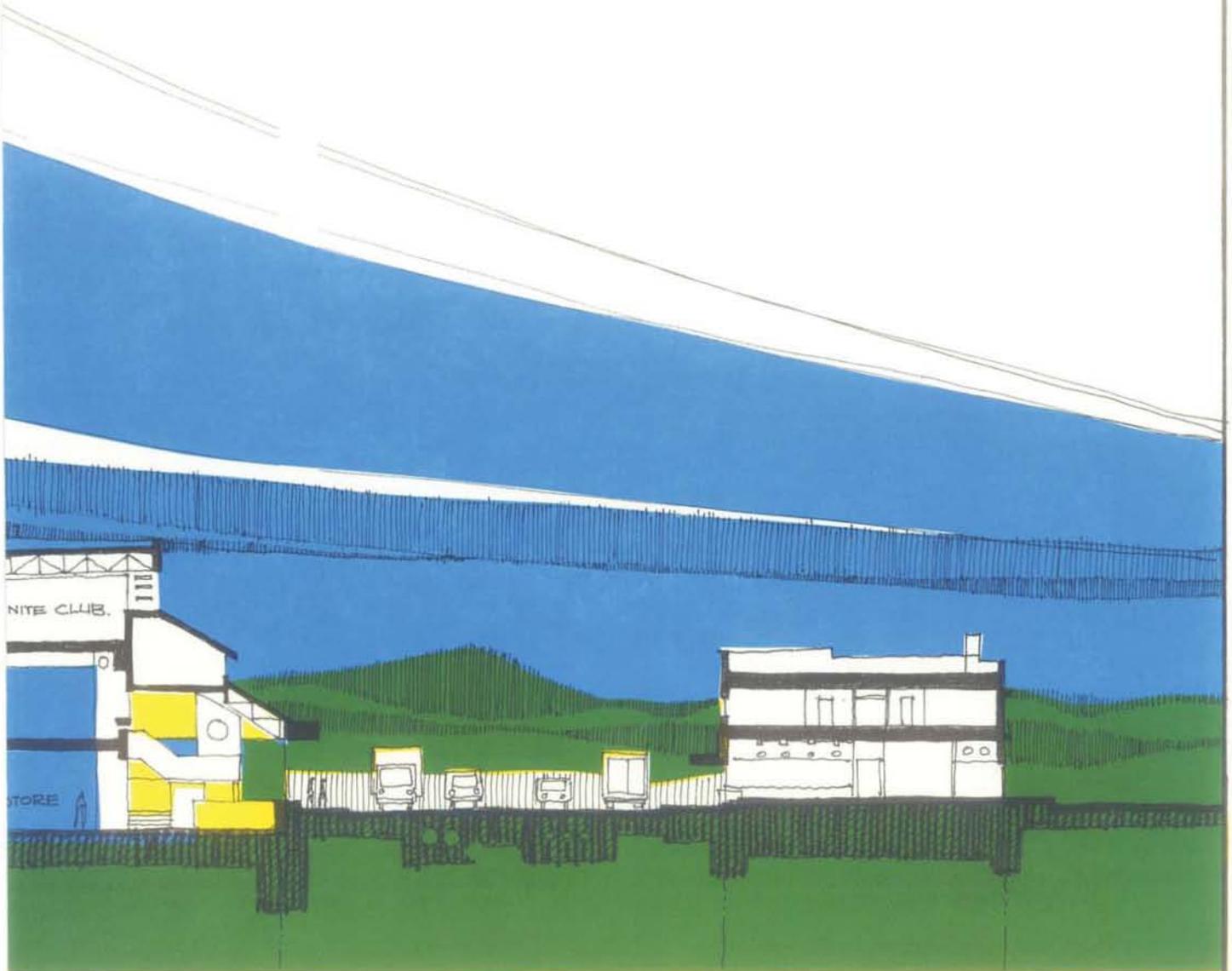
Illustration 5

A REGIONAL CENTER DOWNTOWN SLAVE LAKE

section north-south



GARDEN POST OFFICE DAYCARE SHOPS 2ND AVENUE MALL LIBRARY OFFICES HEALTH CLINIC
DEPARTMENT STORE



Y CENTER
NT STORE

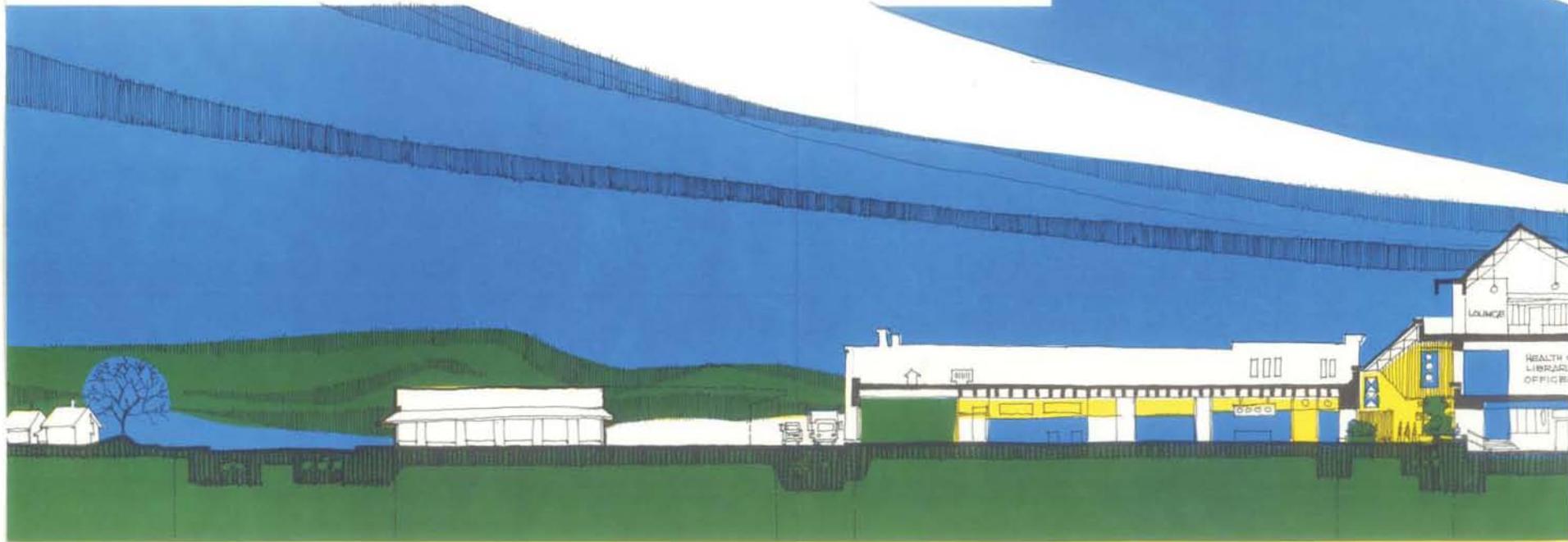
MAIN STREET

HOTEL

Illustration 6

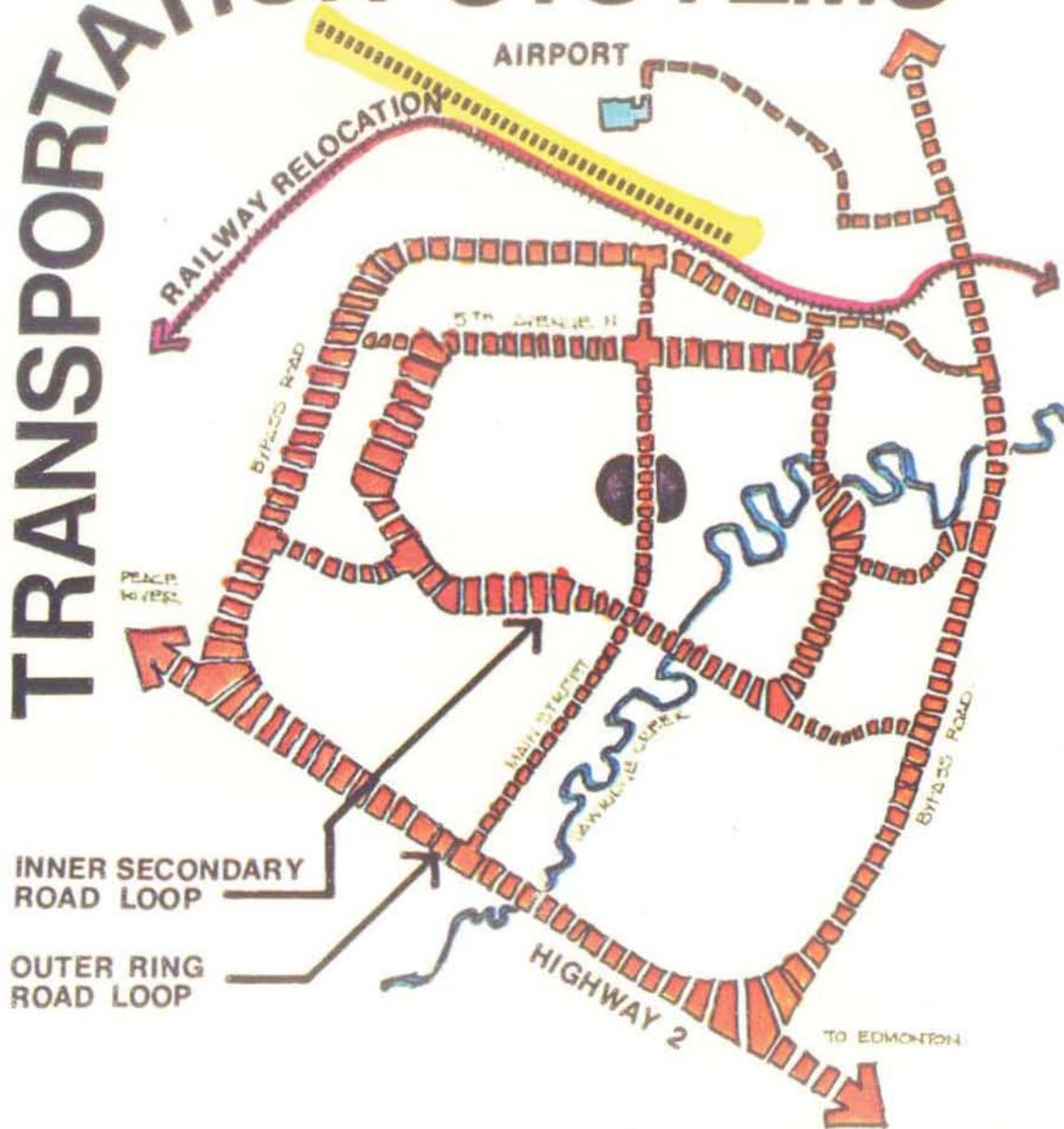
COMMUNITY CENTER DOWNTOWN SLAVE LAKE

section east - west



PARKING 1ST STREET N.E. GROCERY STORE LANE EXISTING RETAIL MALL COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



Map 12

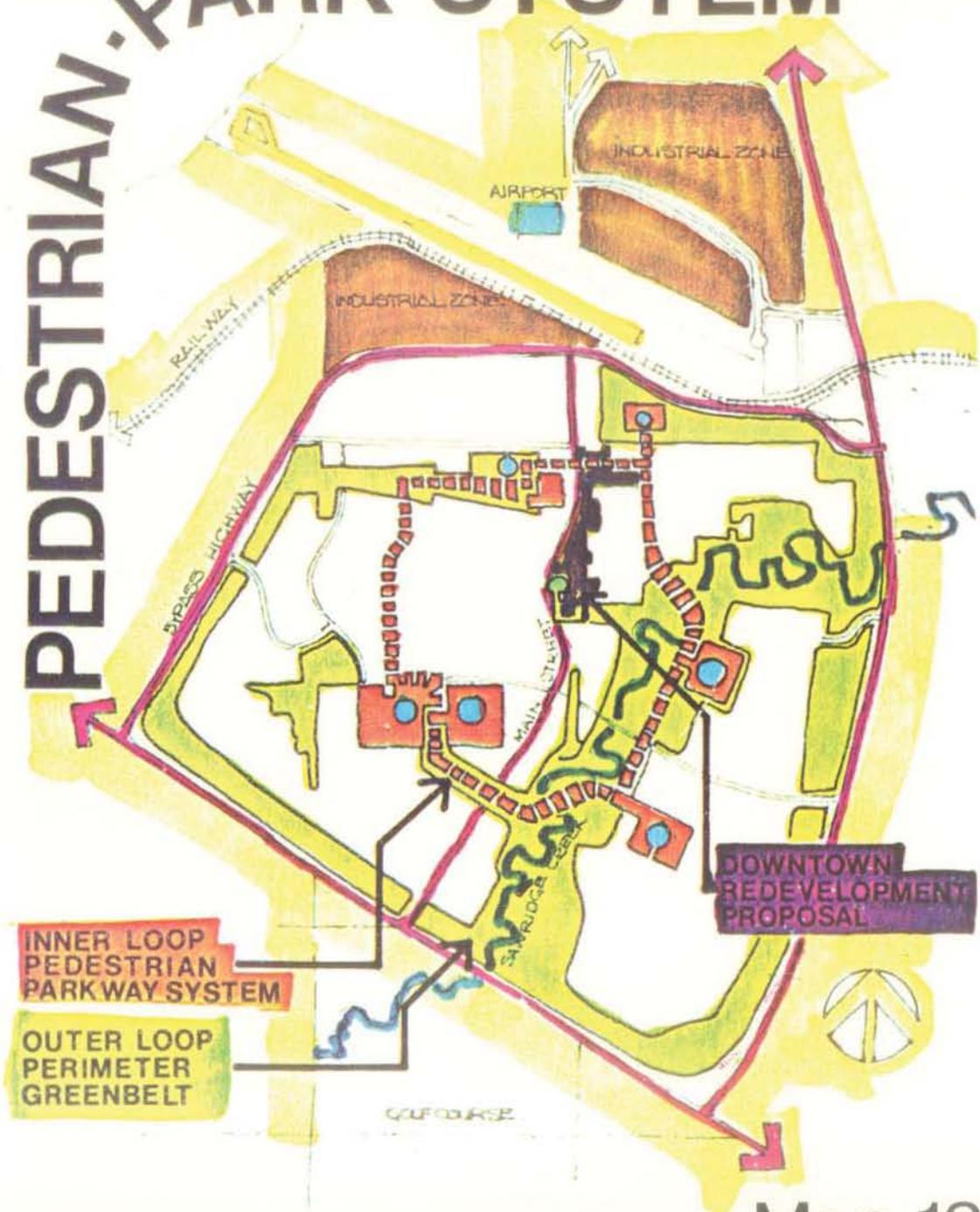
The proposed relocation of heavy truck traffic and rail traffic to the Town's perimeter was also going to allow the Town to develop a safe and effective pedestrian-park system. As illustrated in Map 13 - "Pedestrian-Park System",³⁹ this system called for a pedestrian corridor which linked up the major recreation grounds and future school site in the southwest sector, the two school grounds and Sawridge Creek in the southeast sector, and the school grounds and parks in the northeast and northwest sectors of Town. It was also proposed that the downtown be connected by walkway to this Inner Loop Pedestrian Parkway System. The Outer Loop Perimeter Greenbelt which consisted of a buffer zone of at least 60 metres in width between the residential areas and Outer Ring Road Loop, also connected up to the inner pedestrian corridor and ultimately, to the town centre.

Having established the growth concept for the Town, the planning team identified a number of specific improvements which would have to be made to the Town's community infrastructure in the short - medium term. The projects which were identified included improvements to the Town's road system, water system and sewer system, as well as the relocation of those industries in Town which were inappropriately located within future residential districts.⁴⁰ A summary of these projects, including a definition of need, costs and phasing is presented below.

i) Road System

The Long Range Plan recommended that a ring road be built around the western and northern edges of the Town. The ring road system was designed to eliminate the heavy truck traffic from the major school and park zones, to better serve the industrial area and to physically delineate the limits of residential growth in accordance with the Town's surrounding unstable soil conditions.

PEDESTRIAN-PARK SYSTEM



Map 13

The northern sector (refer to Map 12 - "Transportation Systems") was to be constructed first, at an estimated cost of \$206,000. This sector was to provide the initial link between the industrial area and the highway by-pass to the east. The western sector would provide access from Highway No. 2 from the south to the industrial area, at an estimated cost of \$318,300. This sector would delineate the western limits of residential growth and at the same time provide a drainage function for the southwest area of Slave Lake.

The Long Range Plan also recommended major improvements to the Town's Main Street approach road, at an estimated cost of \$260,910. Realignment of Main Street through the downtown area was required to allow construction of the Downtown Regional Centre. That portion of Main Street from Highway No. 2 to the downtown required upgrading and realignment in order to provide proper service road access to the adjacent businesses and to provide an improved entrance to Town.

Other roads in the northwest and southwest sectors of Town also required improvement in accordance with the regular engineering and public works program. These improvements would be phased in over a number of years, as development warranted, at an estimated overall cost of \$499,000.

ii) Water System

With the water treatment plant and water system capable of supporting approximately 5,000 to 7,000 people, the Long Range Plan recommended that future improvements would have to be made in conjunction with population growth. It was recommended that when the Town reached a population of 5,000 people, the existing water supply main would have to be twinned, at an estimated cost of \$75,000. It was also recommended that a new lift station, at an estimated cost of \$60,000, be built in the west end of Town, to accommodate new residential development in that area.

iii) Sewage System

Following consultation with the Alberta Department of Environment, it was recommended in the Long Range Plan that a third anaerobic pond be added to the sewage treatment lagoon within a two year time period. The estimated cost for this improvement was \$60,000.

iv) Industrial Relocation

As a result of the rapid growth which had occurred in the latter 1960's and early 1970's, many industrial service facilities in the Town were inappropriately located. In order to free some additional land for residential use, it was recommended in the Long Range Plan that these industries be moved to the new town owned industrial park north of the airport. The industries which required relocating were:

- The Alberta Department of Transportation maintenance and storage facility which occupied 8 acres in the centre of a proposed future residential development.
- The Town of Slave Lake maintenance yards which occupied a 3 acre site in the same vicinity as the Department of Transportation yard.
- The Alberta Department of Lands and Forests office, maintenance and storage facilities which occupied a 10 acre site adjacent to the downtown and bordered on two sides by elementary schools.
- Eleven small private industries in the southwest area of Town, in the centre of the proposed future residential development.

It was recommended that a fund of approximately \$440,000 be established to assist the private industries to move to new locations in Town. It was also recommended that discussions be initiated with the provincial government to negotiate the relocation of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Lands and Forests to new sites in the Town's industrial park adjacent to the airport.

3. Service Housing Proposal

Another major component of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan was a proposal to construct a housing project which would serve the unique housing needs associated with a booming resource town. It was proposed that this housing project be built as a pilot project which could later be adopted by the province as a basis for a housing policy applicable to rapidly growing northern resource towns.

It was suggested that in situations of rapid growth, the development of industry may be severely impeded by a lack of housing for incoming workers. The Long Range Plan identified a need for 200 subsidized housing units which would be designed to serve the needs of newcomers to Slave Lake. It was proposed that this medium density "Service Housing" project be directly subsidized by the provincial government, so that the owner of the project could offer subsidized rents scaled according to income and need. It was suggested that the Service Housing project should respond to the needs of all age groups and family structures, including the elderly, the young single person, young married couples, single parent families and so on.

It was recommended that incoming workers be subsidized for a specified time period (possibly one year), in order to give them a positive reception to their new community, to allow them time to save a down payment for a more permanent type of housing, and to allow time for conventional types of governmental housing assistance to come on stream in Slave Lake.

It was recommended that this pilot project incorporate a number of amenities which would help provide a sense of community within the housing complex, including recreational - entertainment facilities, craft and hobby areas and a communal kitchen. In addition, a range of services such as day care facilities, a convenience store and laundry facilities were to be part of the project so that women would be better able to participate in the work force. Furthermore, it was envisioned that the project could set an example by experimenting in the conservation and utilization of energy. In this regard, it was recommended that a hydroponic growing area be set aside in the project so that the residents could grow their own vegetables year round. A conceptual design of such a Service Housing project is presented in Illustration No. 7 - "Section Thru Downtown Service Housing",⁴¹ which shows a cross-sectional view of the proposal.

The Long Range Plan estimated that a \$1,500,000 project grant would be required, allowing for a subsidy of \$7,500 per unit (approximately 30% of the per unit cost) for 200 units. As indicated in Map 10 - "Long Range Plan: Downtown Slave Lake", the recommended location of the Service Housing project was a site adjacent to the downtown area on part of the property occupied by the Department of Lands and Forests. In order to implement this pilot project it was recommended that the provincial government tender out a proposal for developers to bid on both pre-determined Town owned sites or privately owned sites.

4. Planning, Architectural and Engineering Projects

In addition to outlining Slave Lake's physical planning needs, the Slave Lake Long Range Plan also identified a process by which the Plan could be implemented. The Plan identified a number of specialist studies and projects which would be necessary to implement the various physical components of the Plan. The estimated total cost of these studies and projects which are described below was \$489,950.

SECTION THRU DOWNTOWN SERVICE HOUSING



IK AREA

HOUSING UNITS
WALKWAY

WALKWAY
SERVICE · PARKING LEVEL

HYDROPONIC
GREENHOUSES

PUBLIC WALKWAY

Illustration 7

i) Roads Study: 1974 Priorities

Given the Long Range Plan's recommendations for a ring road system, improvements to Main Street approach road and other general improvements to the Town's transportation system, it was recommended that a study be carried out to determine which projects had the highest priority. The projects were to be prioritized according to their feasibility, need and cost. The estimated cost of this study was \$2,800.

ii) Engineering/Soils Study

In order to determine the exact developable limits of the southwest area of Town, it was recommended that a soils study be undertaken in this area, at an estimated cost of \$2,000. The soils study would determine the location of the western portion of the ring road and would help determine the pattern of the proposed residential development in the area.

iii) Legal and Development Advisory Service

As the Town would be involved in major transfers, purchases and sales of land in conjunction with the relocation of industry and the implementation of the Downtown Regional Centre, it was recommended that the Town hire professional legal and appraisal consultants on a retainer basis. The cost of this service was estimated to be \$14,000 over a two year time period.

iv) Railroad Relocation Planning Study

The Long Range Plan recommended that a railroad relocation planning study be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of relocating the Northern Alberta Railway from the downtown and adjacent residential areas to the industrial area to the north. It was suggested that the relocation of the railroad would improve the Town's capability for industrial expansion, as well as allow more

space for commercial and residential expansion. The study, which was to cost approximately \$15,000 was required to determine the feasibility and cost/benefit of railroad relocation, and, if necessary, to prepare the detailed application for federal funding.

v) Parks Master Plan

Through the Long Range Plan the planning team defined the public open space system in general terms. However, it was recommended that a more extensive Parks Master Plan be undertaken to consider the phased development of facilities, the costing of facilities and the definition of lands to be retained or acquired for future park space. The estimated cost of the Parks Master Plan was \$12,500.

vi) Information Coordination

The Long Range Plan recommended that the Town hire a full time information coordinator who would be responsible for advising incoming residents, businessmen, regional inhabitants and the Town Council on housing availability, housing program assistance availability, job training, social services and so on. It was suggested that such a central information office was needed to ensure the attraction and retention of a labour force for the expanding industries. The estimated cost of providing this service was to be \$20,000 per year.

vii) Downtown Regional Centre: Preliminary Design and Programming

The purpose of this study was to be the establishment of the framework within which the Centre would be implemented. This implementation study was to be divided into two parts, with the first part being the establishment of the ownership and management structure of the proposed Centre. The second function of the study was to be the determination of space requirements, layout criteria

and general environmental requirements of the various prospective uses of the Downtown Regional Centre. The study was also to develop guidelines for the redevelopment of existing buildings which would be incorporated into the Centre. Through the study, the rental structure and general conditions of leasing were to be established. It was estimated that this project would cost \$30,000.

viii) Service Housing: Preliminary Design and Tender Documents

It was recommended that a consultant be hired to develop design guidelines, schematics and a tender document which would encourage developers or non-profit organizations to build a Service Housing project under the general terms as outlined in the Slave Lake Long Range Plan. The cost of this study was estimated to be \$15,000.

ix) Roads Study: Engineering

It was recommended that a study be undertaken to prepare construction drawings for those roads which were to be built through the implementation of the Long Range Plan. The cost of this study was estimated to be \$76,500.

x) Downtown Regional Centre: Architectural and Engineering

Through the Long Range Plan it was recommended that a firm be contracted to develop preliminary drawings for structural, mechanical and electrical layouts in relation to the conceptual design of the Centre. The firm would also prepare construction drawings for tendering purposes and supervise construction of the Centre. The total cost for this study was estimated to be \$312,150.

5. Towards Implementation of the Plan

The above description of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan represents a summary of the Plan's components as it was presented to Town Council and the Slave Lake public in November, 1973. The following chapter describes the lengthy plan implementation process which followed this presentation of the Plan.

H. NOTES AND REFERENCES, CHAPTER II

- 1 The functions of the Provincial Planning Branch in 1973 were:
 - to administer the provisions of the Planning Act;
 - to provide planning and development advisory services (upon request) to those municipalities lying outside the seven established Regional Planning Commission areas and the cities of Edmonton and Calgary;
 - to act as the subdivision approving authority for those municipalities mentioned above;
 - to provide professional planning expertise to other provincial government departments, Regional Planning Commissions, and government appointed task forces and ad hoc committees;
 - to act as the executive, technical and administrative arm of the Provincial Planning Board; and
 - to initiate, formulate and carry out province-wide research programs on matters relating to planning and development.
- 2 "Town of Slave Lake Housing Study," Alberta Housing Corporation, C.M.H.C. and D.R.E.E., May 1973, 77 pp.
- 3 The roles of those people on the planning team and the method of operation of the team is discussed in Section D, following.
- 4 Northland Free Press, Slave Lake, Alberta, May 22, 1973, p. 4.
- 5 Planning Theory I notebook, University of Manitoba, City Planning Department, November 1971, p. 52.
- 6 Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary defines strategy as: the science and art of conducting a military campaign on a broad scale; a plan or technique for achieving some end.

- 7 Barclay M. Hudson: "Comparison of Current Planning Theories: Counterparts and Contradictions", Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 45, No. 4, (October 1979), p. 397.
- 8 "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November, 1973, p. 3.
- 9 Harry Lash: "The Great City Debate", (transcript of the debate), August 30, 1970, p. 18.
- 10 John Friedmann: "From Polemics to Dispassionate Analysis", International Social Science Journal, Vol. II, No. 3, 1959, p. 332.
- 11 "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November, 1973, p. 3.
- 12 Ibid, p. 8.
- 13 Harry Lash: "The Great City Debate", (transcript of the debate), August 30, 1970, p. 12.
- 14 Ibid., p. 23.
- 15 Arni Fullerton: covering letter included in the report - "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November, 1973.
- 16 Harry Lash: "The Great City Debate", (transcript of the debate), August 30, 1970, p. 20.
- 17 "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November, 1973, (an excerpt), inside front cover.
- 18 Ibid., (an excerpt), front cover.
- 19 Ibid., (an excerpt), p. 23.
- 20 Ibid., (an excerpt), p. 24.
- 21 John Friedmann: "From Polemics to Dispassionate Analysis", International Social Science Journal, Vol. II, No. 3, 1959, p. 334.

- 22 Jacob L. Crane: Urban Planning: Illusion and Reality,
New York: (Vantage Press), 1973, p. 59.
- 23 Ibid., p. 59.
- 24 Ibid., p. 113.
- 25 Ibid., p. 118.
- 26 "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta",
Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November,
1973, p.3.
- 27 John Friedmann: "From Polemics to Dispassionate Analysis",
International Social Science Journal, Vol. II, No. 3, 1959,
p. 331.
- 28 This figure is taken from the 24" by 32" map/poster of the
Slave Lake Long Range Plan which was produced by the Provincial
Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, June, 1974.
- 29 Sections 94 to 99 inclusive of The Planning Act (1970) of Alberta
define the basic content and method of adoption of a General
Plan. These sections form the legal framework within which a
municipality may carry out its planning and development. The
section from the Act describing the content of the General Plans
is presented below to indicate the rather comprehensive require-
ments of such documents:
95. A general plan
- (a) shall be prepared under the direction of qualified planning
officers or qualified planning consultants, who shall be
appointed by the council and be responsible to it, or if the
municipality is situated in a regional planning area it may be
prepared by the regional planning commission, who shall be
responsible to the council,
- (b) shall be prepared on the basis of surveys and studies of land
use, population growth, the economic base of the municipality,
its transportation and communication needs, public services,
social services and such other factors as are relevant to the
preparation of a general plan,
- (c) shall include
- (i) a map showing the division of all or part of the land
that is to be included in the general plan into areas
of permitted land use classes that the Council considers
necessary for the purposes of the general plan,

- (ii) proposals as to the content of a development control by-law or a zoning by-law,
 - (iii) proposals relating to the provision of public roadways, services, public buildings, schools, parks and recreation areas and the reservation of land for these and other public and community purposes,
 - (iv) a schedule setting out the sequence in which specified areas of land may be developed or re-developed and in which the public services and facilities referred to in sub-clause (iii) should be provided in specified areas, and
 - (v) proposals for a period of not less than five years after the adoption of the plan relating to the financing and programming of public development projects and capital works to be undertaken by the municipalities or other public authorities having jurisdiction within the area included in the general plan, and
- (d) shall include such other written statements, reports, charts, and drawings as may be necessary to express and illustrate the proposals contained in the general plan.

30

A list of the planning reports which were produced through the Slave Lake planning process is found in the bibliography of this thesis.

31

"An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November, 1973, (an excerpt), p. 19.

32

Ibid., (an excerpt), p. 21.

33

Ibid., (an excerpt), pp. 7, 8.

34

Ibid., (an excerpt), pp. 10, 11.

35

Ibid., (an excerpt), p. 43.

36

Ibid., (an excerpt), p. 15.

37

Ibid., pp. 39, 40.

38

This figure is taken from the map/poster of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan which was produced by the Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, June, 1974.

39

Ibid.

- 40 The proposal to relocate the railroad is not included here because it was a more long term proposal dependent upon a feasibility study and an application to the federal government for funding.
- 41 "An Idea for a Regional Center in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November, 1973, (an excerpt), p. 32.

CHAPTER III

PLANNING IS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION: SEEKING THE FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the activities and personal reactions of the planning team during the planning process covering the time period from November, 1973 to September, 1976. During this time period the planning team was involved in a process characterized by two separate streams of activity occurring simultaneously:

- a political negotiating process where the Town Council with the assistance of the planning team was seeking a political commitment from the provincial government to continue to support the Town in its role as the urban growth centre of the regional development program. In this process we were seeking the funds to implement the Slave Lake Long Range Plan in its entirety.

- an ongoing incremental plan-implementation process where the planning team was trying to facilitate the implementation of certain components of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan, as permitted within the Town's existing finances.

Throughout the entire planning process, it was difficult to differentiate between the planning and implementation activities. For the most part we could not tell when the planning ended or when implementation began, as the dynamics of the rapid and fluctuating growth situation created a cyclical process where planning led to implementation which led to re-planning and so on.

As a result of this phenomenon and the need for the planning team to continually concentrate on attaining funds to keep the planning process alive, we adopted the maxim - "Planning is in the Implementation". Coined by Arni Fullerton, this phrase,

which testified to our commitment to plan implementation, was one way of re-iterating another maxim which is so familiar in the planning profession - "Plans which sit on shelves aren't worth the paper they're written on". In other words, we believed that the test of planning is in the implementation, in the ability of planners to follow through on their plans. While we were not tied to the notion that the Long Range Plan had to be implemented exactly as defined in November, 1973, we were committed to following through and seeing as much of it implemented as possible, even if it was to happen "a little at a time".

The following account of the planning process will illustrate how the planning team focussed on implementation in both the political negotiating and plan-implementation activities. While both of these streams of activity influenced each other in a general way, they were for the most part, two identifiable, independent streams. In order to illustrate the interplay, or lack thereof, between these two streams of activity, both the political negotiating and incremental planning activities will be presented as they occurred in time. The incremental planning activities have been typed in italics so that the reader may easily differentiate between the two streams.

Since it would be impossible and of little value to describe in detail every bit of progress made in the incremental planning process, only some of the more significant events will be presented.

This chapter describes in chronological order, the key events which took place during the four phases of this ongoing planning process (refer to Graph 3 - "The Slave Lake Planning Process: 1973-1976"). Both the events and the reactions of the planning team or Slave Lake Council are examined in those sections. A brief description of each of the phases in the planning process is presented below.

The first phase (November, 1973 - July, 1974) could be described as an internal negotiating process where the Provincial Planning Branch was negotiating on behalf of the Town, with Alberta Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, seeking a renewed D.R.E.E. Agreement between the province and the federal government which would include a firm commitment to the implementation of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan.

This first phase is described in some detail since it was during these months that the most intensive and telling political negotiations took place. It was the planning team's strategy to try to force a political decision out of the provincial government soon after the Plan was made public, since the D.R.E.E. Agreement was still in place and the impact of the D.R.E.E. Program was at its peak.

The second phase (July, 1974 - March, 1975), could be referred to as an external negotiating process, where the Town entered into direct negotiations with the Province, using whatever political pressure it could bring to bear on the situation.

The third phase of negotiations (March, 1975 - July, 1976) which began after the official termination of the D.R.E.E. Program, was a longer and less intense phase of negotiations between the Town and the provincial government with the Town Council seeking New Town status for their community.

The fourth phase (July, 1976 - November, 1976) was a period when the closure of a major industrial plant at Mitsue Lake brought the longstanding issue of provincial support for Slave Lake to a head. The closure of this industry, which was the third to run into financial difficulties within a two and a half year period, had the potential of destroying the progress made through the D.R.E.E. Program over the preceding five year period. This caused Slave Lake Council to approach the Premier to demand action at the

political level on a number of outstanding issues in the Town and the Region as a whole. It seems that in the end result, this crisis situation seemed to bring about a normalization of the political negotiations between the Town and the Province.

B. AN INTERNAL NEGOTIATING PROCESS (NOVEMBER 1973 - JULY 1974)

For several weeks at the beginning of this period, we were still receiving feedback from the Slave Lake public and various government agencies about the planning proposals which we had presented in November. The overall response of people in the community suggested to Council that the general public approved of the plans, and of Council's policy of approaching the provincial and federal governments for financial support. This feedback from the community was mainly from reaction at the public presentation of the plans and through person to person contact between the local residents and the Town Councillors and the Town Administration staff.

The two local newspapers took opposing positions on the merits of the Long Range Plan, with The Northland Free Press being enthusiastically in support of the Plan, and the Slave Lake Scope being critical of the Plan, which in the editor's opinion would be too expensive for the Town of Slave Lake. We had expected the criticism from the latter editor because he had been critical of the D.R.E.E. Program in general from its inception. His main criticism of the regional development program was that there was too much costly government interference in the affairs of the Region and the Town and that only a few local businessmen were benefitting from the Program. We decided that rather than confronting him and starting a debate with him through his newspaper, that we would just carry on with our plan to keep the public well informed about the ongoing planning process, mainly through the Town Manager's "Report to Residents" column in both newspapers. This approach was consistent with our physical planning strategy of "focussing on the possibilities rather than the problems".

Slave Lake Council first announced its intentions to carry out political negotiations back during the plan preparation stages when it was stated in the newspapers that they would be seeking an extension of the town infrastructure portion of the D.R.E.E. Agreement once these infrastructure needs were identified. Before starting in on the negotiation process with the provincial government, Council decided to review with me the political strategy for the months ahead. We realized that we were approaching a very critical stage in the planning process. Over the next few months, the Town Council would be initiating negotiations with the provincial government for funds to implement the Plan. At the same time that they would be negotiating with the provincial government for funds to implement the Long Range Plan in its entirety, Council would also be carrying out further research and negotiations in an attempt to implement those components of the Plan which did not necessarily require financial support from the other levels of government. For example, the Town could proceed on the initiation of certain planning studies, road improvements, land negotiations and so on.

The first sign of the incremental plan-implementation process beginning were the discussions on what planning resources would be needed for the upcoming months when Slave Lake Council would be involved in negotiations with the provincial government. It was felt that because of the comprehensive and technical nature of the Long Range Plan proposals, Council should have a broad base of expertise available for this critical negotiation period. In early January, therefore, the author recommended to Council that they hire Arni Fullerton, whose contract with the Provincial Planning Branch had run out at the end of 1973. In terms of maintaining continuity and credibility in the planning process it was felt advisable to re-hire Arni, to help advise on plan-implementation and the negotiations for funding. I also recommended to Council that they hire a private real estate consultant to assist in land assembly and real estate negotiations necessary for the implementation of various components of the Long Range Plan, such as the proposals for downtown redevelopment, industrial relocation and

railway relocation. It was suggested that this real estate expertise was necessary to counteract the severe development pressure which was impacting on the Town at this time.

Council agreed with these suggestions and hired Arni Fullerton and Ed Burgoyne, a real estate appraiser who had formerly worked for the City of Calgary for several years in directing the City's Downtown Urban Renewal Program. By the end of January, therefore, the planning team consisted of Arni, Ed, myself, the planning committee of Council, the Town Manager, and the Town Development Officer.

From the generally favourable response of townspeople to the proposals contained in the Long Range Plan, Town Council decided to adopt the Plan by resolution and start negotiating for funds immediately. It was clear to the Council that their financial position would not allow them to provide these needed facilities on their own and, for those reasons cited in Chapter II, Section F.1. of this thesis, it was also clear that the political negotiations with the province would be difficult.

Just as Council was preparing to start negotiations with the provincial and federal governments, the two senior governments were beginning to negotiate between themselves regarding a change in D.R.E.E.'s operations in the province. The Alberta Government was demanding to have a stronger voice in determining where and how D.R.E.E. funds would be spent in the province. The two governments had agreed to phase out the "Special Area" approach to funding and were replacing this type of programming with a general Alberta-D.R.E.E. Agreement where funding would apply to all areas of the province. Under an umbrella-type agreement called the General Development Agreement there were to be a series of Subsidiary Agreements which would supplement the existing programs of the provincial line departments.

In January, 1974, the Alberta Government formed a committee called the Interdepartmental Working Group on D.R.E.E. (I.W.G.O.D.) which had the function of carrying out this change in policy. This committee fell within the auspices of the Alberta Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs (F.I.G.A.) and was made up of civil servants at the Assistant Deputy Minister level from a number of provincial government departments, with the chairman being the representative from F.I.G.A.

I attended some of the first meetings of this committee and at a January meeting asked the chairman what was to happen to the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area D.R.E.E. Agreement which was scheduled to continue for another two years. He did not have a direct answer to this question when it was asked but at the next meeting he informed the committee that sometime in the upcoming months there would be an interim agreement drawn up to deal with Slave Lake because of the cancellation of the "Special Area" approach and the establishment of a "General Agreement" approach. The chairman indicated that he was getting his direction from the political (Ministerial or Cabinet) level and he gave the impression that the provincial politicians were still uncertain as to their commitment to the Slave Lake area. Nevertheless, he recommended that the Provincial Planning Branch should present a comprehensive funding proposal to the committee and that if it were approved by the Committee it would be transmitted to the Provincial Cabinet.

While we were confident that we could put together a solid argument for the government to support the Town, we were not overly optimistic of the chances of the province reaching agreement with the federal government for those reasons mentioned in Chapter II, F.1. of this thesis. We became particularly skeptical when we learned through our initial contacts with F.I.G.A. and D.R.E.E. that the debate between the provincial and federal governments over the pricing of Alberta's petroleum resources was having a noticeable effect on the federal-provincial discussions regarding the future of D.R.E.E. programming in the province. In any case, federal-

provincial relations were at an extremely low point at the time and we could see that Slave Lake's case, no matter how valid it seemed, could easily be sacrificed for purely political reasons.

In mid January, Zeidler Plywood Ltd., a new forest products industry began production at Mitsue Lake, creating 115 new jobs. Therefore, in the beginning stages of the plan-implementation process a total of 418 new jobs had been created (North American Stud Co. - 225 jobs, Vanderwell Contractors - 43 jobs, Sawridge Motor Hotel - 35 jobs and Zeidler Plywood Ltd. - 115 jobs) and a further 283 jobs were expected to come on stream within the next two and a half years (Arcom Systems Ltd. - 65 jobs, Noral Manufacturing Ltd. - 7 jobs and Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. - 210 jobs) as a result of the D.R.E.E. Program. The momentum which had been building up during the plan preparation stages was clearly in the Town's favour at the beginning of the political negotiation process, in terms of placing pressure on the provincial government to decide on whether or not to support the Town.

During the first few weeks in January the planning team was involved in an informal negotiating process with the chairman of the I.W.G.O.D. committee where we communicated back and forth regarding the proper approach which we should take with the "Slave Lake Proposal". We discussed openly with him the nature and scope of Slave Lake's needs, keeping him attuned to our progress as we began to put together the comprehensive proposal. Throughout this period he assured us that there would be some kind of commitment made to support Slave Lake over the next two or three years.

Throughout the period that the planning team was preparing the Slave Lake Proposal, the team was also making some headway in laying the groundwork for the implementation of the Long Range Plan. In early February, a development agreement was signed between a local developer and Town Council regarding the developer's plan to construct an interior mall in his new commercial building as was planned in the Downtown Regional Centre

concept. This agreement came as a result of some rather intensive negotiations and we felt that we had established an important precedent in terms of ensuring that downtown development conformed with the Downtown Regional Centre concept. It also was symbolic in terms of showing the provincial and federal governments that the Town Council was determined to implement the plan for the downtown. Since this agreement might not have been concluded successfully if we did not have an expert in real estate negotiations on the planning team, we felt that our decision to add this area of expertise to the team was a timely decision.

Later in February, Slave Lake's Town Engineers presented a report to Town Council outlining the estimated costs of the Main Street roadway improvements and the Ring Road extension as proposed in the Long Range Plan.¹ This report helped to establish the Town's transportation system priorities, although the actual timing of the construction of the parts of the system would, of course, be dependent upon the possibility of obtaining funds through the D.R.E.E. Program, the Alberta Department of Transportation, and/or existing Town revenue.

In March, the author, with a person from the Areas and Facilities Branch of Alberta Culture, Youth and Recreation, began preparing detailed terms of reference for a Slave Lake Parks Master Plan. The study was to cost \$15,000 and be carried out by a private consulting firm. A small committee from Slave Lake, made up of the Town's Recreation Director and three local residents, was formed to participate in the finalization of the terms of reference, the hiring of the consulting firm and the monitoring of the project as it proceeded.

During April, the Town Council was faced with a proposal put forward by the Federal Department of Public Works, which wanted to build a new Post Office and Manpower Building on a site next to the Town Hall. Council rejected the proposal as it did not conform to the plan for the redevelopment of the downtown which Council had

just recently approved. Since the Long Range Plan had designated that site for the future expansion of the Town Hall, Council negotiated with the Public Works representatives to take over the option to purchase the property beside the Town Hall and to find an alternative site for the Post Office. One of Council's alternative sites was in a section of the proposed Downtown Regional Centre complex. During these negotiations the Town attempted to encourage the Department to hold off on their plans until the Town had a decision from the senior governments as to whether or not they would fund the Downtown Regional Centre - a decision which they expected would be reached within a few months.

In order to ensure that we could forestall any other developments in the downtown which might conflict with the proposed Downtown Regional Centre, the planning team recommended that a "Regional Centre Working Committee" be formed. This new committee was formed, made up of three downtown business people, two citizens at large, Arni Fullerton, Ed Burgoyne and the author. We felt that this was an important extension of the planning team in that it would help us keep the local business community informed as to the progress on the critical political negotiations during the upcoming months, while ensuring that proposed developments in the downtown area would not rule out the possibility of building the Centre in the future.

After having been endorsed by Slave Lake Council, the report which we referred to as the "Slave Lake Proposal" was submitted to the I.W.G.O.D. committee at the end of April.² In the covering letter of the report the Deputy Director of the Planning Branch stated that the proposals contained within the report were supported by the Department of Municipal Affairs and were necessary to answer the Town's comprehensive needs during this period of rapid growth. The report suggested that these needs be covered under three new Interim Subsidiary Agreements to the Alberta - D.R.E.E. General Development Agreement, with the three sub-agree-

ments addressing Slave Lake's needs for town infrastructure, housing, and planning, respectively.

It was explained that these agreements would enable the Town to implement the Slave Lake Long Range Plan over a period of two to three years, extending the implementation process beyond the time frame of the D.R.E.E. Agreement which was to continue to March 31, 1975. The proposal recommended that the federal and provincial governments provide a total of \$2,553,355 in grants to the Town, \$2,168,355 in loans, and that the Town allocate \$385,000 of its existing revenue towards the implementation of the Plan over this time period. The chairman of the I.W.G.O.D. committee suggested that the committee members review the proposal and that the proposal could be dealt with in a few weeks time.

The Planning Branch took the position that the Slave Lake Proposal, if approved, could become a model for resolving the comprehensive needs of rapid growth resource communities. In fact, the Planning Branch was in the process of preparing another general proposal for an Alberta - D.R.E.E. sub-agreement which was based on the Slave Lake experience and would apply to any town experiencing rapid growth.³ It should be noted that while the Provincial Planning Branch Director felt that both of these proposed sub-agreements were of critical importance, he was not able to secure an endorsement for the proposals from either the Deputy Minister or the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It appeared that because of the political sensitivity of the Slave Lake situation, the Minister of Municipal Affairs was unwilling to give his support to the Slave Lake proposal prior to its submission to the I.W.G.O.D. committee.

Throughout the following three month period when the I.W.G.O.D. committee was reviewing the Slave Lake Proposal, the planning team continued on with the initiation of certain projects relating to the implementation of the Long Range Plan. In May, the Slave Lake Council decided upon a private consulting firm to

carry out the "Slave Lake Railroad Relocation Planning Study". The study, which was to cost \$5,000 would analyze the feasibility, costs, and alternative locations of rail relocation within Slave Lake. Another study which was initiated during this period was the Engineering/Soils Study which was undertaken to determine the development capability of southwest Slave Lake. In addition to providing background information for the design of the future residential development in the southwest area, the study would help delineate the preferred alignment of the western portion of the Ring Road. The private consulting firm which was awarded the \$2,000 contract was to be assisted by the Town Development Officer and the Municipal Engineer from the Provincial Planning Branch.

During June, the author initiated negotiations with F.I.G.A. to have a number of Slave Lake's planning and engineering studies funded through the Alberta - D.R.E.E. Interim Planning Agreement, an agreement to cover any studies or projects which were initiated during the period of transition between the cancellation of the "Special Area" approach and the introduction of the General Development Agreement. These negotiations proved to be successful and later that month, the federal government had agreed to fund up to 50% of the cost of the following Slave Lake studies: the Parks Master Plan; the Railroad Relocation Planning Study; the Roads Study; 1974 Priorities; the Engineering/Soils Study; the Legal and Development Advisory Services; and, the Architectural - Planning Services related to the Downtown Regional Centre proposal. The maximum amount claimable from the federal government was \$35,150.

When the Slave Lake Proposal was being prepared, the planning team had discussed the merits of Slave Lake Council meeting with a few key Ministers to review the Slave Lake situation prior to the Proposal being considered at the interdepartment committee level. The letter which had been sent in May to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs, Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and Northern Affairs respectively, resulted in a meeting

being arranged for the beginning of July, a week before the crucial interdepartmental committee meeting. A delegation consisting of the Mayor, the Town Manager, five Councillors, Arni Fullerton, Ed Burgoyne and the author, was to meet with the Ministers at the Provincial Legislative Building in Edmonton.

At the preparatory sessions for this meeting we worked out the strategy for the meeting where the Slave Lake Council members would do most of the talking, while the planning consultants would serve a supportive role and explain any technical aspects of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan if called upon. It was agreed to emphasize in the presentation the fact that the provincial and federal governments induced the rapid growth by joint agreement in 1970 and therefore were morally if not legally obliged to follow through on what they started. Slave Lake Council felt that the provincial government was badly misinformed on many of the facts regarding the regional development program and their Town's situation. The decision was made to attempt to correct these misunderstandings at the outset of the meeting and then move on to discuss the positive aspects of the D.R.E.E. Program, and the possibilities of the Town.

The meeting produced few surprises for the Slave Lake delegation as the Ministers listened attentively to the Town's presentation and adopted a defensive stance to any suggestion that their government was not cooperating and supporting the Town. The Town delegation was attempting to be as tactful as possible in accusing the provincial government of abandoning the D.R.E.E. Program and the Town at a time when the major impact of the industrial growth was just hitting the Town. The Ministers succeeded in talking around this question for most of the meeting until the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs admitted candidly that upon review of the situation, "It looks like we geared down too soon." Although the Slave Lake people had suspected that there was some kind of unwritten policy to gear down the Program, it was still a shock for them to hear this statement by the Minister.

In closing the meeting, the Minister of Municipal Affairs suggested that the Ministers had learned a great deal about Slave Lake's situation and would do everything in their power in the future to cooperate with the Town. Towards this end he proposed that the following decisions be entered into the minutes of the meeting:

1. Dave Russell, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, to circulate memo to other Cabinet Ministers asking that they re-emphasize to their Departments that there should be no negative bias when dealing with the Town of Slave Lake.
2. In connection with the Town's representation on the need for additional funds for the development of municipal services, Dave Russell indicated that Slave Lake's proposal would be considered within the framework of a Government review on municipal financing which is now underway.
3. In the matter of a liaison person, Mayor Boisvert will contact Dave Russell by letter, with a suggestion on an appropriate individual and how the person might operate.
4. Mayor Boisvert to indicate, on a confidential basis, those Government Departments or Agencies with which Slave Lake has had problems.
5. The D.R.E.E. Committee proposals will be considered by the Economic Planning Committee of Cabinet (the Town indicated that if these proposals are approved then most of the Town's problems would be solved).⁴

The Slave Lake delegation had mixed reactions to the meeting, but the general concensus was that the meeting produced no concrete results to speak of. Slave Lake Council was not too hopeful that the actions promised by the Minister of Municipal Affairs would be of any substantial benefit and still felt that the only real solution was to gain a clear political commitment from the government through the approval of the Slave Lake proposal. Nevertheless, the Town Council felt that they had at least achieved two things: they had begun a communication and education process with the provincial politicians and had attained an admission from a key politician that the province was still either against or neutral to the objectives of the D.R.E.E. Program. And furthermore, although they were skeptical of the promises of future support, at least they felt that they could quote them in future negotiations.

The chairman of the I.W.G.O.D. committee, in informal discussions with the planning team following the above meeting, suggested that we were just on the verge of securing some kind of agreement of support for Slave Lake at the committee level. Since an agreement at this committee level would send the proposal on to Cabinet we felt at this point that an answer to Slave Lake's problems was near. We were encouraged by the fact that the negotiation process was moving relatively quickly at this stage and we felt that the provincial government was perhaps softening in its attitude towards the D.R.E.E. Program.

The day before the regular meeting of the I.W.G.O.D. committee (July 10, 1974) when the Slave Lake Proposal was to be decided upon, the Planning Branch hosted a special meeting of the I.W.G.O.D. committee members to allow for a detailed discussion of the Proposal. It was the standard practice of this committee that any government department proposing Sub-Agreements under the General Development Agreement was required to hold such an informational meeting prior to calling for a decision. I had arranged this special meeting during the preceeding week, contacting the people directly.

I chaired the meeting which was attended by 12 people from the various provincial government departments. Also in attendance, at my invitation was a person from Slave Lake who had been a central figure in the evolution of the regional development program. I briefly summarized the results of the previous week's meeting with the Ministers and reviewed the Slave Lake Proposal which had been sent to them two months earlier. The meeting went smoothly with the I.W.G.O.D. committee chairman advising us at the end of the meeting that as far as he was concerned it looked certain that Slave Lake's proposal would be accepted by his committee.

The next day, Arni Fullerton, Ed Burgoyne and I attended the regular I.W.G.O.D. committee meeting prepared to recommend approval of the Slave Lake Proposal. We sensed that something was wrong when the committee chairman moved the Slave Lake discussion

from the beginning to the end of the agenda. Although the chairman allowed Arni Fullerton and Ed Burgoyne to stay for most of the meeting, he asked them to leave the meeting for the Slave Lake discussion, stating that any decision on this matter was strictly an interdepartmental government responsibility.

When they left the chairman advised me to quickly sum up the progress on the proposal because he had to leave the meeting shortly for another important engagement. He suggested that the committee would not be able to make a decision yet because more information would be needed. I could not accept this turn-around in his position from the day before and I therefore requested that the proposal be voted on at that meeting as planned. He said that he could not act as chairman as he had to leave the meeting. I held my ground and when he left a deputy chairman of the committee was appointed, whereupon I made my resolution asking for acceptance of the Slave Lake Proposal.

The meeting had been totally disrupted by this point and those present could sense that the decision that they were about to make was very politically sensitive. The result was that the resolution was voted down by an 8 to 2 margin. I was surprised at the vote but I later realized that the people who voted against the proposal had not been in attendance at the informational meeting the day before. Unfortunately, with each department having two or three alternate members assigned to the committee, the same members were not at all the meetings and consequently such inconsistencies were inevitable.

It was extremely frustrating to go through 6 months of a negotiation process where support for the Slave Lake Proposal had been building steadily, only to have the I.W.G.O.D. committee chairman attempt to delay the decision at the very last minute. It seemed that there was some important, last minute directive from the political level to delay or abandon making a commitment on Slave Lake.

Surprisingly, the minutes which were prepared by the chairman of the committee included a number of points which were not made at the meeting. Using a bit of editorial license, the committee chairman (who was absent for the last portion of the meeting) recorded the following points in summation of the discussion on the Slave Lake Proposal:

It was proposed that the time required for adequate inter-departmental coordination and subsequently, for D.R.E.E./Alberta negotiation, would be quite extensive. If the sponsors of the proposal felt the matter was as urgent as suggested, it was suggested that:

1. the matter be presented to Hon. Russell as a departmental position, with the Deputy Minister's approval.
2. that via an R.F.D. (Request for Decision), if Mr. Russell agreed to the proposal, it be submitted to Cabinet as an Alberta program.
3. that, if approved by Cabinet, negotiations for retro-active D.R.E.E. funding could be initiated after the program had begun.

One point concerning the Slave Lake discussions held at the last was clarified by committee members.

- that the committee did not desire a total cut off of industrial development in the Slave Lake Area, but rather that the province, federal government, and town cooperate to provide careful evaluation and control of new industrial development in the area. This would be required to permit the provision of community services to catch up with the economic expansion.⁵

Rather than being representative of what the I.W.G.O.D. committee members had said in closing off the discussion on the Slave Lake Proposal, it seemed that the above points were representative of the position of the committee chairman and his Minister regarding Slave Lake. To those of us who had attended the meeting with the Ministers a week earlier, the statements in the minutes regarding the committee's desire that "industrial development not be cut off, but carefully controlled to permit community services to catch up" were reminiscent of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs' statement that perhaps the province had "geared down too soon".

It seemed that the above points were included in the minutes because the province did not want to put on record that it had rejected Slave Lake outright, for fear that it might add credence to the Town's earlier allegation that the province had a negative bias towards the Town and the D.R.E.E. Program. In any case, it was made clear that the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs wished to pass the responsibility for the negotiations on the Slave Lake/D.R.E.E. situation back to the Department of Municipal Affairs from whence it came.

It was not too surprising that this I.W.G.O.D. committee dissolved permanently in one month's time due to the lack of progress of the Committee. It finally came to light that the committee members were basically talking around in circles and that negotiations with D.R.E.E. would be much more efficient if each Department dealt directly with D.R.E.E. regarding the creation of Alberta-D.R.E.E. Subsidiary Agreements.

The end to this internal negotiating process between the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs marked the beginning of a new process where the Town, with the support of the Provincial Planning Branch and its private consultants was to attempt to open up a new channel of negotiations and deal directly with the provincial government themselves. Slave Lake Council initiated this new process three days after Slave Lake's Proposal was turned down at the I.W.G.O.D. committee by instructing Arni Fullerton and Ed Burgoyne to write a letter on their behalf to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, with copies to the Ministers of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, Health and Social Development and Northern Affairs respectively, asking that he intervene and call for a Cabinet decision on the Proposal.⁶

C. AN EXTERNAL NEGOTIATING PROCESS: THE TOWN JOINS IN
(JULY 1974 - MARCH 1975)

In seeking this new channel of negotiations, the Town launched itself into another protracted series of discussions with various Cabinet Ministers and senior civil servants. The highlights of these discussions will be presented below.

The first event of this new negotiating process was a meeting at the end of July between the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Executive Director of Alberta Northern Affairs, the Chairman of the I.W.G.O.D. committee and the Director of the Provincial Planning Branch, where, in response to the recent letter from the Town, they met to discuss the possibility of the province funding certain components of the Slave Lake Long Range Plan. The Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs suggested that he was fearful of setting a precedent in resolving Slave Lake's needs through the application of major planning resources because he feared that a number of other towns would follow suit and also request a higher level of services. As a result of these fears, he passed on the responsibility to resolve the Town's problems to the Department of Northern Affairs.

Agreeing to be the liaison between the Provincial Government and the Town of Slave Lake, the Executive Director of Northern Affairs convened a series of meetings with the planning team and the Director of the Planning Branch in an effort to find alternative channels for attaining funds for Slave Lake. While we felt that these meetings would only forestall a political decision on Slave Lake we felt at least that a few Ministers and senior civil servants were becoming more informed about Slave Lake's case and that this could possibly result in some sort of breakthrough at sometime in the future. In one sense, the Town felt that some day there may be a time where the Province would become so fed up with the tedious negotiations that they would eventually give in and agree to support the Town.

In August, Slave Lake Council decided to write another letter to the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, inviting him to a meeting on September 4, 1974 to discuss the possibility of Slave Lake becoming a New Town - an idea which the Deputy Minister had mentioned that he favoured in a previous discussion with members of Town Council. The Deputy Minister replied to their invitation by saying that he would be on vacation on September 4, but that he could be available at a later date. In his reply, however, he suggested that the Town's housing problems seemed to have improved over the last year, and that this led him to believe that "the question of New Town status does not have as much relevance at this point as it appeared to have sometime ago."⁷ This response from the Deputy Minister was disappointing to Slave Lake Council and further dampened their hopes of ever getting the Deputy Minister to follow through on the Slave Lake Proposal and present their case to Cabinet.

In response to this recent communication, Slave Lake Council wrote to Premier Lougheed on September 16, 1974, requesting that he intervene so that the Slave Lake Proposal could be aired before Cabinet. The letter included a chronology of events of the negotiating process and stated that the Provincial Ministers had not yet acknowledged the Town's numerous requests for a Cabinet decision.⁸

The Municipal election which was held in October was seen as having the potential of playing an important role in the ongoing political negotiations. We felt that it was important that a number of existing Councillors were re-elected so that their re-election would illustrate to the provincial government that there was strong local support for the position which Town Council had taken in the negotiation process. As it turned out, all four of the Council members who ran for re-election were elected, with one of the four becoming the new Mayor. This allowed us to continue on with our planning process with a minimum of disruption.

Another event occurred in October, however, which from the Town's point of view was to have an adverse effect on the negotiations. North American Stud Co., a major forestry industry at Mitsue Lake closed down, leaving 225 employees jobless. Besides causing a serious impact on the social programming for the Natives in the Region, this event created an atmosphere of uncertainty over the Town's growth potential and thereby took some pressure off the provincial government to make a decision on Slave Lake. Slave Lake Council felt that this closure was especially ill-timed since the Town had just initiated what could have been a process where they aggressively confronted the provincial government.

By the end of October the first phase of the Railroad Relocation Planning Study was completed and the consultants presented their findings to Town Council. This study indicated that the relocation of the railroad to the north of the downtown area was a feasible and desirable project, and that the Town should initiate negotiations to purchase a narrow strip of land south of the airport property for a right-of-way for the railroad if it were ever to be relocated. Council decided to initiate these discussions with the owner of the property in question, Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources, but decided not to proceed with an application to the federal government for a relocation funding because they felt that the project was premature, given the uncertainty over the larger question - the implementation of the Long Range Plan.

By early November, Arni Fullerton's contract with the Town of Slave Lake had expired, reducing the extended planning team down to a complement of 7 members. Council felt that since the political negotiations were moving so slowly and since Ed Burgoyne and the author would be continuing on as planning consultants with the Town, they did not need to re-hire Arni at this time. They suggested that if the Downtown Regional Centre proposal was to be approved, they would re-hire Arni again to assist in starting up the implementation process.

During November, the Town initiated a replot of a block in the downtown area. This replot, which was designed by the author, involved a roadway re-alignment, a lane closure and the re-arrangement of some privately held land. The replot served three purposes: it provided for a more functional arrangement of private developers' properties in the block; it provided for a minor re-alignment of the downtown roadway system to accommodate the possible future re-development of the downtown in line with the Downtown Regional Centre concept; and, as a result of the roadway re-alignment and the lane closure, it provided the Town with a developable piece of commercially zoned property which Council promptly sold to the Federal Department of Public Works for their proposed Post Office and Manpower Building.

This replot scheme illustrated Council's dogged determination to carry on with its incremental implementation process no matter how disappointing the results of the political negotiating process were. Even though the recent closure of North American Stud Co. left doubt in peoples' minds that the Town would ever reach a population size to warrant all the facilities proposed for the Downtown Regional Centre, Council stuck with their bold plan and made every effort to ensure that the option was left open to build such a Centre in the long term.

At the end of November, Council received a reply to their September 16, 1974 letter to the Premier. The reply which was from the Minister of Northern Affairs, did not suggest that Slave Lake's case would be aired before Cabinet, but suggested that "... quite a number of other Alberta municipalities are experiencing those same pressures to a greater or lesser degree ..." and that "... much of what is contained in the proposal can be accommodated through existing programs ..." and that "... it is possible that some components of your proposal will be covered within other sub-agreements that may be negotiated with D.R.E.E."⁹ By this time Council felt that the negotiation process with the Province had already died a slow death and in a sense it seemed as if they were

just going through the paces. In any case, at their regular Council meeting in the last week of November, Council passed a resolution stating "that the Minister of Northern Affairs' letter does not adequately answer Council's requests contained in a letter from the Mayor; Another letter therefore should be sent to the Minister with a copy to the Premier requesting an immediate reply...".¹⁰

Although they did not feel that they would get any change in position from the Province at this point, Council wrote the letter just to let the Minister know that they completely rejected his position.¹¹

In December, the Town received approval for a \$451,000 loan from the Alberta Housing Corporation to enable them to develop a 35 acre mobile home subdivision in the southwest area of Town. This subdivision would give mobile home owners the option to purchase property in Town if they wished. Up to this point, the mobile home owners, who accounted for approximately a third of the Town's residents were either renting a mobile home lot in one of the crowded mobile home parks, or they were living in the industrial area on a temporary permit. It was felt that this subdivision would provide a more attractive and permanent environment for mobile home owners, while taking some pressure off the demand for housing accommodation in the Town.

In another effort to continue on with the implementation of the Long Range Plan, the Mayor of Slave Lake made arrangements for the planning team to begin discussing with the provincial government the possibility of Alberta Transportation and Alberta Lands and Forests relocating their maintenance yards and offices to new sites in the Town's industrial park north of the airport. He wrote to the Deputy Minister of Alberta Public Works, whose department was responsible for making land purchases and relocation arrangements for all provincial departments, indicating that the Town would be developing its new industrial park sometime within the next year and that the Town was anxious to begin negotiations on land exchanges and relocation. While the planning team had held informal discussions with representatives from the two pro-

vincial departments previously regarding their possible relocation, this letter was to be the start of a more formal negotiation process which would likely carry on for quite some time into the future.

By mid December, the Minister of Northern Affairs had replied to the Mayor's November 28, 1974 letter assuring Council that he would support Slave Lake, but not in the form of any special agreement. He informed the Mayor of his arrangements to meet with his staff, Ed Burgoyne, the author and representatives of the Alberta Housing Corporation to keep up-to-date with progress being made and so that he could lend support to those areas which posed problems.¹² It was quite clear at the time to Town Council that it was not worth their effort to continue on this path of negotiations, and therefore, they did not carry on any further communication with the Province up to the time of the official termination of the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area D.R.E.E. Agreement on March 31, 1975.

D. SEEKING NEW TOWN STATUS FOR SLAVE LAKE (MARCH 1975 - JULY 1976)

With the termination of the D.R.E.E. Agreement, Slave Lake Council decided to look into alternative ways to secure the funds for their Long Range Plan. Negotiations with the Province for financial support had been at a standstill for several months and Council had all but abandoned any attempt to secure federal-provincial support under any D.R.E.E. Agreement. However, with a major new factory set to open at Mitsue Lake in the fall of 1975 (Alberta Aspen Board Ltd., with 210 potential new jobs) the planning team with Council decided to examine the possibility of Slave Lake applying to the provincial government for New Town status.

The granting of New Town status is the means by which the provincial government provides extraordinary financial and administrative assistance to communities during periods of unusually rapid growth. Such status is granted by Cabinet under The New Towns Act,¹³ but only after the Provincial Planning Board has processed a Town's application and made such recommendation to Cabinet.

New Town status means that the municipal government may borrow funds in excess of the established guidelines for normal towns and may become eligible for direct grants from the provincial government. It also means that there is an improved system of communication set up between the municipal government and the various government agencies involved in the New Town's development. The New Town is responsible to the Provincial Planning Board for planning and development and to the Local Authorities Board for finances.

This channel of negotiating for funds represented a third phase in the political negotiation process. It began in March, 1975, when Council struck a "New Towns Committee of Council" to examine the feasibility of applying for New Town status. The Committee and the Mayor kicked off their study by visiting three existing and former New Towns in Alberta: the New Town of Whitecourt, The Town of Swan Hills, and the Town of Fox Creek. Through these visits the committee was able to glean first hand information from several Councillors and Town Administrators about the pros and cons of this special status. While the New Towns Committee was carrying out this research, the planning team was preparing the groundwork for a day long "New Towns Seminar" which was to be hosted by the Provincial Planning Branch in May.

During March, the final draft of the Slave Lake Parks Master Plan was completed and presented to Slave Lake residents at a public meeting. It was indicated that before finalizing the Plan, the consultants would undertake a public information process over the next few weeks in order to obtain public feedback on the proposals in the Plan. This public information process which was to consist of publishing informational articles in the local newspapers and holding meetings with the local recreational organizations, was initiated the following week.

Also during March, the author made a field trip to the New Town of Leaf Rapids, Manitoba, to study the new Town Centre

complex and the legal agreements between the Town and the provincial government regarding the planning and implementation of the New Town. Upon my return I wrote a detailed report on the Town's development, and presented it to the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs suggesting that with provincial support, Slave Lake's development could become a model for an Alberta resource town to match Manitoba's model resource town.

As a result of a provincial election which was held in April, a new Minister was appointed to the Department of Municipal Affairs. This was a hopeful sign to Slave Lake Council since this change occurred at the same time they were initiating their new process of negotiation and they felt that the new Minister would bring a fresh outlook to the Slave Lake situation.

In early May, Arcom Systems Ltd., a modular housing factory at Mitsue Lake, closed down due to financial difficulties, laying off 52 employees. While this event was serious in terms of its impact on the social goals of the regional development program, it did not seem to have a major impact on Slave Lake's efforts to continue on with its negotiations with the Province. By this time, the Town had adopted the stance that they were planning for the long term and with the prospect of Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. opening up in the fall and other factories establishing at Mitsue Lake, Town Council felt justified in carrying on with its request for New Town status.

The New Towns Seminar was held during the third week in May in the Provincial Planning Branch's offices in Edmonton. Those attending were Council members and Town Administrators from seven former or existing New Towns, members of the Provincial Planning Board, members of the Local Authorities Board and other government officials involved in Slave Lake's development. The concensus from this meeting was that New Town status offered the best alternative for a town in Slave Lake's situation and upon their return to Slave Lake, Council wrote a letter to the Provincial Planning Board officially applying for New Town status.

During June, the Town signed a development agreement with a local firm about to construct a major new building in downtown Slave Lake. The building, which was to contain a grocery and clothing store, was designed in an architectural style similar to that illustrated in the Downtown Regional Centre conceptual drawings and its design included an indoor mall which would connect up to the proposed Centre, if and when the Centre was ever constructed. This represented a clear expression of support for the Downtown Regional Centre proposal and gave the planning team the satisfaction that even if the Centre itself were not to be built, all new development in the downtown was certainly following the planning concept for the downtown as set out in the Long Range Plan.

In negotiating the parking requirements for this new building, it became evident that the planning team should carry out a detailed parking survey of the overall downtown area. As an off-shoot of some preliminary research into the downtown parking situation, the Town decided to purchase two vacant lots next to the two lots which it already owned beside the Town Hall as the Long Range Plan indicated that these four lots were needed for parking if the Town was to build on its three acre parking lot in the town centre. With four lots behind Main Street and the existing three acre site in the centre of Main Street, the Town was definitely the major landholder in the downtown core. The planning team, in recommending that the Town purchase these lots, felt that it was important for the Town to own a major share of land in the downtown in that it kept the option open for the Town to build the Downtown Regional Centre if circumstances warranted and it helped to control speculation in the downtown.¹⁴

During August the planning team was involved in helping the Town negotiate the purchase of more land in conjunction with the implementation of the Long Range Plan. The negotiations with Alberta Energy and Natural Resources which were initiated in August, 1974 were successful, with the Town purchasing a strip of land along the southern edge of the airport property for the northern

leg of the Ring Road. In purchasing this land, the Town also acquired sufficient land for a future railroad right-of-way, keeping the possibility open for the relocation of the railroad.

Alberta Aspen Board Ltd., a new chipboard manufacturing company began production at Mitsue Lake during August, creating a potential 210 jobs. With the opening of this major industry at this time and with the possibility of both North American Stud Co. and Arcom Systems Ltd. re-opening in the future, the need for an answer to Slave Lake's request for provincial support became even more pressing. Through discussions with experts in the forest products industry, the planning team received confirmation that over the long term these industries could re-open, other industries could be attracted and the original vision of a strong, diversified forest-based complex at Mitsue Lake could ultimately become a reality. This prediction was put in writing in a letter to the author from the Director of Forest Products, Alberta Business Development and Tourism. Part of the text of this letter is reproduced below.

"Despite the serious effects of the current market downturn on mills in the Slave Lake area, the longer term prospects for a revival of existing facilities and for an expansion of a diversified forest-based complex in that area are very good once general economic conditions improve. Such a complex will include the utilization of the large aspen poplar resource available in the Region. A development of a more diversified product base is already evident, including facilities to produce wafer board, veneers, studs and dimension lumber, and certain secondary products. These product combinations, together with the potential for a pulp facility, will permit a market diversification and raw material integration which should enable a greater stabilization in future cyclical fluctuations." ¹⁵

During September, the Provincial Planning Board requested that the Planning Branch prepare a report on Slave Lake's New Towns application. I began preparing this report which was to be dealt with by the Planning Board in October. In the meantime, the new

Provincial Planning Director who started with Alberta Municipal Affairs in July, visited Slave Lake for two days to meet with various local officials involved in the development of the Town and Region. Upon his return, he sent a lengthy memorandum on his visit to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, giving him a detailed report on his observations.

A preliminary report on Slave Lake's application was presented to the Provincial Planning Board during October, with the final, more comprehensive report being submitted in November.¹⁶ The Board members were to study the report and be prepared to vote on the Town's application at a meeting in January, 1976.

In order to promote their New Towns application with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Slave Lake Council wrote to the Minister in December, requesting a meeting. The meeting which was arranged for early January included the Minister and Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Provincial Planning Director, the author and a Slave Lake delegation consisting of the Mayor, three Councillors and the Town Manager. During the meeting the Minister and Deputy Minister were very receptive to the points being put forward by the Slave Lake delegation, and the Deputy Minister was effective in keeping the discussion on a positive track. At the end of the meeting the Deputy Minister commended the Town and the planning team for the success they had shown in managing the town growth to date. Council left the meeting feeling that the Minister and Deputy Minister were generally supportive of their application for New Town status and that this was perhaps a good sign that their application would be well received by the Provincial Planning Board.

Later in January, the Provincial Planning Board discussed Slave Lake's New Towns application in detail and decided to hold a public hearing on the question in Slave Lake, in accordance with the requirements of The New Towns Act. At the public hearing which was hosted by the Provincial Planning Board in February there was almost unanimous support for the New Towns application by the

approximately 50 townspeople in attendance. At the next regular meeting of the Provincial Planning Board, in March, the Board recommended that Slave Lake be granted New Town status and requested that the author prepare a brief report to be attached to the recommendation as background information. Prior to his passing on the recommendation to Cabinet, however, the Minister of Municipal Affairs initiated further research into the financial ramifications of granting New Town status to Slave Lake - a move which ultimately served to stall the application indefinitely.

During April, Slave Lake Council began to market part of its recently approved 55 acre light industrial park north of the airport, selling three lots for immediate development.

In May, the author, together with Mike Cardinal, the supervisor of the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program for the Slave Lake Region, began writing up Slave Lake's physical and social planning processes as a Habitat demonstration project for the upcoming Habitat Conference in Vancouver in July. I approached the Provincial Planning Board for funding of a physical model of Slave Lake Town (estimated cost - \$5,000) and a physical model of the Downtown Regional Centre (estimated cost - \$2,500) indicating that these models could be the basis of an Alberta Municipal Affairs' exhibit at the Habitat Conference in Vancouver, and the pre-and post-Alberta Habitat Conferences in Edmonton and Calgary respectively.

At the beginning of June, having secured the funds from the Planning Board for the construction of the models, two model builders were hired, an industrial design firm was hired to prepare a display, and the author began preparing a brief report outlining the physical and social planning responses to the human settlement issues in the Slave Lake Region. This report which became part of the Alberta Government's publication - "Alberta Habitat Demonstration Projects",¹⁷ categorized the planning responses under the topics of social issues, economic issues and physical issues respectively, with the responses being the Employment and Relocation Counselling

Program, the Regional Development Program, and the Slave Lake Planning - Implementation Process respectively. Under the physical issues category a number of projects or proposals were cited, including the Downtown Regional Centre proposal, the Transitional Housing Program (in conjunction with the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program),¹⁸ the proposed New Town designation (a response to rapid growth financing), the land banking programs of the Town and the Province,¹⁹ and the encouragement of strong local participation in the small business sector.²⁰

During July, the Slave Lake display and models were exhibited at the Habitat Conference in Vancouver and at Alberta's pre-and post-Habitat Conferences in Edmonton and Calgary respectively. During August they were exhibited in the Town of Slave Lake, and during September in the Alberta Municipal Affairs' library in Edmonton.

E. TOWARDS A NORMALIZATION OF POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS
(JULY, 1976 - NOVEMBER, 1976)

A new phase in the political negotiating process was triggered by the closing down of Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. in July, 1976. Due to financial difficulties, this chipboard factory was forced to close down its operations and lay off its current staff complement of 175 employees for an indefinite period. The closure of this factory represented a major setback in the progress of the social programming for the Natives in the Region as it was the third major factory at Mitsue Lake which had to shut down within a period of two and a half years. In the two previous cases the majority of employees who were laid off were able to find employment in another local industry, as there were a number of industries still in the expansion stages. However, with the closure of Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. there were no such alternative job opportunities in the area of Slave Lake and as a result, the vast majority of those laid off were forced to go on welfare or unemployment insurance.

This plant closure seemed to be the "final straw" in the problems which had confronted Slave Lake Town since the regional development program was initiated in 1970. The social programming in the Region was severely affected because the entire regional development program depended upon the stability of these industrial jobs. The major objective of the D.R.E.E. Program in 1970 was to create job opportunities for the large numbers of unemployed Native people in the Region, and the program had helped initiate a total of 693 new jobs at Slave Lake and Mitsue Lake in its five year history. However, of this number, only 193 jobs remained in place at 1976 due to the closure of the three major factories: North American Stud Co. (225 employees), Arcom Modular Homes Ltd. (65 employees), and Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. (210 employees).

While the long term forecast at the time was cautiously optimistic that all three of these factories could start up again, the latest, sudden disappearance of 175 jobs brought disorder to the entire social programming efforts in the Region as well as to the planning program for the Town of Slave Lake. Politicians and senior civil servants in the provincial government offered assurances that Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. would re-open within a few months, but the immediate impact on the Town was too severe for the Slave Lake people to be pacified by these words.

From the point of view of the political negotiating process this major setback provided the opportunity for the Town to bring the issue of the Slave Lake - provincial government standoff to a head. Slave Lake Council felt that the Town could make a good case that the provincial government, by ignoring or opposing Slave Lake or the regional development program over the past three years, had indirectly contributed to the dismal record of the industries at Mitsue Lake. Many of those close to the situation felt that had the provincial government fully supported the D.R.E.E. Program throughout the five year period as agreed upon, that the industrial complex at Mitsue Lake and the Town of Slave Lake could have been in a strong position by 1976.

Slave Lake Council seized upon this opportunity and initiated a new line of attack against the provincial government, confronting their local M.L.A., demanding to meet with the Premier. Following unsuccessful bids by the owners of Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. to re-open their factory, Slave Lake Council called a meeting with the local M.L.A. to discuss a wide range of social, economic and physical issues facing the Town as the urban growth centre of this faltering regional development process. At the meeting they confronted the M.L.A. in a bitter exchange and demanded action by the provincial government on a number of issues, 15 in all. Council expressed their right to meet with the Premier and the M.L.A. promised to try to arrange such a meeting.²¹

The M.L.A. was successful in arranging a meeting with the Premier and a number of Cabinet Ministers, to be held in three weeks time, on September 27, 1974. The Cabinet Ministers who were to attend were those responsible for the following departments: Business Development and Tourism, Native Affairs, Transportation, and Health and Social Development. In preparation for the meeting the Minister of Health and Social Development visited the Town and Region, as did three senior civil servants from the other above-mentioned provincial departments.

For the meeting with the Premier, the Slave Lake delegation, made up of three Town Council members and three citizens-at-large, prepared a very positive brief, approaching the question of the Province's general long term commitment to Slave Lake, the Region, and Northern Alberta as a whole. My role was to help the delegation prepare their brief for the meeting.²²

In his preparations for the meeting, the Premier had obviously been briefed thoroughly on the 15 specific problem areas which Council had stressed in its meeting with the local M.L.A.. As a result, it appeared that the Premier was not prepared for the more positive approach of the Slave Lake delegation. It seemed to the Slave Lake people at the meeting that the Premier and his

Ministers underestimated them, and were surprised at their well prepared political approach. The Slave Lake delegation felt that during the meeting the Premier was trying to chastize them for relying on the regional development program as they did. From his attitude towards the Slave Lake situation it made it appear to the Slave Lake delegation that the Premier must have been a strong figure over the last few years in the provincial government's political approach to the regional development program. Nevertheless, the Slave Lake delegation felt that they made a strong impact on the Premier once they stressed that the initiation of the Alberta - D.R.E.E. Program in 1970 was not the Town's doing but the provincial government's, and that of the six people representing the Town at the meeting, only one person had even been a resident of the Town in 1970.

In the months following this meeting there was an obvious effort by a number of provincial departments to try to resolve some of the 15 specific issues raised by the Slave Lake delegation and there was a noticeable increase in the provincial government's efforts to try to get Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. back on stream. It seemed that the meeting with the Premier brought about a new understanding of the Slave Lake situation and apparently this positive attitude was passed on down through the ranks of the civil service. Slave Lake Council acknowledged these encouraging signs of support in a letter to the Premier dated November 12, 1976 where they stated:

Since our meeting we have become aware that as a result of your directive, certain investigations necessary to arrive at an assessment of Slave Lake's position have been commenced, a move which we certainly appreciate.

I would now like to raise the question of Mitsue Park and the D.R.E.E. Programme, and in doing so realize from your remarks during our discussion that it is a sensitive area.

... we are not idiosyncratic about the source of assistance. We simply wish to ensure we are not lacking in our efforts to do everything possible to bring stability to Mitsue Park upon which so much of the welfare of the natives and whites alike in our town depend.²³

At the local level the meeting with the Premier was judged to be successful by the general public of Slave Lake. The meeting was well covered by both local newspapers and it was apparent that Slave Lake people were hopeful that the provincial government was making an effort to help get Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. back on stream and that the long standing political negotiation process had been somewhat normalized.

F. POSTSCRIPT

1. The Town Plan and Planning Process

While the prospects for an early re-opening of Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. seemed rather positive at the end of 1976, the negotiations on the takeover of this firm were to carry on to the year 1980. In the intervening years, the Town continued to receive planning assistance from the Provincial Planning Branch, although the involvement of the Branch was not as intensive as it had been during the period of rapid growth.

In 1977, a new planner from the Provincial Planning Branch was assigned to Slave Lake and by 1979 the new planning team had produced a new Land Use Bylaw and General Municipal Plan for the Town. For the most part, there was little change in the new plan from the proposals set out through the 1973 Slave Lake Long Range Plan. As a result of the considerable reduction in the Town's growth rate between 1973 and 1979 the new Plan was much more conservative than the 1973 Slave Lake Long Range Plan, although it contained many of the proposals of the original plan. The major difference in the plans was that the 1979 Plan had discarded the proposal for a Downtown Regional Centre since the Town's growth

potential in 1979 did not appear to warrant such a major redevelopment scheme. In place of the Downtown Regional Centre proposal the Plan proposed a more conservative scheme for the downtown area, including a modification of the downtown traffic pattern and a beautification scheme for the downtown core parking lot area.

While the Downtown Regional Centre concept has been "shelved" for the time being, the Town has retained the option, over the long term, to develop its central three acre site because of some of its actions taken in the mid 1970's, such as: the development of parking lots on the periphery of the core; the exclusion of heavy truck traffic from the core; and the minor re-alignment of the street pattern in the downtown. Since the Town still has not been able to provide some of the community facilities envisioned for the Downtown Regional Centre (such as a library, swimming pool and new Town Hall), it appears that the proposal could be resurrected at some time in the future. The conditions which would be necessary for this proposal to become feasible again are: another rapid, but sustained population increase; a shortage of reasonably priced developable land; and sponsorship of the concept by government or a combination of the private and public sectors.

The stabilization of the growth rate in the late 1970's had a positive effect on the Town in that it reduced the urgency to carry on with political negotiations with the provincial government, allowing the Town to concentrate on the implementation of a number of components contained in the 1973 Plan and other related plans. The most visible improvements undertaken by the Town during this period are the paving of ten miles of Highway No. 67 extending north from the Town (undertaken by Alberta Transportation in 1978); the relocation of mobile homes from the light industrial zones (1976-80); the relocation of the provincial government departments' maintenance yards (Alberta Energy and Natural Resources and Alberta Transportation) and the Town's maintenance yards to the Town-owned industrial park north of the airport (1978-80); and the completion of the Town's ring road system (1980).

The progress made in the above areas is evidence of the momentum which was created in the mid 1970's when the planning team was involved in an aggressive, intensive planning process, along with the Town Council. Although the extended planning team as it existed in 1973 has since dissolved, it appears that the initial commitments established, and the incremental plan - implementation process followed by the team during the mid 1970's, set the stage for the long term implementation of much of the original Long Range Plan.

A new momentum appears to be building in the Town, however, as the Town prepares for its next surge of growth (see the following section on Town Growth). One sign that the Town is in the midst of a new dynamic phase of its development are the numbers of local organizations which are planning new projects. The most noteworthy of these projects are those planned by the following groups: a major new addition to the Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre with racquetball courts, fitness centre and meeting rooms (the Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre Association); a new ski resort at Flat Top Mountain with a 1500 foot T-bar lift (the Slave Lake Ski Club); and a new six sheet curling rink (the Slave Lake Curling Association).

Another sign of the new momentum is the growing shortage of developable residential lots in Town. In the five year period following the termination of the D.R.E.E. Program, all of the 600 residential lots which were land-banked by the Alberta Housing Corporation in 1970 have been developed. Although it took more than five years for this to happen, it appears that the Town is now at the stage where it must consider new bold plans for the long term.

2. Industrial Activity: Impact on Town Growth

In the five years since the termination of the D.R.E.E. Program, the growth rate of Slave Lake levelled off considerably as only three of the original seven enterprises which

started up under the D.R.E.E. Program remained in operation. However, in 1980 two of those original seven firms re-opened and it now appears that Slave Lake is on the verge of yet another phase of short term rapid growth.

Arcom Systems Ltd., a modular house building plant which employs from 30 to 50 people, was purchased by the Sawridge Indian Band in 1979 and commenced operations in early 1980. In addition, the former Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. enterprise which closed down in early 1976 was purchased by a major Canadian company in 1979, (was re-named Alberta Waferweld), and is currently gearing up to re-open at capacity operations in January, 1981.

It is expected that the re-opening of Alberta Waferweld will cause a significant impact on the Town of Slave Lake as it will be employing 150 persons for four shifts per day, seven days a week, and an additional 100 persons on a contract basis (to provide logs for the plant), immediately upon its re-opening. Its future plans call for a doubling of capacity (from 120 million sq. ft. of 3/8 inch plywood sheeting equivalent per year to 240 million sq. ft. per year) by 1986. This would create an additional 75 in-plant jobs and an additional 100 contract logging jobs in 1986.²⁴

A study which was undertaken in July, 1980 to examine the economic and employment situation in Slave Lake indicates that there will also be 121 secondary and tertiary jobs created in 1981 as a direct spin-off effect of the opening of Alberta Waferweld. The study indicates that since Slave Lake had virtually no unemployment during 1980, all of the new positions, both primary and secondary, should most likely be filled by persons currently not resident in the Town. The population projection contained in the study shows that as a result of the re-opening of this one plant, the population of Slave Lake may increase by 950 persons in 1981 and an additional 750 persons in 1986.²⁵

This most recent change in Slave Lake's future growth pattern seems to fit the rapid and fluctuating pattern of growth experienced by the Town since the discovery of oil in the vicinity of the Town in the mid 1960's. As a direct result of fluctuations in industrial activity connected to both the oil and forestry industries in the Region since the mid 60's, the Town's growth rate has fluctuated from a 266% increase between 1961 and 1966, to a 20% increase between 1966 and 1971, to a 74% increase between 1971 and 1976. Then, in the three year period between 1976 and 1979 the Town grew by only 7%, from 3561 to 3821. Most recently, however, in the one year interval between 1979 and 1980, the Town experienced another rapid growth spurt, growing to a population of 4328, a one year increase of 13%. And finally, the population projection mentioned above suggests that the Town's population will increase by another 21% during 1981.

In conclusion, it is expected that the commencement of operations of both Arcom Systems Ltd. and Alberta Waferweld will create a significant impact on the Town of Slave Lake. The re-opening of these two plants means that five of the original seven plants located at Mitsue Lake Industrial Park and Slave Lake will be in operation in 1981, eleven years after the inception of the D.R.E.E. Program. Although the industrialization program instituted through D.R.E.E. met with serious difficulty in the mid 1970's it appears that in the long run, the program may prove to be remarkably successful in establishing a new economic base for the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

3. Social Change in the Region

(a) Social Programming in the Region.

The social programming efforts which were initiated under the D.R.E.E. Program in the 1970's have had far-reaching effects on the improvement of the social and economic conditions of the Native peoples living in the Region. The two most successful programs

which have emerged from the regional development process are the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program (as described in Chapter I) and the Community Vocational Centre Program, a program aimed at improving the educational and skill levels of the Native peoples living in the isolated areas of northern Alberta. While these programs initially were intended to apply strictly to the Lesser Slave Lake Region, they proved to be so successful in reaching out to the Native peoples and in assisting them into employment and the mainstream of society, that they have since been expanded to cover most of northern Alberta.

(b) The Sawridge Indian Band

Another significant spin-off effect of the D.R.E.E. Program has been the steps taken by the Indian bands in the Region to break away from their reliance on the federal government. The Sawridge Indian band, in particular, emerged from the regional development process as a relatively strong force within the local business community of Slave Lake and as a leader of the 11 Indian bands in the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

The major motel/restaurant which the Sawridge band constructed (with financial assistance through the D.R.E.E. Program) in 1972 provided the band with the foundation from which to base its future commercial ventures. While much of its time since the termination of the D.R.E.E. Program has been spent on working with the 11 regional Indian bands, the Sawridge band was active enough during this period to develop a major medical clinic/office building (1977) and to purchase and re-open Arcom Systems Ltd. modular house building factory at Mitsue Lake Industrial Park (1979).

Its most recent venture (July 1980) has been to set up a satellite receiving dish on its Reserve land within the Town boundaries, providing the entire Town of Slave Lake with vastly improved television reception. Since the establishment of this satellite dish the Town has received both Canadian national networks (CBC and CTV) as well as two American networks and a

"continuous movie" channel (featuring 30 of the most recent major films per month, shown without commercials). Prior to the satellite dish being set up, the Town received only one channel, CBC, and the reception was very poor.

This move by the Sawridge band is particularly interesting since the Slave Lake Town Council had been negotiating with the provincial government for 11 years to have a transmitter installed near the Town; this transmitter would have improved the reception of CBC and provided the Town with CTV reception. The band's decision to set up the satellite dish on its land and its willingness to risk possible legal action (although at present it is unclear as to whether or not the relevant communications laws apply to Indian Reserve land), is symbolic of the band's impatience with government inaction. This action also illustrates the aggressive, business minded approach taken by the band since the inception of the D.R.E.E. Program.

In the near future, the Sawridge band plans to develop a light industrial park on its land on the northeastern boundary of Town. It has begun clearing the land for development and it is generally felt that the band will have little difficulty in negotiating with the Town for an extension of services for this development, given its recent gift to the Town of four new television channels.

(c) Regional Indian Bands

In examining the impact of the D.R.E.E. Program on the Native population in the Lesser Slave Lake Region, consideration must be given to the fact that it was the Natives themselves who initiated this regional development process in the early 1960's. These Indian bands which joined together in the early 60's to lobby for governmental involvement in the Region, provided the foundation for the establishment of the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council - a Council consisting of the leaders of the 11 Indian bands in the Region.

The aim of this Council, which was officially formed in 1972, was to develop self government for the Indians living in the Region. By 1975, the Regional Council had taken its first significant step towards achieving self government, by gaining control of Indian education programs previously administered by the federal government.

During 1978, the Council, led by president Walter Twinn of the Sawridge band, began negotiating for the right to take over all of the functions of the federal government. By August 1979, the Council and the federal government had signed an agreement giving the Council control over all of those programs previously administered by the federal government, namely: social services, economic development, community improvement, housing, finance and general administration. By April 1980, the Regional Council opened Canada's first regional Indian Affairs office to come under complete Indian control.

The tremendous progress made by the regional Indian bands towards achieving self-determination is probably the most significant achievement of the two decades of regional development efforts in the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

G. NOTES AND REFERENCES, CHAPTER III

- 1 "Report on Slave Lake 1974 Priorities Estimate: Town of Slave Lake", Strong, Lamb and Nelson, Ltd., February, 1974.
- 2 For a more detailed examination of the approach taken in the "Slave Lake Proposal", the reader may refer to Appendix A where an excerpt from the Proposal (which consists of a covering letter from the Deputy Director of the Provincial Planning Branch, a four page summary and the funding requirements for the three proposed Interim Sub-Agreements) has been reproduced.
- 3 "Alberta's Recommended Municipal Development Policy", Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs, (a preliminary proposal for an Alberta/D.R.E.E. Sub-Agreement under the General Development Agreement), Fall, 1974.

- 4 A copy of the minutes of this meeting held on July 3, 1974, appears in Appendix B.
- 5 A copy of the minutes of this meeting held on July 10, 1974, appears in Appendix C.
- 6 A copy of the letter which was sent to the four Ministers, dated July 12, 1974, is included in Appendix D.
- 7 Letter from the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs to the Mayor of Slave Lake, dated August 23, 1974.
- 8 A copy of the letter from the Mayor of Slave Lake to the Premier of Alberta, dated September 16, 1974 is included in Appendix E.
- 9 Letter from the Minister of Northern Affairs to the Mayor of Slave Lake, dated November 24, 1974.
- 10 A copy of an excerpt of the minutes of the Slave Lake Council meeting held on November 27, 1974 is included in Appendix F.
- 11 A copy of the letter from the Mayor of Slave Lake to the Minister of Northern Affairs, dated November 28, 1974 is included in Appendix G.
- 12 Letter from the Minister of Northern Affairs to the Mayor of Slave Lake, dated December 19, 1974.
- 13 The New Towns Act, Statutes of Alberta, Chapter 258, 1969.
- 14 The purchase price of \$35,000 for the two downtown lots helped stabilize the price of downtown land which at the time was selling at approximately \$2.50 per square foot.
- 15 Letter from the Director, Forest Products, Alberta Business Development and Tourism to the author, dated October 14, 1975.
- 16 "A Comprehensive Planning Report on Slave Lake's Application for New Town Status", Ken Johnson, Provincial Planning Branch, Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs, November, 1975.
- 17 "Alberta Habitat Demonstration Projects", Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs and Alberta Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, July, 1976.

- 18 The Transitional Housing Program is the housing program which is associated with the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program as described in Chapter I, E.2 of this thesis. Approximately 100 Native families had been involved in the Program up to July, 1976 and another 200 families were scheduled to enter the Town of Slave Lake within the next two years.

The participating families are provided with subsidized housing with rent geared to income by the Alberta Housing Corporation. In order to encourage these families to become permanent residents of the community, there is an attractive "option to purchase" financial arrangement available. Slave Lake, as the participating town was deeply involved in the planning of housing locations and in working with the provincial departments responsible for the sister Employment and Relocation Counselling Program.

- 19 A land assembly program which was initiated in 1970 resulted in approximately one-third of all residential lots in Slave Lake having been land banked and developed by the Alberta Housing Corporation by 1976. During this same period the Town of Slave Lake carried on a land banking program of its own in conjunction with the implementation of its Long Range Plan. Throughout this plan-implementation process the Town held onto and acquired key downtown commercial properties and developed other property in Town including a mobile home subdivision and a large light industrial park.

It is clear that this public land ownership at such a large scale served to choke off speculation in land in this community throughout its period of rapid and fluctuating growth. While there is normally severe escalation in the land and housing market in situations of accelerated demand, the public land banking programs enabled the delivery of residential lots at affordable prices - lot prices at 1976 were \$6,000, as compared to over \$25,000 in other northern Alberta resource communities.

- 20 One of the success stories which emerged from the D.R.E.E. Program was that certain local Native groups had established themselves as major participants in the social and economic development of their Region.

By taking advantage of federal commercial and industrial financing opportunities, the local Sawridge Indian Band emerged as a leader in the local business community in Slave Lake and as a leader amongst the regional Indian Bands as well. In 1972, the Sawridge Band built a major motel/restaurant in Slave Lake - a building which sets the architectural standard for the Town. Since this time, the Band has ventured into

other commercial projects, including a major medical clinic/office building on its Reserve Land within the Town boundaries, and a modular homes factory at Mitsue Lake. And through the leadership of the Sawridge Band, six Indian Bands within the Region have joined together and have become involved in an equity position in another major forest-based industry at Mitsue Lake.

- 21 Slave Lake Council minutes of the meeting held on September 6, 1976.
- 22 A copy of the brief prepared by the Slave Lake Town Council and the Slave Lake Chamber of Commerce entitled "A Brief Addressing the Social and Economic Concerns of the Town of Slave Lake, Alberta" (a report prepared for the September 27, 1976 meeting with the Honourable Peter Lougheed, Premier of Alberta), is included in Appendix H.
- 23 A copy of the letter from the Mayor of Slave Lake to the Premier of Alberta dated November 12, 1976 is included in Appendix I.
- 24 "A Slave Lake School Division Study", Resource Management Consultants (Alberta) Ltd., (a report prepared for the Town of Slave Lake), July, 1980, p. 1.
- 25 Ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER IV

LESSONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PLANNING STYLE FOR RAPID GROWTH TOWN PLANNING

A. LESSONS LEARNED

This Chapter reviews some of the more pertinent lessons learned from the three and a half year planning process described in the preceding two chapters. While every community is unique, and the political and economic circumstances influencing Slave Lake's situation as a designated growth centre of a federal-provincial regional development program are particularly unique, many of the lessons which have emerged from the Slave Lake planning experience are applicable to any resource community facing rapid and fluctuating growth. Indeed, many of the lessons are applicable to any community, or any planning process.

The lessons range in scope, some addressing very specific, localized issues and others dealing with the broader, more policy oriented concerns. While in some cases the lessons proved to be difficult to categorize because of their subjective, general nature, for the sake of clarity the lessons have been categorized under the following headings:

- Addressing the Impact of Growth
- Designing a Planning Strategy
 - Initiating the Planning Process
 - Building Up an Effective Planning Team
 - Creating Flexibility
 - Developing Local Support
 - Taking a Leadership Role
- Senior Government Involvement in Local Planning

The concluding section in this chapter deals with future directions for rapid growth town planning, with general recommendations

being made on how to develop an effective planning style for these situations.

1. Addressing the Impact of Growth

Community - Industry Interdependence: Where a town is forced to cope with growth pressures brought on by rapid industrialization in its midst, it usually requires significant assistance from senior levels of government throughout the growth period, and most particularly, at the outset of this period. In Slave Lake's case, the Town could determine through personal contacts with prospective new employees that problems such as housing shortages, a lack of a complete range of social-recreational facilities and so forth, can be a deterrent to potential residents. This was an impact that the new industries could not afford.

There is a need for senior governments to give more attention to the interrelationships between the development of industry and the development of community facilities in resource town situations. The simple economic argument that - providing an attractive, stable community reduces costly job turnovers in industry - should be enough to convince government that more effort and resources should be applied to creating better social and physical environments for resource towns, from the outset.

Social and Recreational facilities: Social and recreational facilities should be viewed as necessity items rather than luxury items in resource communities because recreation provides such an important social outlet for the residents of these communities which characteristically are socially unstable. Due to the fact that resource towns usually have a younger, more active population than ordinary towns, recreational facilities take on a new meaning in these communities.

Potential for multi-use structures: In resource communities which are deficient in a wide range of social, cultural and recreational facilities, it is possible to capitalize on the situation by building multi-use structures which provide a social focus to the community. In strict economic terms it can be more economical to build such a multi-use structure than to build a number of separate structures.

Preservation of local autonomy: The growth in resource communities is usually caused by outside forces such as major private industry or the provincial and/or federal government and therefore there is usually a problem in these communities where the overbearing presence of the outside forces seriously threatens local autonomy. Measures are needed, such as those provided in The New Towns Act of Alberta, to ensure that resource communities retain their autonomy during periods of rapid growth when they are receiving financial and planning assistance from government.

Taxation of industry/town finances: Where a town is impacted by rapid growth and the industries are located outside of its taxation jurisdiction, it leaves the town in a position where it has little control over its own destiny. In Slave Lake's case it was found that their reliance on the provincial government to provide them with an annual tax transfer did not give them the necessary basis to make long term financial plans.

Contribution of industries to a resource community: Towns which have small locally based industries causing their growth are placed in a more difficult position than those which have major Canadian or multi-national companies associated with them, because the former industries lack the "traditional capital" to contribute significantly towards housing or recreational and social facilities required by their employees.

Social and physical planning: Resource communities require both effective social and physical planning because fast growth is unsettling to social stability. Wherever possible, the physical planners should work closely with the social planners in resource communities, in order that their physical plans may be responsive to local social needs. Social planners should also become involved in the physical planning process. In Slave Lake, for example, those who were responsible for the social programming aspects of the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program were closely attuned to the physical planning process to ensure that the Transitional Housing units were located in an attractive physical environment.

Local political dynamics: In rapid growth towns there appears to be considerable awareness on behalf of the residents as to the activities of the local politicians and therefore feedback on planning issues is readily attainable. A large degree of public participation in this situation is generated through person to person contact between the town residents and their political representatives. In Slave Lake's case, the small size of the community seemed to be a major factor in allowing for a very democratic and responsive local political process.

2. Designing a Planning Strategy

i) Initiating the Planning Process

Initial planning and problem solving: In the very early stages of a planning process in a rapid growth town, it is necessary first to take a problem-solving approach before moving into a more positive, long term planning stage. It is during these early stages that a planner must organize himself, determine what resources will be required, and work to build up credibility in the community through solving practical problems. Following this initial period, a planner should work quickly to prepare an acceptable long range plan so that the planning process does not become overwhelmed by these

more short term problems. Up to the point that a plan is produced, a planner may be without clear guidelines and therefore be under considerable pressure to approve development without sufficient concern being given to the public interest.

Focussing on possibilities: In order to create bold plans within a rapid growth situation, it is advisable (after the initial problem solving phase) to downplay most of the problems, focus on the possibilities, and begin - then as problems occur they can be addressed in the context of definite, positive goals and objectives. It is a planner's responsibility to explore bold ideas, especially in a rapid growth situation where there are no easy solutions to issues. If a planner becomes too wrapped up in the day-to-day problem solving activity, he risks the danger of losing a positive, long term perspective on events and his activities may simply duplicate those of the town administration.

Streamlining the planning process: The pressure which rapid growth places on a planner to develop a plan appears to be a positive factor in that it allows him to cut down on the costly and time consuming collection of background data, and forces him to spend more time addressing the real issues and possibilities. In addition, this pressure can be harnessed by the planner during the plan review and approval stages because it forces local decision-makers to be decisive.

ii) Building Up an Effective Planning Team

Diversified planning expertise: For planning in resource communities, it is a good strategy to build up a diversified planning team with varied technical experts because these communities have more urgent and diversified problems than do slow growth communities.

Planner as facilitator: For towns involved in rapid and fluctuating growth situations, their difficulty in solving problems can often be traced to a lack of communication with one of the government agencies involved in the development of the Town. Consequently, an important function of the planner in these situations is to act as a facilitator, a person who tries to keep the lines of communication open between the relevant government agencies and the Town.

Real estate negotiator: In resource communities, the pressure from private land developers and speculators is greater than in slow growth communities and therefore it is beneficial to include an expert in real estate negotiations on the planning team in order to better equalize the expertise of these land development interests.

Advocacy planning: Although a planner's official mandate may strictly be to prepare a plan for a town, it is difficult for planners not to become advocates of a town's position during the plan-implementation activity, especially in situations where rapid growth towns meet strong opposition in the acceptance of their plans by funding bodies.

Introducing innovations: In rapid growth situations where bold action and/or political advocacy may be required, it is helpful to utilize planning consultants who are independent of any government department because such freedom seems to lend a creative, adaptive dimension to the planning team. This freedom enables the planning team to more readily introduce innovative ideas which are usually necessary to resolve particular issues in resource communities.

iii) Creating Flexibility

Dealing with irrational factors: A rapid growth planning process is usually a dynamic, irrational process, where a number of varied and opposing influences act upon the process. It is advisable,

therefore, for a planner to develop an incremental, flexible planning strategy so that he can adapt to the changing situation. It is also important for a planner to have at his disposal varying levels of planning resources in order that he may increase or decrease the level of planning activity as required.

A dual strategy: Where planners are uncertain of support for their plans they should adopt a two-pronged approach or a "dual strategy", where they first of all develop a comprehensive plan and secondly, adopt an incremental plan-implementation approach for contingency purposes. If they cannot obtain approval for implementation of the plan in its entirety, they can still follow through on their plan in an ongoing, incremental implementation process.

Conceptual physical plans - advantages/disadvantages: One method of building flexibility into a physical plan is to define the plan in conceptual terms, leaving the details to be worked out in the implementation stage, through negotiations between the Town and the individual development interests. This follow-up mechanism is particularly suitable for situations of rapid and fluctuating growth where plans must be modified to meet changing conditions. At the same time, however, flexible plans place more demands on a planner and Town Council to monitor public response to the planning process to ensure that the real community needs are being addressed.

iv) Developing Local Support

A popular theme and bold image: Since planners often need to become involved in political negotiations on behalf of resource communities, it is particularly important to have local support of their planning concepts. In order to obtain this local support it is beneficial to adopt a popular theme to the planning process and to maintain an effective public information program

in the local media. In Slave Lake's case it appeared that the "Warm Spot in the North" theme adopted for the planning process, and the idealistic, visionary approach taken in the planning reports was successful in that it created a confident, united image for the Town, and, it helped to keep people enthusiastic throughout a long period of time.

In developing a popular theme to a planning process, it is important to create a theme with a positive human or social dimension to it because this dimension "stands up" over time. It seems that people can more easily relate to and believe in this kind of message than to one which simply promotes growth and development.

Bold plans - advantages/disadvantages: One key advantage of setting high ideals through the creation of a bold plan is that the small successes which are achieved during the plan-implementation process seem to be greater than they would have been if these ideals were not stressed. For example, it appears that if the Town of Slave Lake had not stood by their Downtown Regional Centre concept for the downtown, they may not have been able to control land speculation and development as effectively in the downtown area.

One significant disadvantage of setting high ideals, of course, is that when expectations are built up and are not lived up to, then the wisdom of encouraging these high ideals in the first place is brought into question.

v) Taking a Leadership Role

Public leadership in planning: Strong local public leadership in the planning process is required in rapid growth towns because private development pressures are greater than in normal communities and because the social, economic and political conditions in the community are more volatile than normal.

Land and public/private sector development: In rapid growth situations it is important for a Town to hold onto and to acquire land if the Town Council and the planning team intends to have a strong impact on the planning and development process. In addition to allowing a Council to take a leadership role in the planning process, the banking of land serves to keep down land speculation and the development of town land recaptures the un-earned increment on that land for the community. If a Town Council assumes such a leadership role, however, it should attempt to establish programs (such as a downtown redevelopment program) which allows significant involvement of the private sector in order to combine the strengths of both the public and private sectors.

Land banking acquisition of sufficient land: Where a town is involved in a land banking scheme, it should ensure that it acquires a large enough share of the developable land to have an effective influence on the market. For example, the Town of Slave Lake's ownership of key downtown property enabled Council to influence the market and the development pattern of the downtown. Similarly, the acquisition by the Alberta Housing Corporation of one-third of the Town's residential land enabled the corporation to completely cut off speculation in residential land because its major share of the market allowed it to set the price.

Protecting community socio economic interests through physical planning: During periods of rapid town growth there is often considerable pressure placed on a town to allow the development of shopping malls on the outskirts of town. These proposals pose a threat to the vitality of the downtown business community, particularly in situations of rapid growth where small businesses are operating within a heated and volatile economy. Given recent examples in small towns in Alberta, these shopping centre developments are usually put forward not by the local business community but by outside entrepreneurs who are able to put together a major financial package. In order to control this form of peripheral

development and at the same time protect the small business sector in the downtown core in Slave Lake, the Town Council opted for a centralized model of commercial development as put forward by the planning team. Council felt it important to establish firm guidelines at an early stage to rule out such peripheral development until the Town's business core and its existing business community had an opportunity to consolidate.

It is evident, therefore, that planners in developing their physical plans, may have a considerable impact on decisions which affect the economic and social fabric of a town. The above example illustrates why a planner has a responsibility to carefully consider social issues and to involve the local public in the plan preparation activity.

3. Senior Government Involvement in Local Planning

Three party communication problems: Where municipal, provincial and federal governments are involved in planning and/or financial arrangements together the difficulties in communication and co-ordination between the three different parties seem to cause considerable problems for those attempting to manage the planning process at the local level. These problems become particularly acute when the two senior levels of government become involved in disagreements. This suggests that the senior governments are not as accountable to the local level and that this lack of accountability causes them to be slow to react to the pressing urban problems which go hand in hand with growth.

Government support for growing communities: Where senior levels of government choose not to fully support the efforts of fast growing resource communities financially or politically, the development of these communities and their associated industries may suffer immeasurable damage because these communities cannot support accelerated growth on their own.

Communities require Iron-clad agreements: Where senior governments are heavily involved in resource community development, there is a built-in danger in that a change in government may cause significant changes in policy which may result in a loss of commitment towards a resource community. In Slave Lake's case, with the provincial government changing hands in the middle of the five year regional development program, there was a change in commitment to the Town and Region which caused major problems in the planning process at the local level. It is clear, therefore, that resource communities require an iron-clad commitment by either the industry or the government which is sponsoring the growth to provide the necessary planning and infrastructure resources for the community from the beginning to the end of the rapid growth period.

Interference of jurisdictional jealousies: Where a number of government agencies become involved in attempting to solve local planning problems, such as the provision of housing in a rapid growth situation, there is a tendency for officials to allow jurisdictional jealousies to interfere in their attempts to solve local problems. For example, a D.R.E.E. official's offer to help solve a critical housing problem in Slave Lake was refused by officials from the provincial and federal housing agencies because they could not accept another agency stepping into their jurisdiction.

Lack of empathy for urgent local problems: It seems that when government officials deal with one specific, technical aspect of a community they do not develop a sound understanding of (or empathy for) the practical problems or solutions at the grass roots community level. For example, officials carrying out research on the housing problems in Slave Lake did not develop a close working relationship with the Council or town administration of Slave Lake during their research and rather than examining

the possibility of creating a special solution to the housing problem, were satisfied that a solution would be found in the future, through a possible revision of one of their existing programs.

Reliance on promises for the future: Planners in resource communities should learn not to depend on government bureaucrats' promises for the future because the rapidly changing conditions in these communities requires quick and definite action. At the same time, however, planners must learn to be persistent and to develop good working relationships with all agencies involved in the community's growth.

Applicability of existing government programs to resource communities: A number of problems encountered in resource communities cannot be solved through existing government programs because the majority of these are designed to address problems associated with normal growth situations in the larger cities. And furthermore, because these programs are geared towards addressing issues related to slow growth situations, they often cannot respond effectively to problems associated with rapid growth communities.

Pilot projects - opportunities and limitations: In addressing the issues created through rapid growth, it seems that governments should look more to initiating "pilot projects" or "demonstration projects" so that they may become more actively and directly involved in examining solutions. As was suggested during the Slave Lake planning process, one function of pilot projects is that politically they can be sponsored by governments as experiments and they do not have to be contained within a government's existing array of programs. Nevertheless, government officials still are reluctant to become involved in innovative projects because they fear that they may set precedents which are difficult to match in other communities. Since it is easier and safer to stay away from innovation there is a tendency for government officials to seek out reasons why innovations should not be initiated rather than vice versa.

Need for comprehensive implementation mechanisms: There is a lack of government programs which take a comprehensive approach to the planning, financing and implementing requirements of resource communities. While The New Towns Act of Alberta may create a proper framework within which to deal with the wide range of needs of rapid growth communities, there still is a need to create implementation mechanisms, which are comprehensive in nature. The involvement of special purpose development corporations in the planning and development of resource towns is one possible approach, while the sponsoring of pilot projects is another.

B. SUMMARY: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RAPID GROWTH TOWN PLANNING

An as overview of a three and a half year planning process for a resource community undergoing rapid and fluctuating growth, this thesis was designed to provide a more informed basis for evaluating: the impacts of rapid growth on communities; the requirements for an effective planning strategy for resource communities; and the problems inherent in major senior government involvement in local planning. The thesis does not present a complete new model for planning in rapid growth situations, but points out a number of opportunities and limitations of local planning in the above context, and makes suggestions on developing a planning style for more effective local determination.

Through this case study, it becomes evident that governments are not well prepared to deal with the wide range of complex problems which go hand in hand with rapid growth and the creation of new industrialization programs. The lessons discussed in the preceeding section indicate that when governments designate towns as growth centres, they must be prepared to follow through with an iron-clad commitment of support in order to ensure that both the community and industry survive during the unstable rapid and fluctuating growth periods. This financial and political support

is particularly critical at the outset of the industrialization program in order that a community may initiate a reasonable long term financial and physical planning program.

In a rapid growth situation there are several opportunities to create innovative solutions to urban problems, but governments must be aggressive in their approach to planning lest the problems become too overwhelming and the chance to create a positive, dynamic planning/implementation process is lost. Similarly, for planners involved at the local level in rapid growth situations, an aggressive planning style is required. It was found that the pressure of rapid growth can be harnessed by the planning team in that it forces decision-makers to be decisive and it creates an atmosphere where planning, decision-making and implementation can join together in an ongoing, recursive process. It was also found that after an initial problem-solving phase, it was critical that the planning team move quickly to establish a positive, dynamic planning process as well as an implementable plan.

A dual strategy of plan-implementation seems to be necessary in situations where three levels of government are involved in local planning because if negotiations for funding the comprehensive plans break down, an incremental implementation program can become quite effective on its own. It was found that the development of an extended planning team involving planning and real estate consultants, a planning committee of Council and members of a town administration worked well as a unit providing that the communication process was open and the roles and responsibilities of the actors were clearly stated. In rapid growth situations where the development pressures are accelerated it is advantageous and perhaps necessary for a community to utilize specialists in the area of real estate negotiations, especially where a town holds and plans to develop its own land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes.

A planning process for rapid growth towns must be flexible in terms of allowing for an increase or decrease in the level of planning resources applied to a situation. Another means of creating a flexible process is through designing a flexible, or conceptual plan which places demands on the actors in the planning process to work out the details.

In rapid growth situations a community may take a strong leadership in its own planning and development, using its ownership of land as the key negotiating tool. The public sector requires a sufficient proportion of land in a resource community to be able to have a strong impact on the planning process, but where the public sector does become involved in the development process it must be prepared to operate as a private agency would and be responsive to the market. It appears also that the public sector should explore new mechanisms for involving the public and private sectors in joint ventures, such as the redevelopment of a downtown core. Given the problems associated with most northern Canadian resource communities it seems clear that there is a need for governments to sponsor pilot projects in urban planning and development in order to test out new solutions. The experience of Slave Lake also suggests that there is a critical need for governments to explore new programs which deal with local problems in a comprehensive fashion and which allow a community to retain its local autonomy throughout its period of growth.

Summing up, the wisdom of governments targetting communities for rapid growth is still open to question. A limited amount of research exists which might be brought to bear on the many issues surrounding the planning of rapid growth towns. Studying the lessons of Slave Lake and other resource towns will help to anticipate future problems associated with rapid growth. While the lack of a clear, ongoing government commitment to the Lesser Slave Lake Special Area program created a difficult situation for those involved in the local planning process, the difficulties

are not insurmountable where an aggressive, positive planning style is adopted. Hopefully, this case study has identified an approach and a number of practical lessons which may be applied to the planning of resource communities in the future.

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- Town Council, Slave Lake and Chamber of Commerce, Slave Lake, "A Brief Addressing the Social and Economic Concerns of the Town of Slave Lake, Alberta", (a report prepared for a meeting with the Honourable Peter Lougheed, Premier of Alberta), September 27, 1976.
- Webster, D., "Final Report on the Creation of Employment Under the Regional Development Incentives (R.D.I.A.) Program in the Special Area of Lesser Slave Lake in Northern Alberta", Program Evaluation Division, D.R.E.E., January, 1975.

APPENDICES



MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

403/429-4821

Office of
Provincial Planning Director

April 23, 1974

8th Floor
Workers' Compensation Board Building
9912 - 107th Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. T5K 1G5

Mr. Vic Hamm, Chairman
Interdepartmental Working Group
on D.R.E.E.
Federal Intergovernmental Affairs
7th Floor, Blue Cross Building
10025 - 108 Street
EDMONTON, Alberta

Dear Sir:

Please find attached a carefully worked out definition of assistance which our Department feels is urgently required by the Town of Slave Lake, Alberta.

Although to date the Town has received \$1,292,000. in grants for public infrastructure (including two schools), the last funds were expended in late 1972. However, the Town is now experiencing a second major surge of growth due to industries already committed to the area. With the Town expected to reach a population of 5000 within the next two years it will develop the role of the Regional Service Center for a vast area largely inhabited by native people. The Town will take on an additional responsibility of co-ordinating many governmental services with the phasing out of the Office of Program Co-ordination in the next year.

The rapid growth rate already experienced has left the Town with the third highest per capita debt load of all Alberta communities with a population greater than 2000. The Town incurred this high per capita debt load (\$621.04 per capita in 1972: \$710. per capita in April 1974) through the provision of basic infrastructure (sewer, water and roads) during a period of extremely rapid growth. As a result, the Town has fallen far behind in being able to provide other essential services related to the recreational and social needs of the community. Therefore,

the Town has one more major hurdle to overcome in terms of providing these services if, in fact, the industry already committed and coming on stream is to be able to attract and keep employees. A labor problem already exists in that Canada Manpower has indicated that there are eighty vacancies in the new industries at present.

We recommend that during the next two years additional assistance be made to the Town through the DREE interim sub-agreements. The Department of Municipal Affairs will continue to work with the Town in an endeavor to find a longer term financial solution so as to enable the phasing out of special Provincial-DREE assistance at the earliest possible date.

The attached proposals are considered to be the priorities for the future development of the Town. Nevertheless, sub-agreements based on these proposals must have a flexibility factor built into them, in order to meet the changing requirements of the Town during its period of most rapid expansion.

It is important that the timing and rate of introducing new industries into Mitsue Lake Industrial Park be closely co-ordinated with the ability of the Town to provide the necessary supportive infrastructure. In addition, a more diversified industrial base should be pursued over the long term with recognition of "in-town" locations to strengthen Slave Lake's tax base.

We trust that the interdepartmental group will join us in recognizing the urgency of the Town's needs, in order to include these proposals in interim sub-agreement(s) as soon as possible.

Yours truly,

R.R. Erickson
Deputy Director
Provincial Planning Branch

c.c. TOWN MANAGER,
TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA

A CASE FOR ADOPTION

The community of Slave Lake, centering a vast region of Alberta's North, rich in oil and timber resources, finds itself in a difficult situation as it proceeds on a course of development:

- from a village of 461 people in 1961 to a small city of 8-10,000 people* in the 1980's.
- the center of a predominantly Native region which only a few short years ago was recognized as a poverty center in Alberta, is now unable to keep up with the growth resulting from successful industrial development.
- since 1970 over 1,200 new jobs have been provided by industrial funding agreements (through the Special Area Program) with 300 more in discussion stages.

These industries represent approximately 22 million dollars in capital investment with an additional 10 million ± pending. In addition, the Department of Lands and Forests have indicated that there is forest capacity for a 500 million ton pulp mill which could be located in the region, employing another 400 and costing in the range of 75 million dollars.

The Town has had no 'Special Area' funds committed to it since late 1972 and its share of infrastructure costs between 1970 and 1973 has raised the Town's per capita debt to the third highest in the Province, after Grande Cache and Edmonton.** In fact the existing recreational and social facilities are inadequate for a community of 2,000 to 3,000 let alone a community now at 3,300 and projected to be 5,000 to 7,000 in two to three years.

* this projection is substantiated in the report 'An Analysis of Population Growth Slave Lake' prepared by the Provincial Planning Branch in January 1974.

** See Schedule A, attached.

The community cannot afford to finance further growth of the kind anticipated without assistance for public facility infrastructure and housing. The present financial position of the town poses a problem for both industry, which is desperately in need of employees, and the people in the region who want to move into the community to become employed. *

Although it is recognized that this community's situation is not unique, and the scale of the problem is not one that will dramatically affect such a buoyant economy as Alberta's, the Town is now experiencing the kinds of problems that will face many other communities as the full impact of government decentralization policy and northern socio-economic development is felt.

As the Special Area Agreement (which has directly involved the town) nears official termination, the Town Council has established three ongoing objectives:

- One "To meet the challenge of existing and future population increases by the provision of essential services".
- Two "To foster and create a community spirit which expresses itself in the provision of an environmental quality which will attract the labour force required to support extensive industry".
- Three "To seek, by way of responsible management, a state of self-sufficiency based on a workable tax structure at the earliest point of time".

The enclosed proposal prepared by the Provincial Planning Branch indicates three areas which require major financial support if Northern communities in general, and Slave Lake in this particular case, are to be able to deal with this unusually rapid growth.

* The Office of Program Co-ordination estimates that 60 Native families would move into Town but there is no housing they can afford.

The Planning and Implementation proposal outlines projects and studies necessary to deal with the major surge of growth over the next two years. The Slave Lake Long Range Plan prepared by the Provincial Planning Branch provides the basis for a comprehensive planning program leading towards implementation of housing and infrastructure in the town. Those specialist studies and projects, as indicated in the proposal, represent the minimum effort required to accommodate the expectant growth.

The Service Housing Program could be part of an interim sub-agreement with DREE which would give some urgently required experience in providing 'Service Housing' in a prototype form, orientated to boom towns in the North.

The Community Infrastructure proposal, again as part of an interim sub-agreement with DREE, will enable the completion of the community infrastructure required in the town during this unusually rapid growth phase.

The urgency of the present situation, along with the pending arrival of a relatively short and wet building season, indicates the need for quick decisions to initiate the necessary plans.

Although faced with many problems due to a lack of more comprehensive planning at the outset, Slave Lake offers the potential of an interesting and useful model for future endeavors in the area of Northern Development.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

Component A - PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. SPECIAL PLANNING STUDIES *	Total	Federal	Provincial	Town
(1) Roads Study - 1974 Priorities (Preliminary)(has been completed)	2,800	1,400	700	700
(2) Engineering - Soils Study(has been completed)	2,000	1,000	500	500
(3) Downtown Development and Re-development(has been completed)	18,000	9,000	4,500	4,500
(4) Community Infrastructure Proposal(ongoing)	16,000	8,000	4,000	4,000
(5) Legal Advice and Analysis of Development Procedures(ongoing)	14,000	7,000	3,500	3,500
(6) Railroad Relocation Planning Study(ongoing)	5,000	2,500	1,250	1,250
(7) Recreation Analysis and Sites Study(to be tendered)	12,500	6,250	3,125	3,125
(8) Information Co-ordination and Management.....(to be tendered)	20,000	10,000	5,000	5,000
(9) Regional Center - Preliminary Design and Programming(to be tendered)	30,000	15,000	7,500	7,500
(10) Town Management Assistance(to be tendered)	30,000	15,000	7,500	7,500
	<u>\$150,300</u>	<u>\$75,150</u>	<u>\$37,575</u>	<u>\$37,575</u>
2. SERVICE HOUSING - PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND TENDER DOCUMENTS	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$3,750	\$3,750
3. ROADS STUDY - ENGINEERING	\$76,500	\$38,250	\$19,125	\$19,125
4. REGIONAL CENTER - ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING	\$312,150	\$156,075	\$156,075**	-
TOTAL COST FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION	\$553,950	\$276,975	\$216,525	\$60,450

* items (1) to (8) have been submitted and tentatively approved as part of the Interim Planning Sub-agreement.

** paid for from Guaranteed Loan to Regional Center

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL (Continued)

<u>Component B - SERVICE HOUSING PROGRAM</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Loan</u>	<u>Town</u>
1. PROJECT GRANT - SUBSIDY				
- Phase One: \$7,500/unit x 100 units	\$750,000	\$690,000	--	\$60,000 (Land)
TOTAL COST OF SERVICE HOUSING PROGRAM (PHASE ONE)	\$750,000	\$690,000		\$60,000
 <u>Component C - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE</u>				
1. RING ROAD				
(1) North Eastern Sector				
- Improvements	\$176,000			
- Land	30,000			
	\$206,000	\$103,000	\$73,000	\$30,000 (Land)
(2) Western Sector				
- Improvements	\$268,300			
- Land	50,000			
	\$318,300	\$159,150	\$109,150	\$50,000 (Land)
2. MAIN STREET APPROACH ROAD - PHASE ONE				
- Improvements	\$65,910			
- Land	15,000			
	\$80,910	\$40,455	\$25,455	\$15,000 (Land)

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL (Continued)

<u>Component C. - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE (continued)</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Loan</u>	<u>Town</u>
3. INDUSTRIAL RELOCATION				
(1) Transition Warehouse				
- Building	\$500,000			
- Land	50,000			
	\$550,000	\$275,000	\$225,000	\$50,000 (Land)
(2) Relocation of Existing Industry	\$380,000	\$190,000	\$190,000*	(Land exchanged)
4. DOWNTOWN REGIONAL CENTER				
- Structure	\$3,121,500			
- Land	450,000			
	\$3,571,500	\$1,785,750	\$1,545,750**	\$240,000 (Land)
TOTAL COST OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	\$5,106,710	\$2,553,355	\$2,168,355	\$385,000

OVERALL REQUEST FOR FUNDS (COMPONENTS A, B and C)

\$ 6,410,660

* includes relocation of provincial government facilities such as the Departments of Highways and Lands and Forests.

** recoverable from lessees and applied to long term mortgages.

Minutes of Meeting with Representatives of the Town of Slave Lake and Area held on 3rd July, 1974, in Room 108 from 4.00 - 5.45 p.m.

Present:

Hon. D.J. Russell - Minister of Municipal Affairs.
 Hon. D. Getty - Minister of Federal & Intergovernmental Affairs.
 Hon. N. Crawford - Minister of Health & Social Development.

Mr. Leo Boisvert - Mayor of the Town of Slave Lake
 Mr. Ed Burgoyne - Consultant Calgary.
 Mr. Ed Thomas - Council of the Town of Slave Lake
 Arnie Fullerton - Architect Consultant Calgary.
 Ken Johnson - Municipal Affairs.
 Mel Zachary - Council, Slave Lake, Bayview Air Service.
 Bob Owens - Council, Slave Lake, Bank Manager. C. of Commerce Business Committee.
 Tony Lester - Council, Slave Lake, Businessman.
 Trevor Collister - Town Manager.
 Walter Twinn - Chief Sawridge Band.
 Neil Gilliat - Representing Industry & Commerce.
 Val Meredith - Councillor.
 Tom Vant - Office of Programme Co-ordination.
 Bob Carney - Northern Development.

Attached is the Agenda which was followed by Mayor Leo Boisvert in presenting the case of the Town of Slave Lake, as well as the three resolutions of the D.R.E.E. Co-Ordinating Committee.

A good discussion followed Mayor Boisvert's presentation and four main points of concern could be identified.

1. Need for some interim financing to rectify the lag in providing services required by development.
2. A suggestion that incentive grants to industries in the Slave Lake region be slowed down until more services can be provided.
3. A request that the Province and Town agree on an individual to act as liaison person between the Town and Provincial Government Departments, preferably with direct access to a Cabinet Minister.
4. A request that the Ministers indicate to their Departments that the Government supports Slave Lake.

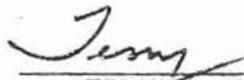
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The Slave Lake representatives brought up a number of points to prove the uniqueness of Slave Lake and why it is deserving of special attention:

1. The expanded industrial development in the area was initiated to solve a chronic unemployment problem among natives - this has been very successful to date and there is a further pool of unemployed labour available for future industries, if the housing and other service problems can be solved in Slave Lake.
2. Slave Lake is developing as a fully integrated town where natives feel welcome and are able to contribute significantly to community life. The continued development of Slave Lake depends partly on improved services.
3. Several of those attending the meeting felt that the Opportunity Corps of the Department of Health & Social Development had contributed to the success of the integration process in Slave Lake.

DECISIONS:

1. Dave Russell to circulate memo to other Cabinet Ministers asking that they re-emphasize to their Departments that there should be no negative bias when dealing with the Town of Slave Lake.
2. In connection with the Town's representation on the need for additional funds for the development of municipal services, Dave Russell indicated that Slave Lake's proposal would be considered within the framework of a Government review on municipal financing which is now under way.
3. In the matter of a liaison person, Mayor Boisvert will contact Dave Russell by letter, with a suggestion on an appropriate individual and how the person might operate.
4. Mayor Boisvert to indicate, on a confidential basis, those Government Departments or Agencies with which Slave Lake has had problems.
5. The D.R.E.E. Committee proposals will be considered by the Economic Planning Committee of Cabinet (the Town indicated that if these proposals are approved then most of the town's problems would be solved).


TERRY C. ROBERTS

4th July, 1974.

SLAVE LAKE

Our community holds a modest dream. It grew out of regional conditions which, only a few years ago, could be compared to those of the poorest regions in Canada.

Our dream was and continues to be a simple one: It is to vastly improve those conditions and become a first class Regional Centre to an area containing 14,000 people; the "Centre" of an area which offers full employment opportunity.

We are well on our way to this goal with over 850 new jobs on stream and an additional 300 committed by next summer. Over 50% of these are local people who are employed full time for the first time in their lives. The industry is largely Canadian or Alberta owned and is utilizing a renewable resource previously unused.

Our Basic Service Infrastructure is planned and installed to allow the community to double to 7,500 people. We have good schools and a good airport serving the north.

The native people who comprise 50% of the people in the region have joined in the development process as workers and holders of major investments on Main Street and in the forestry product industries.

THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF PRIDE AND ENTHUSIASM IN THAT WE HAVE COME SO FAR SO QUICKLY.

We recognise the significance of the large investments made to date by the senior governments. Upwards of \$12,000* per job created has been invested in the Slave Lake Region. This is not (we are led to understand) high considering it involves

Alberta and Canadian based industry. We understand some \$30,000/job has been granted directly to Proctor & Gamble. This \$30,000/job does not include training, social development and community infrastructure costs which were a large part of the Slave Lake figures. There are apparently no figures for the Fort McMurray development area.

There are at the very least 500 more people in the region who are in need of employment (some say that this figure is low and it is more likely 4 times this, or 2,000). The vast majority of these are native people.

As we continue to build this region so as to fulfil our dream, we will begin to pay dividends to the larger society instead of being the ward of social assistance programs as has been the case for some generations.

We would like to continue our partnership with the senior levels of government in this relatively successful venture.

We will continue to carry the weight of local management and administration at little cost to the senior governments--but we will require, at least for a short while, continued, but modest, capital investment as your share of the partnership.....this is particularly important in that the Canadian based industry in Slave Lake lack the 'traditional capital' of the multi-national companies and thus cannot assist us in providing housing and community facilities which we must make available to their employees.

AGENDA

1. Our dream.....do you share it?
2. Discuss co-ordination: a Co-ordinator acceptable to both partners (Province and Community)
Shared costs, (Part of DREE program request)
3. Discuss recognition of Regional Centre status for community-- including full range of government services for the region.
4. Areas requiring continued committments by Provincial Government:
 1. Housing--need enthusiastic assistance from Alberta Housing.
 2. Relocation of Government services: forestry and highways D,P,W.
 3. Infrastructure proposal,
 4. Above all, Alberta Municipal Financing and Local Authorities Board.
5. How to achieve recognition by Departments that this Provincial Government has adopted Slave Lake?

SLAVE LAKE NOTES

1. In 1960's--the area was the most depressed in Alberta.
2. In 1974-- 858 jobs have been created by DREE incentives
+ 270 jobs projected in next year (industries committed)
Total 1128
3. Over 50% of these are people who were unemployed or seasonal etc.
4. 50% or 5-600 are from the region.
5. There are 546 statistically employable yet in the region, and up to 2,000 potentially employable.
6. A shortage of housing, transportation and community facilities is resulting in 80 job vacancies in industry.
7. Each new position has involved \$12,000⁺ in incentive grants (includes all costs to date.)
8. Return on Investment pays off in income benefits within twelve years.
 - There appears to be a balance required of approximately one management or skilled employee from outside the region to create work for one local relatively unskilled person.
9. The town has had \$978,000 in infrastructure grants (not including two schools)
\$1,014,000 in guaranteed loans (557,600 picked up by the Province)
10. The loans have raised the per capita debt from \$430 to \$710/capita (1969 - April 1974): third highest in Alberta behind Grande Cache and Edmonton for communities over 2,000 people.

11. This community had: 468 people in 1961
2052 people in 1971
3240 people in 1973
people in 1974

12. The town is growing so fast that its recreation and social facilities are inadequate.....these are facilities which are usually built over a half of a century, but required here in a period of 5 years--if the community is to be able to attract the work force needed.

13. Local businesses are utilizing their whole borrowing power to improve their own business, keeping pace with growth. They have no extra capital.

The nature of the industry being Canadian and Albertan based companies--means they are lacking in the 'traditional capital' required to get into housing or contribute to recreation and social facilities (as compared to the large multi-national oil companies in Fort MacMurray).

Thus the Community sector is left to provide these facilities. This is especially true when the nature of housing costs is such that virtually 90% of the people in this region now will need to be subsidized somehow to obtain living accommodations. (A Canadian wide problem, but compounded by the virtually free housing that most native people now have on and off the Reserves, and additional construction costs in this area.)

FEDERAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

100-123-103

FROM V. G. Hamm, Chairman
DREE Coordinating Committee

OUR FILE REFERENCE D8-300

YOUR FILE REFERENCE

TO All Departmental Designates

DATE July 19, 1974

TELEPHONE

SUBJECT RE: DREE Coordinating Committee Meeting, July 10th, 1974

Present at the meeting were:

Bill Duke, Education
 Larry Keown, Culture, Youth & Recreation
 Carson Tannant, Municipal Affairs
 Jim Wright, Industry & Commerce
 Norm Thomson, Agriculture
 Fred McDougall, Lands & Forests
 Russell Banta, Health & Social Development
 Elden Schorn, Northern Development Group
 Dave Cantera, Manpower and Labour
 Brian Stoodley, Treasury
 Doug Keith, Treasury
 Bill Gillespie, Municipal Affairs
 Julian Nowicki, Environment
 Ken Johnson, Municipal Affairs
 Dave Beckman, Advanced Education

Guests present for a portion of the meeting:

E. J. Burgoyne, Consultant, Town of Slave Lake
 Arni Fullerton, Consultant, Town of Slave Lake

Departments not represented:

Highways and Transport
 Public Works
 Travel Alberta
 Office of Program Coordination

ADMINISTRATION

On-going Programs:

In order to expedite a review of all on-going Alberta/DREE Programs presently functioning in Alberta, the Chairman proposed that departments report on their activities under ARDA, PFRA, Special Areas, Agricultural Service Centres, Irrigation, or other programs.

The purpose of the information is to determine the extent and costing of on-going programs in order to facilitate evaluation of these programs in the future. A good starting point would be the information to be provided our department for the Federal/Provincial Program Inventory.

Departmental Reaction Forms

Departmental designates are urged to complete the departmental sub-agreement analysis forms for all subsidiary agreements discussed to date. The deadline for submission of these forms to the undersigned is Tuesday, July 23rd.

Forest Resources Improvement and Development Agreement

Fred McDougall reviewed agreement components including noting programs which the Department was hoping to expand within the coming year under "E" Budget provisions, regardless of DREE involvement. In addition, it was noted that a number of components proposed in the draft agreement are presently funded under Federal/Provincial cost sharing provisions, most of which lapse in March 1975.

Questioning of programs by committee members included:

1. Environment suggested that funding allocated for inventory portions of the agreement may be insufficient to carry out the project scale desired. In addition, it was noted that coordination should be provided between the forest resource inventory, inventories proposed under the Public Lands Agreement, and on-going inventories in Alberta Environment. The same applies to work commissioned under the authority of the C & U Committee.

Response

This will be insured by Lands & Forest representation on the C & U Committee. As well, Lands & Forests will invite Environment participation in the agreement management group in matters affecting inventory work.

2. Lands & Forests suggested that the amounts asked for in Appendix 3 (Forest Protection) will probably not be sufficient for the total program required. There is apparently a serious under-estimation of potential problems associated with protection of gas plants, oil fields, etc. In addition, there is the problem of protecting industrial development in or near forest areas.

Response

Alberta Lands and Forests proposes to go with the present estimates for the time being. Since subsidiary agreements schedules can be revised at any time during the life of an agreement, these potential under-estimates will not pose a major problem.

Motion

Moved by Fred McDougall, seconded by Carson Tannant:

"Intergovernmental Coordination having been affected, the DREE Coordinating Committee approves the Forest Resources Improvement and Development Sub-agreement and recommends the agreement to the Economic Planning Committee of Cabinet".

The motion was approved unanimously.

Arrangements will be made by this department to have the agreement put on the Cabinet Committee agenda, the presentation thereof to be made by Hon. Warrack and appropriate officials.

SLAVE LAKE AGREEMENT

Ken Johnson, Provincial Planning Branch, outlined the intent of the agreement. He also summarized the meeting of several cabinet ministers with the delegation from the Town of Slave Lake and reported on discussions held July 9, with various interested departments.

A document was distributed by Ken Johnson outlining Alberta Departmental involvement in the delivery of various components contained in the proposal. (a copy attached)

After discussion of the merits of the proposal, in light of present and projected difficulties facing the town, Ken Johnson moved that the committee approve the concept of the agreement, permitting the sponsors of the proposal to initiate discussions required to facilitate rapid advancement of the agreement.

After considerable debate on requirements which departments felt would first have to be met before they could endorse the proposal, the motion was defeated.

It was proposed that the time required for adequate interdepartmental coordination and subsequently, for DREE/Alberta negotiation, would be quite extensive. If the sponsors of the proposal felt the matter was as urgent as suggested, it was suggested that:

1. the matter be presented to Hon. Russell as a departmental position, with the Deputy Minister's approval.
2. that via an R.F.D., if Mr. Russell agreed to the proposal, it be submitted to Cabinet as an Alberta program.
3. that, if approved by Cabinet, negotiations for retroactive DREE funding could be initiated after the program had begun.

One point concerning the Slave Lake discussions held at the last was clarified by committee members.

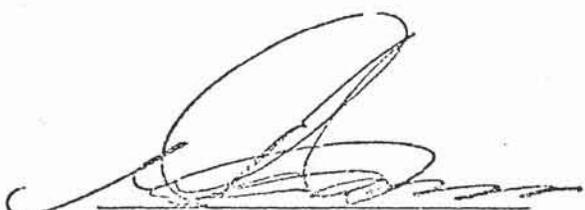
- that the committee did not desire a total cut off of industrial development in the Slave Lake Area, but rather that the province, federal government, and town cooperate to provide careful evaluation and control of new industrial development in the area. This would be required to permit the provision of community services to catch up with the economic expansion.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the DREE Coordinating Committee will be held July 24th, 1:30 p.m. in the Intergovernmental Affairs Board Room. The agenda includes:

1. Report on status of Agricultural Industry and Alberta North Sub-agreements.
2. Discussion of the following matter:
"Should this committee emphasis several extensive agreements, in keeping with major provincial priorities, or should this committee's efforts be directed toward smaller, moralocalized but more numerous sub-agreements - keeping in mind that at some point federal funds will reach the maximum available to the province?"
3. Final discussion and decision on the "Public Lands Improvement and Development Sub-agreement.
4. Discussion of the revised "Municipal Development Agreement".

Additional items may be added prior to or at the meeting.



V. G. HAMM

c.c. Hon D. R. Getty
L. D. Mabbott

attachment
VGH/cr

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT
 , IN THE DELIVERY
 OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSAL **

- PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION - Department of Municipal Affairs,
 Provincial Planning Branch
- (CO-ORDINATED WITH)
1. Roads Study - 1974 Priorities (Preliminary) Highways
 2. Engineering - Soils Study Town Manager
 3. Downtown Development and Re-development Town
 4. Community Infrastructure Proposal I.G.A.
 5. Legal Advice and Analysis of Development Procedures Town Manager
 6. Railroad Relocation Planning Study (CMHC, Industry & Commerce)
 7. Recreation Analysis and Sites Study (Culture, Youth & Recreation)
 8. Information Co-ordination and Management (Town Manager)
 9. Regional Center - Preliminary Design and Programming (Town, DPW, Youth & Recreat)
 10. Town Management Assistance (Town Manager)

- Service Housing DMA, AHC
- Roads Study DMA, HWYS
- Regional Center DMA, DPW, DEPT. OF CULTURE, YOUTH & RECREATION

SERVICE HOUSING DMA, AHC

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Ring Road HWYS
- Main Street DMA, HWYS
- Industrial Relocation ENVIRONMENT, DPW, DMA
- Regional Center TOWN, DMA, DPW, CULTURE, YOUTH & RECREATION

** The above implementation program will be carried out in-service, where possible, as indicated above under the co-ordination of the Provincial Planning Branch, Department of Municipal Affairs.

MEMORANDUM

To: Hon. D. J. Russell - Minister of Municipal Affairs
Hon. D. R. Getty - Minister of Federal & Intergovernmental Affairs
Hon. N. S. Crawford - Minister of Health & Social Development
Hon. J. A. Adair - Minister for Northern Development

From: E. J. Burgoyne - Real Estate Consultant
Arni Fullerton - Architect & Town Planner

Subject: The Slave Lake Proposal

cc: Mr. L. Boisvert - Mayor of Slave Lake
Dr. R. J. Carney - Executive Director, Northern Development
Mr. V. G. Hamm - Chairman, Alberta Interdepartmental Working Group
on D.R.E.E.
Mr. R. Erikson - Provincial Planning Branch

July 12th, 1974.

Re: The Slave Lake Proposal

As you are aware the Town of Slave Lake hired the writers to present to the Provincial Government an unbiased approach to the Town's problems which the Town does not have the resources to articulate. Since accepting this assignment we have conducted many discussions with various levels of the Provincial Government Administration. Throughout the majority of these discussions we have remained constantly optimistic because each discussion resulted in a greater understanding and appreciation of the Community's situation coupled with an offer of sympathetic support.

In this connection the meeting chaired by Mr. Russell in Edmonton was no exception. We were particularly impressed with the summation towards the end of the meeting made by Mr. Getty, and the statements made by the Chairman to the effect he would give direction to Provincial Departments who have jurisdiction in Slave Lake, that he would agree to the appointment of an officer to act as a liaison between the Town and the Provincial Government, and that he would accelerate a study on the economic stability of the Town together with an analysis of its future tax base.

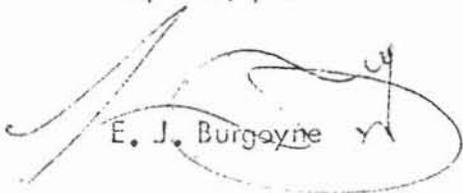
In April, 1974, a proposal designed to resolve the Town's situation was submitted to all members of the Alberta Interdepartmental Working Group on D.R.E.E. Later, assurance was received from its Chairman that the proposal would be processed quickly and that recommendations would be made by his Committee to Cabinet. This week, some two and one half months after the proposal was submitted, the Working Group on D.R.E.E. adjourned without coming to a final decision. It was, however, suggested all member departments should be solicited to secure their individual support for each

item contained in the proposal. As the whole basis of the proposal is one of innovation, and because it does not set out to be a conglomerate of existing programmes, such total support is impossible to attain. This sequence of events, therefore, adds to our belief that the committee, as a pure administrative body, has been placed in an invidious position whereby it cannot make a recommendation in all conscience, without a prior political commitment. For them to make such a recommendation without that commitment would be to recognize the urgency created by the ongoing success of the Region's development, which is not the committee's prerogative and to ignore the precedent setting implications of the proposal which they cannot control.

We truly believe Northern Alberta requires such unique precedent setting solutions through the vehicle of a pilot project if we are to facilitate the integration of people indigenous to the North into the main stream of Canadian society. If we are to attack the problems, armed with existing tools alone, no significant progress will be achieved to the embarrassment of all.

In the light of events subsequent to our meeting with you and after reflecting upon all the discussions which have occurred, we feel unless the Cabinet under the "Request for Decision" procedure, is agreed the Slave Lake proposal is a worthwhile pilot undertaking which qualifies as a "priority project," the green light at the administration level will not be forthcoming.

If you feel there is a need to hold a short meeting either with yourselves and/or any other arm of Government, or you think the production of specific clarifying material is required, please do not hesitate to contact us.


E. J. Burgoyne


Arni Fullerton

September 16, 1974

The Honorable Peter Lougheed
Premier
Room 307
1 Legislative Ground
EDMONTON, Alberta
TSK 2B7

Dear Sir:

The rate of growth of Slave Lake over the last two years has been the second fastest in the Province. Council during its term of office has striven to cope with the day-to-day problems inherent in this type of urban situation. In addition, Council has made a determined effort to make decisions aimed at laying a good foundation for the growth which inevitably is still to come. Some of these decisions include the hiring of consultants to prepare a Long Range Plan, the adoption of the plan produced and the decision to commence initial discussions leading to its implementation. In addition to land use planning, plans were prepared to supply those deficiencies in the town structure which inevitably arise when physical facilities cannot keep pace with rapid population expansion. Those deficiencies were put together and presented to your government as "the Slave Lake proposal".

The attached chronological sequence of events gives some indication of the context within which we have been operating. As you know much of the extraordinary growth of Slave Lake has been caused by the D.R.E.E. Incentive Grant program which has caused new industry to locate in the area. At the time this program was initiated by the Alberta Government jointly with D.R.E.E. in a commitment of intent to share the funding of that infrastructure which would impose a drain and hardship if financed by town resources alone.

Unfortunately, the last commitment of financial support to the town came in January 1973, based on 1972 information and negotiations. Through 1973 and 1974 there has been no new consideration by the two senior level governments to financially support the town in its critical growth period. The proposal therefore to some extent covers funds deficient under existing agreements. It was this realization which prompted Mr. Getty to ruminate at the meeting with council "Perhaps we geared down too soon."

Naturally with your busy itinerary it would be inappropriate here to give a detailed account of all the discussions which have taken place with members of your administration over the last six months. Also it would not engender a good working relationship with the town if the inaction and the frustration caused by these discussions were presented to you. Suffice it to say, having met with three members of Cabinet and having submitted our "Request for a Decision," Council to date has not even received an acknowledgement to its latter communication.

It is for this reason Council has requested I appeal to you to intercede so that the Slave Lake Proposal can be aired before Cabinet as a whole, under the "Request for a Decision" procedure.

Respectfully yours,

Leo B. Boisvert
Mayor

lfc

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

May 13, 1970

a Federal-Provincial Development Agreement was signed committing the two governments to co-operate in development plans within the Lesser Slave Lake Area for the next five years (until March, 1975) (see enclosure)

Summer, 1970

under the above agreement, Dree Incentive Grants begin to attract new industries.

Jan. 30, 1973

the last commitment of funds (based on 1972 information and negotiation) to the Town's infrastructure, brings the total funding to date in the town of Slave Lake:

- \$978,400 Federal grants
- \$557,600 Provincial grants
- \$457,000 Town loans

May, 1973

the Provincial Planning Branch is requested to undertake long range planning to accommodate the rapid urban growth in the town of Slave Lake.

April 23, 1974

The Provincial Planning Branch submits a request for additional infrastructure funding to the Provincial D.R.E.E. Committee (see enclosure).

July 3, 1974

The Slave Lake Council meets with a Cabinet Committee chaired by Mr. Russell, including Mr. Getty, Mr. Crawford, and Dr. Carney representing Mr. Adair.

July 10, 1974

The Provincial D.R.E.E. Co-ordinating Committee recommends that the sponsors refer the proposal for infrastructure funding to Cabinet via Mr. Russell that is approved by Cabinet, negotiations for retroactive D.R.E.E. funding could be initiated after the program began.

July 12, 1974

A "Request for a Decision" was forwarded to Mr. Russell (see enclosure).

Sept. 12, 1974

The community is faced with a potential new council and no direction with the 5 year D.R.E.E. Agreement running out in March 1975.

- faced with over 500 new basic industrial jobs coming on stream between now and April 1975.
- an extremely high per capita debt.
- a community which may expand from 3500 at present to 6-7000 in two or three years.
- with retail, recreation, social and cultural facilities suitable for a town of only 2000 people.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1974 AT 7:00 P.M.

PAGE 4

PHASE II:

Councillor Korzenowski moved that a request for permission to build a self serve gas station and car wash in Phase II be declined.

CARRIED

Moved by Councillor Bolan that this meeting adjourn to committee.

Council meeting reconvened at 10:00 P.M.

Councillor Meredith moved that Mr. Adair's letter does not adequately answer Council requests contained in a letter from former Mayor Boisvert. Another letter therefore should be sent to Mr. Adair with a copy to the Premier requesting an immediate reply to these questions.

CARRIED

Councillor Korzenowski moved that a submission be made to Alberta Public Works requesting that an opportunity be created to negotiate the relocation of Department of Lands and Forests, Department of Highways and other Government departments and that Government will also include an opportunity for Council to negotiate the eventual development of a service centre to cater to existing needs of Slave Lake.

CARRIED

Councillor Lestar moved that the new Council wholeheartly supports past action of Council and unanimously supports the Slave Lake Proposal and Long Range Plan.

CARRIED

Councillor Bolan moved that the Developers of the Highway Commercial property west of the Sawridge Motel be given land within the subdivision presently owned by the Town in a straight exchange for the necessary right of way from the highway to the Lands and Forests property north the N.A.R. tracks.

CARRIED

Moved by Councillor Lestar that this meeting adjourn.

 MAYOR

 SECRETARY-TREASURER

November 28, 1974

Honorable Al Adair
Minister Without Portfolio
229 Legislative Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2K5

Dear Mr. Adair:

Your letter dated November 25, 1974 in reply to a letter sent to Premier Lougheed by former Mayor Boisvert was discussed by Council on Wednesday, November 27, 1974, and to put it mildly, the members of Council were extremely upset.

It would appear that, for some reason, the whole matter is misunderstood and background information is not being interpreted correctly. It must be stressed that the proposal must be implemented in the near future unless the Province is prepared to face a situation similar to that in Fort McMurray although on a lesser scale.

To date much effort has been put into delay of development in the Town in order to achieve planned development, but all indications are that the Council will not be able to contain this for more than a few months. With a possible 500 new jobs during 1975 the pace will be accelerated and it will be beyond the capabilities of the Town to accommodate the expected rapid growth.

Some specific requests had been made in the letter to the Premier, and Council wishes to receive a reply to these requests. Considering the delay in receiving a reply to the first letter, I trust we may expect an early reply to this letter.

Yours very sincerely,

R.C. Thomas
MAYOR

c.c. Hon. Peter Lougheed
307 Legislative Building
Edmonton, Alberta

A BRIEF ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS
OF THE TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA

PRESENTED TO

THE HONORABLE PETER LOUGHEED
PREMIER OF ALBERTA

PRESENTED BY

TOWN COUNCIL, SLAVE LAKE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, SLAVE LAKE

SEPTEMBER 27, 1976.

TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA - T0G 2A0

September 27, 1976

The Honorable Pêter Lougheed

Dear Sir:

In recognizing the responsibilities of the Town of Slave Lake as a regional growth center in North Central Alberta, Council would like to express to you our concerns over the future growth and stability of Slave Lake and its surrounding region. We are aware of the vast potential of this northern region and would like to see a continuation of the social and economic progress which has taken place to date.

Since the mid 1960's Slave Lake has grown from a village of 500 people to a town of 3,500. During this period, growth and economic activity has fluctuated with the result that tremendous strains have been placed on the management and financial resources of the Town. This fluctuation has been caused by economic expansion programs designed to increase the education, skills and standard of living of the indigenous people of the region, fluctuation in world lumber markets and the inevitable shortcomings of new enterprises which lack start up funds and borrowing power. Regardless of these experiences to date, the long term forecast of the Forestry Industry is one of optimism. This view is shared by the Department of Business Development and Tourism who have expressed the view that the long term economic prospects for Forest based industries, fossil fuel recovery and tourism in the region, is sound.

It is evident to us that most of what has been written and said on the subject, Slave Lake, is an outgrowth of our struggle to keep pace with the consequences of growth, the desire to manage our

affairs with as little outside assistance as possible, and the need to lay a rational foundation upon which the Town can continue to provide required services to the Region. However, if the present and future Councils and other Town leaders are to continue to strive for improvement with enthusiasm, assurances are required that their policy, aims and objectives are in tune with your Government's commitment to the North and the Slave Lake Region in particular.

While assurances of this sort may on the surface seem shallow, they do constitute a major factor in our desire to meet with you because, to date, all our requests for confirmation of the Government's commitments as they apply to Slave Lake have not been forthcoming from your spokesmen.

The commitments in doubt upon which we need assurance are:

1. Does the Government support Slave Lake as a Growth Center or would you prefer to see the Region served by some other center?
2. Does the Government wish to see Mitsue Industrial Park expand as and when the lumber market can absorb the products produced at economic prices?
3. Does the Government support Forest Product expansion as a means of educating, employing and increasing the standard of living of indigenous people or would they prefer some other means of achieving the same objectives elsewhere in the Region?
4. Is your Government prepared to cover those additional costs of creating socially acceptable Urban Forms necessitated by policies arising out of 1-3 above?

Yours truly,



Val Meredith
Deputy Mayor

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I. BRIEF HISTORY OF SLAVE LAKE

Slave Lake (Sawridge Settlement) was established in 1802 when the North West Company established the "East Lesser Slave Lake House." The growth of the settlement from this time until 1961 was very slow, with Slave Lake reaching a population of 498 in 1961.

In 1963 oil was discovered in the area and by 1965 three oilfields were in production. Between 1961 and 1966 the population rose from 498 to 1,416, representing a 245% increase and the fastest growth rate in the province over this time span. By 1964 Slave Lake had achieved town status.

In the latter 1960's the town's growth slowed down to an increase of 19.58% between 1966 and 1971. This growth rate compared to a provincial increase of 10.1% for the same period.

During the years of 1970 to 1975 the population of the town increased from 2,052 in 1971 to 3,449 in January of 1975, representing an average increase of 11.4% as compared to the provincial average of 1.1%. This rapid increase of population has caused some severe strains on the Town which has resulted in this meeting today.

II INDUSTRIAL

A. Mitsue Industrial Park

The economic development which has taken place in the forestry industry since 1970 has been as a result of governments' efforts to upgrade the socioeconomic conditions of North Central Alberta, a region which was at the time, the most depressed area in the province.

The Slave Lake - Mitsue Industrial Complex was chosen by private industry as being the most favored location in the region to establish a diversified forestry-based industrial park. From these decisions, the Town of Slave Lake became the natural growth centre of this region.

In the early 1970's it was projected that 750 new jobs would be created within a five year time span. However, only 3 of the original 8 businesses which started up between 1971 and 1973, are still in operation. As a result, only 193 of the projected 750 jobs are still in existence. Fortunately for many of the workers, the timing of the industries coming on stream was such that as one industry shut down, a new one started up and absorbed the work force of the other industry.

The companies which located in Slave Lake and Mitsue were:

<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>LOCATION START UP</u>	<u>SHUT DOWN</u>	<u>JOBS CREATED</u>
North American Stud	Mitsue 1972	1974	225
Vanderwell Contractors	Mitsue 1972	still operating	43
Northwood Industries	Slave Lake 1972	1972	15
Ziedler Plywood Corp.	Mitsue 1973	still operating	115
Arcom Systems	Mitsue 1973	1974	65
Sawridge Motor Hotel	Slave Lake 1972	still operating	35
Noral Manufacturing	Slave Lake 1973	1975	7
Alberta Aspen Board	Mitsue 1975	1976	210

Although these enterprises all received industrial incentive grants ranging between \$1940 per job to \$9944 per job, most forest-based industries met with serious difficulties such as:

- a downturn in world lumber markets
- shortages of start up funding and borrowing power
- problems associated with a new work force which requires additional on-the-job training and social counselling
- problems associated with experimentation with a major new product - poplar lumber.

Regardless of the above mentioned difficulties, Mitsue Industrial Park is a first for any northern area and its total potential cannot be overlooked in the overall economics of the Province.

Proposed Solutions as Seen by the Town of Slave Lake

1. It is proposed that the Alberta Department of Business Development and Tourism appoint an industrial specialist to make an analysis of the Mitsue Industrial Area - in terms of trying to establish the relationship of Mitsue to the world lumber markets and the necessary support needed to see that its potential is realized.
2. It is proposed that the Alberta Department of Business Development and Tourism refer industries interested in locating in Alberta to Mitsue Industrial Park.

3. It is proposed that the Town of Slave Lake and Mitsue Industrial Park be annexed. We feel that Mitsue Industrial Park and the Town cannot be separate as they are both interdependent and interrelated.

The Town depends to a large extent on the success of the Industrial Park and Mitsue depends on the Town to attract and sustain the work force. Therefore we feel that the Town should receive the tax base from Mitsue, while maintaining full administrative control over the industrial park (whether or not it is profitable at this time is not important).

B. Service Industry - Slave Lake and Area

As a direct result of the various businesses closing their doors at the Mitsue Industrial Park, including the most recent, Alberta Aspen Board Ltd., a noticeable financial strain has been put on other businesses in Slave Lake. A few businesses have had to relocate in other areas, while others have had to go out of business entirely.

We are aware that Alberta Aspen Board Ltd. has outstanding payables in excess of \$750,000, with the majority being owed to several service companies, truckers, loggers, etc., right here in Slave Lake. Without these funds, these companies have had to make approaches to their bankers and other financiers, for increases or extensions in their operating credit facilities and finance contracts covering machinery and equipment. Various small operators have had equipment repossessed, as they have been unable to

keep up with repayments. This lack of funds has also caused difficulties in meeting payrolls, which naturally escalates to the fact that individuals are not able to meet their personal monthly obligations, and again resulting in vehicles, mobile homes, etc., being repossessed by creditors, in lieu of non-payment.

As a result of the chain reaction as indicated above, the local merchants, garages, food stores, etc., have also felt the pinch and in many instances, have accepted personal cheques, for goods sold, only to have the cheques returned by the banks for "Non-sufficient Funds". This causes great misunderstanding amongst the people who have dealt in Slave Lake for many years; furthermore, any value of trust, is, of course, destroyed.

With the lack of employment and work for the various contractors, numerous people have left our area, leaving the housing market, in a very mixed up state. There are between 15-20 houses for sale in Slave Lake at this time, and people are reluctant to invest at this time, as they are awaiting some definite trend for the community.

Proposed Solution as Seen by the Town of Slave Lake

From a business point of view, Slave Lake requires the revitalization of the many industries carried on at Mitsue Industrial Park to keep this a healthy and financially stable community.

We are not asking for any handouts from your Government, however, we do feel you have the necessary expertise and personnel, to guide and provide assistance to those companies that need it, in following the correct methods in obtaining long-term funding. Hopefully these industries could therefore re-establish themselves and provide employment for the many who have remained in our area.

III. INFRASTRUCTURE - LONG RANGE PLAN

A. Basic Town Infrastructure

The Town requested the Planning Services Division, Alberta Municipal Affairs, to prepare a Long Range Plan to help control development during our phase of Rapid Growth. As a result, the SLAVE LAKE LONG RANGE PLAN 1973 was realized and accepted (see diagram on following page). Since this time, Town Council and the Town Administration has worked under these guidelines.

The Town has completed the following components of the Long Range Plan since 1973:

- industrial subdivision -- to allow for relocation of industries from residential zones
- land banking -- to protect land needed for future developments
- major paving programs
- eastern leg of Ring Road (near completion) -- to remove industrial traffic from residential and school districts
- initial negotiations with Alberta Public Works regarding relocation of provincial departments of Forestry, Highways and Fish and Wildlife

Projects which are in the process of planning or implementation are:

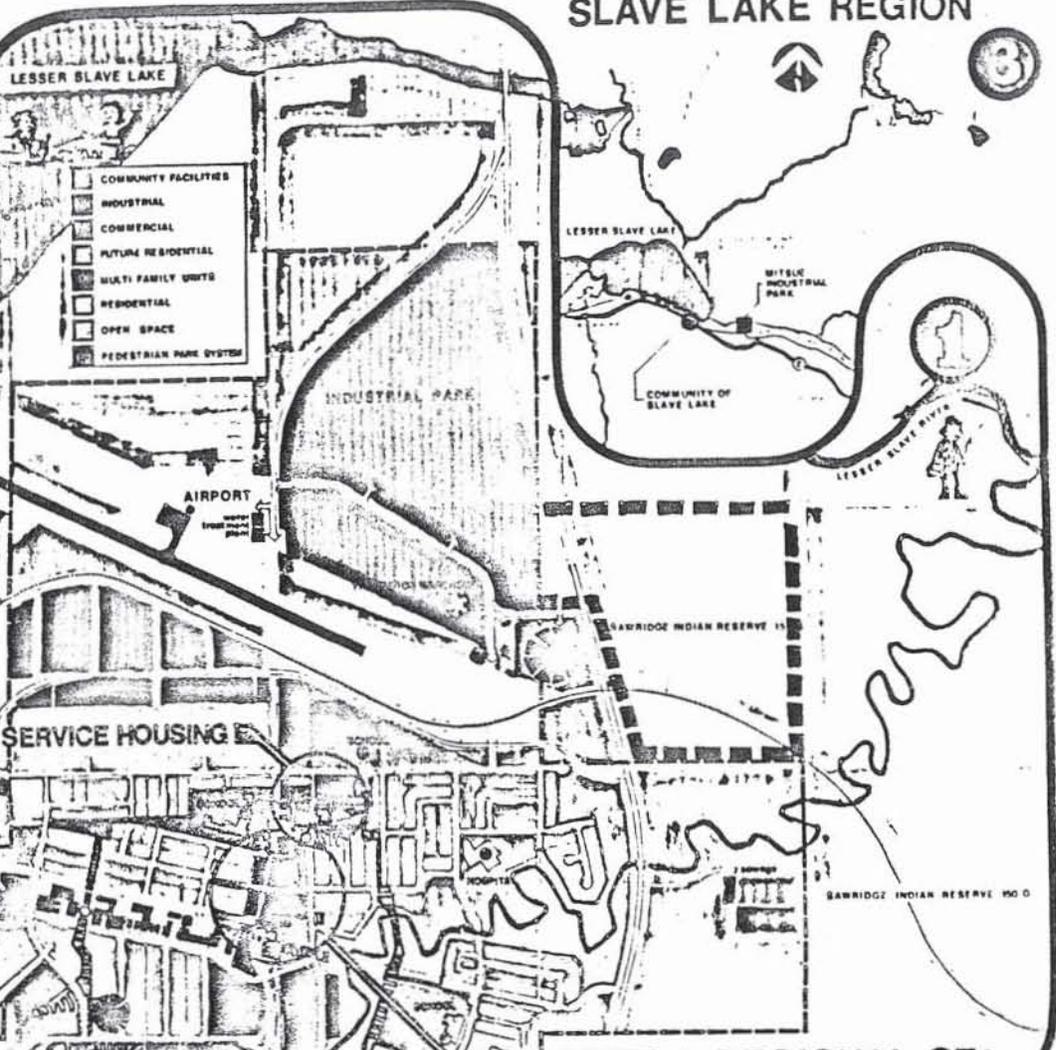
- western leg of Ring Road -- necessary to complete industrial traffic pattern outside of residential and commercial areas
- land banking (second phase) -- to complete parking requirements in the downtown area
- paving programs (second phase)

SLAVE LAKE REGION

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



- COMMUNITY FACILITIES
- INDUSTRIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- FUTURE RESIDENTIAL
- MULTI FAMILY UNITS
- RESIDENTIAL
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN PARK SYSTEM



PEDESTRIAN PARK SYSTEM



A REGIONAL CENTER



SLAVE LAKE LONG RANGE PLAN

CENTRALIZED MODEL

PROPOSED RING ROAD

HIGHWAY
COMMERCIAL
no 2

DOWNTOWN
PERIPHERAL
SERVICES

NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES

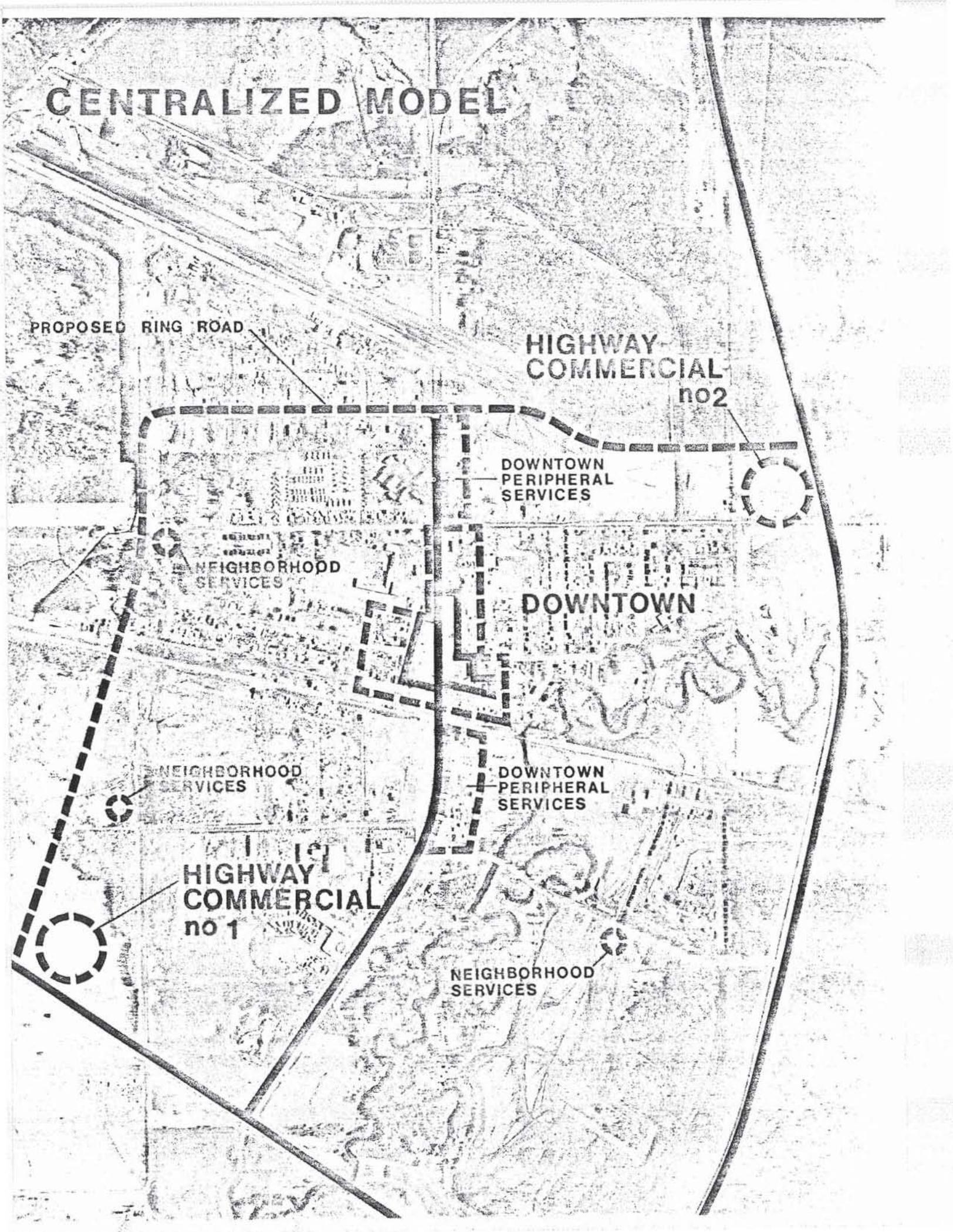
DOWNTOWN

NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES

DOWNTOWN
PERIPHERAL
SERVICES

HIGHWAY
COMMERCIAL
no 1

NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES



- sewer and water facility upgrading
- realignment of Main Street in the downtown area

Proposed Solution As Seen by the Town of Slave Lake

On May 29, 1975, the Town of Slave Lake applied to the Provincial Government, requesting New Town status. Town Council is presently awaiting a reply.

B. Downtown Regional Center

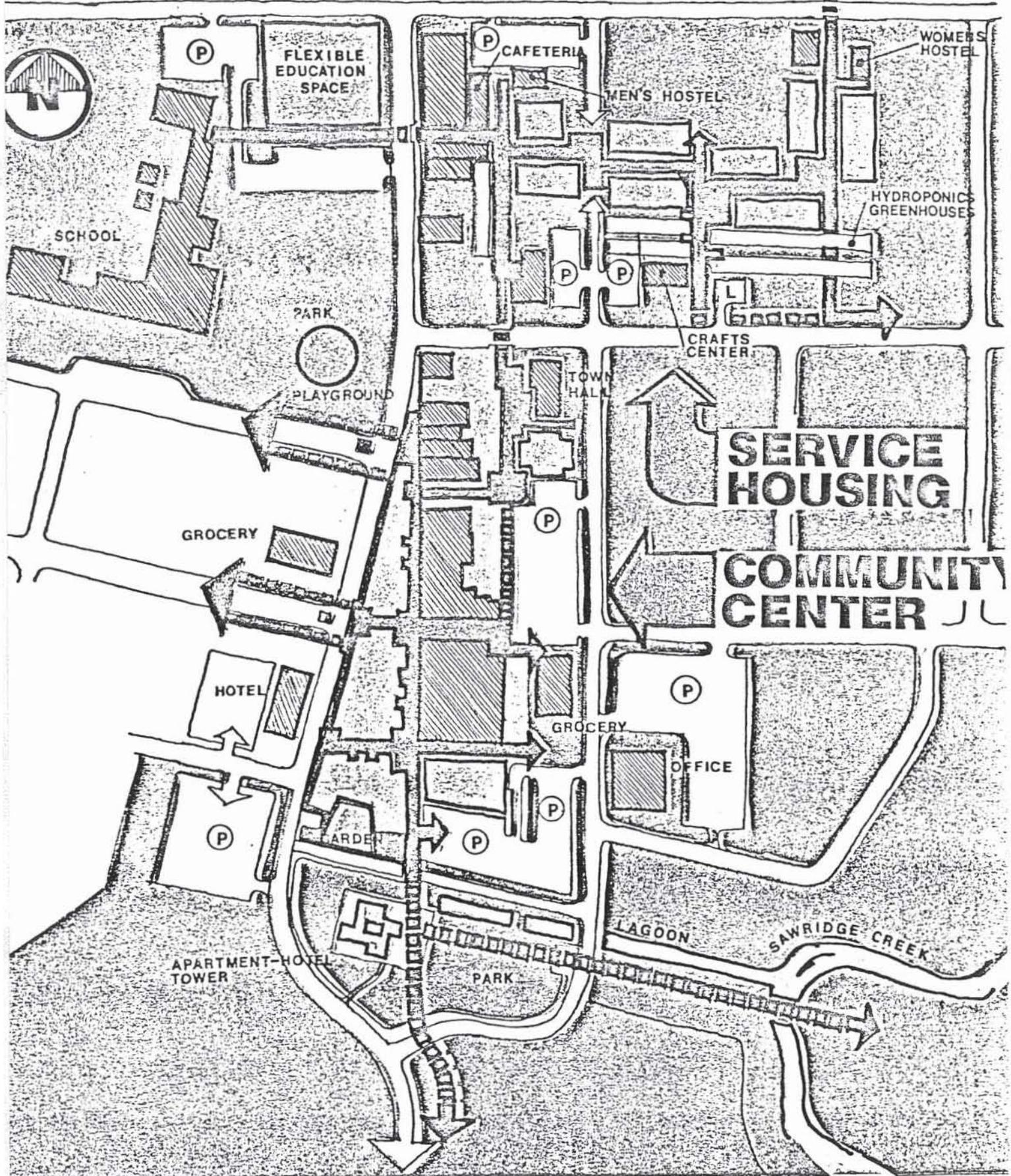
In adopting the Slave Lake Long Range Plan, Town Council decided to make major improvements in Downtown Slave Lake. The plan as adopted (see map on following page) has been used as a development guide for all new projects in the downtown since 1973.

We continue to follow this plan in detail and hope to see its eventual completion, making Downtown Slave Lake a model indoor Regional Center containing recreational, community and health facilities needed to attract and sustain a viable work force for industry.

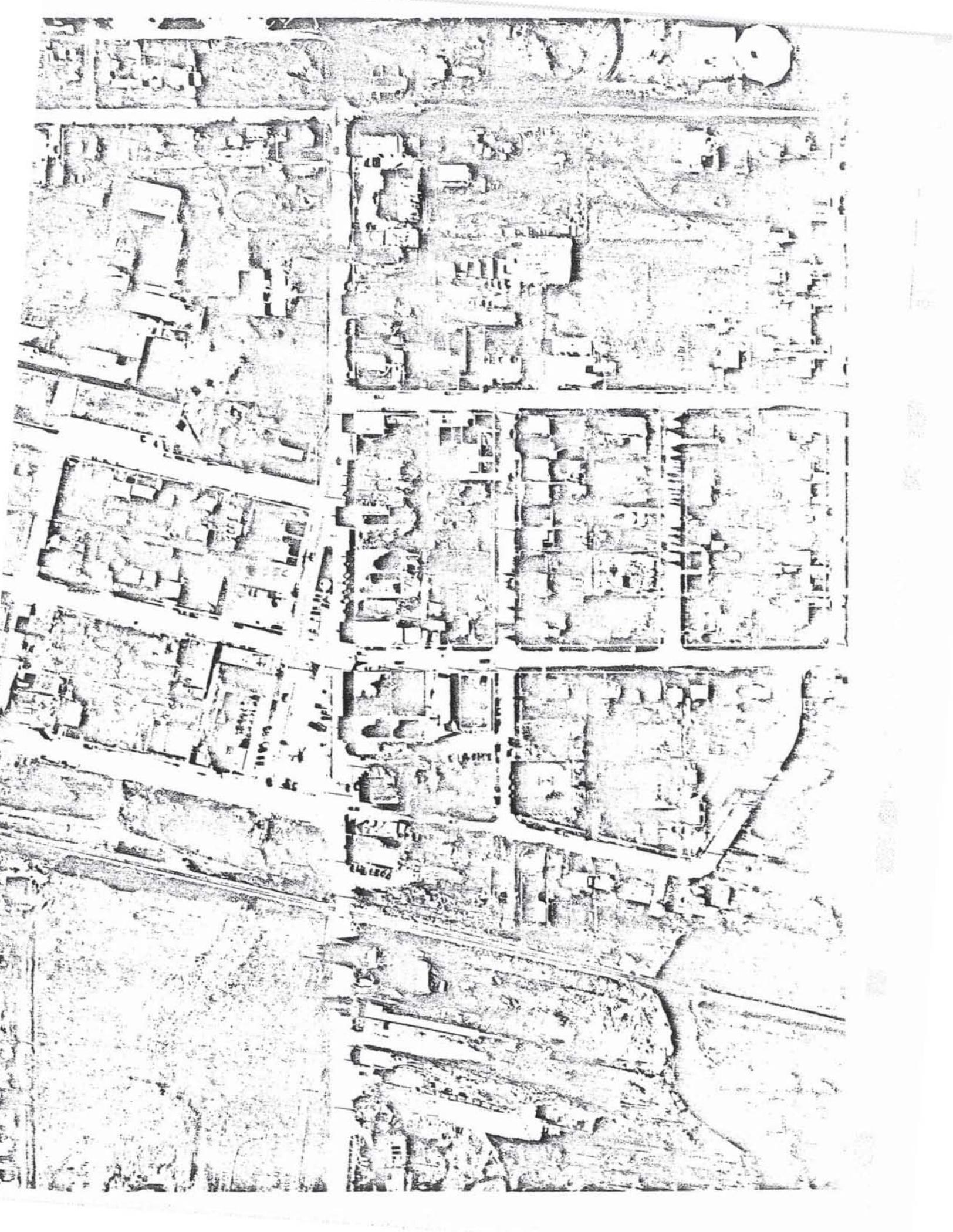
Projects which have been implemented to date are:

- land banking -- the Town has retained ownership and control of the most valuable commercial real estate in the center of town
- land banking for parking -- the Town has purchased four lots for parking, just east of Main Street
- the North Mall on the east side of Main Street
- South Mall linkage is prepared between new grocery store and Main Street
- plans for underground utilities prepared

LONG RANGE PLAN



DOWNTOWN SLAVE LAKE



- large trucks have been "zoned out" of downtown

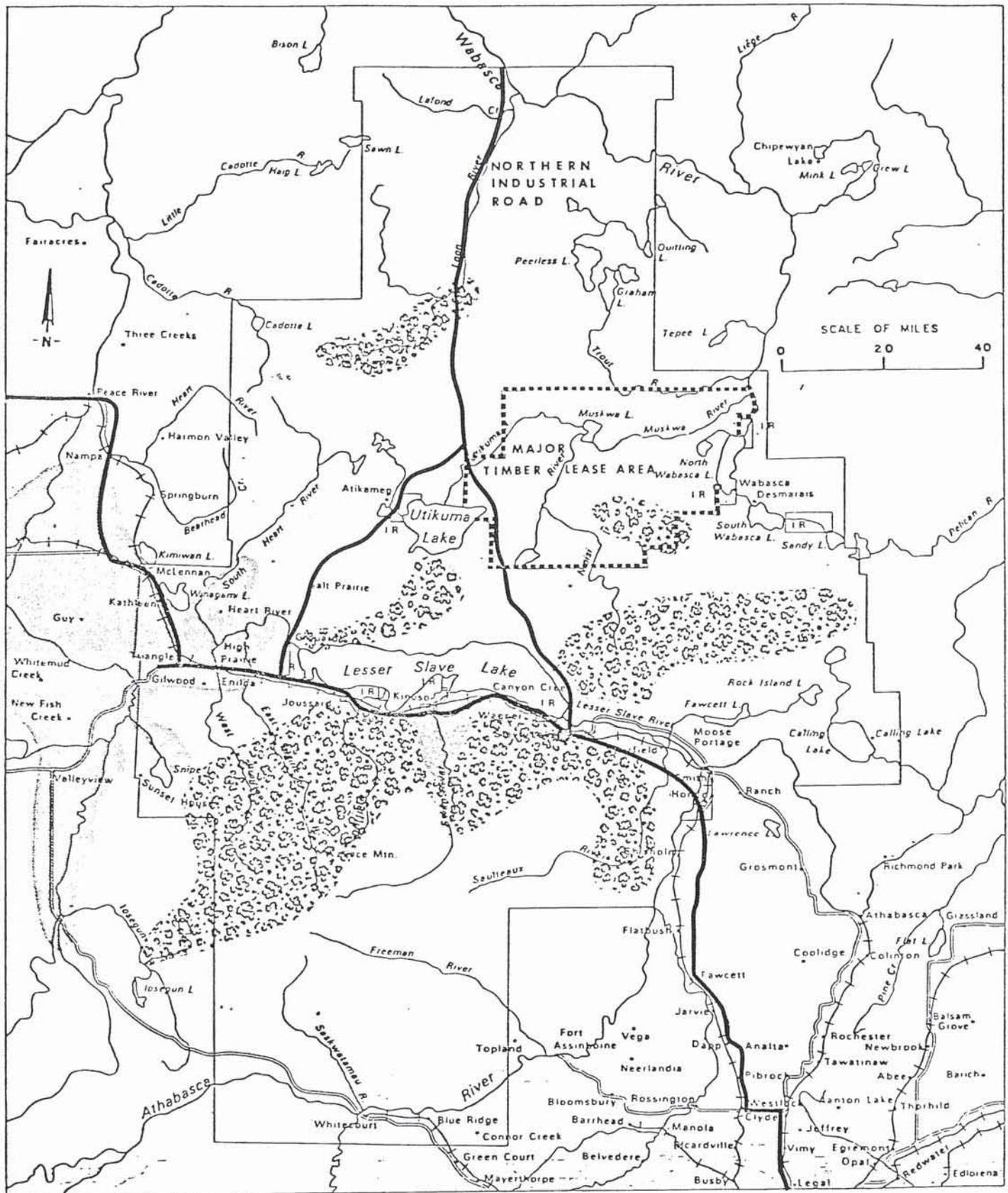
Proposed Solutions As Seen by the Town of Slave Lake

1. We feel that the major financial burden required to continue implementing the Downtown development can be handled out of existing Town resources, with supplemental funding from available financing programs within government departments.
2. We request that the Provincial Government participate in the financing of preliminary engineering and design fees which would ensure that the ultimate development meets site constraints and downtown needs.
3. Town Council wishes to retain development control of the Downtown Center, by way of a joint venture agreement with the private developer (s), to ensure that the necessary social and recreational facilities are provided.

We recognize that legislation may need to be changed to allow for this joint venture, and we would hope to continue working with the Provincial Government to see the Regional Center become a reality.

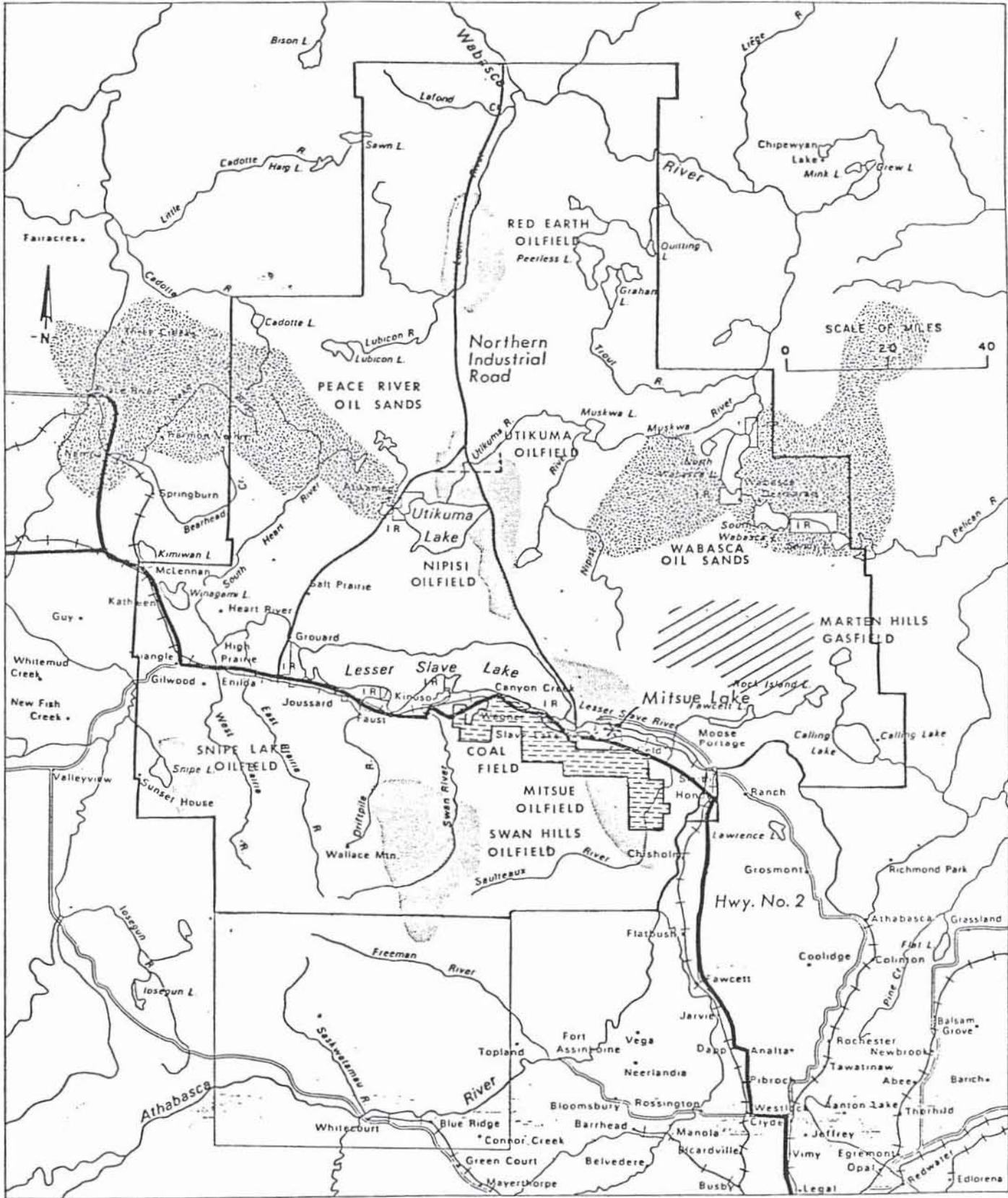
IV. TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM IN THE REGION

With Slave Lake being the southern terminus of Highway #967, the Town is situated in a key location for both the transportation and tourism industries of North Central Alberta. We recognize that the upgrading of Highway #967 will undoubtedly help to diversify the economy of Slave Lake and its outlying region.



 high potential forestry
 agriculture

RENEWABLE RESOURCE POTENTIAL LESSER SLAVE LAKE REGION



NON RENEWABLE RESOURCES POTENTIAL
 LESSER SLAVE LAKE REGION

Highway #967 is the link between the service center, Slave Lake and:

- Wabasca-Desmarais, Nipisi, Red Earth, Trout Lake, Peerless Lake, and eventually, Fort Vermilion
- Marten Hills Gas Plant, Nipisi Oil Field, Utikuma Oil Field, Red Earth Oil Field, and the Wabasca Oil Sands
- timber leases north of Slave Lake
- major tourist area -- Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park
- transportation corridor joining up to the MacKenzie Highway

Proposed Solutions As Seen by the Town of Slave Lake

We feel that it is important that the initial (southern) 20 miles be paved in the immediate future to indicate the Provincial Government's commitment to the Provincial Park and to the resources to the north.

Communities to the north of Slave Lake generate a good flow of traffic, as Wabasca lying about 80 miles to the north, alone has a population of some 1,500 people.

The poor condition of the road has caused a loss of tourists wishing to visit and enjoy Alberta's largest lake. Comments made by many tourists indicate that they will never return to the area due to hazardous road conditions, and due to damage done to their holiday equipment.

V. EMPLOYMENT AND RELOCATION PROGRAMS

1. Program Objectives

Through the co-operative efforts of the provincial and federal governments, a number of social programs were initiated in 1971 for the

indigenous peoples of the Lesser Slave Lake Region.

The following programs which were established in Slave Lake as pilot projects in 1971 have since been recognized as models and have been adopted in other areas of Alberta.

- Opportunity Corps Program (work habit training in the region)
- Community Vocational Centre Program (adult academic upgrading from grade 1 to 12)
- Employment and Relocation Counselling Program (family relocation from remote areas of high unemployment)

The most notable of these social programs is the Employment and Relocation Counselling Program, now administered from Slave Lake by the Alberta Department of Advanced Education and Manpower.

In general, the aim of this experimental program is to increase the education, skills, and standard of living and bring greater opportunity to Native people living in areas of high unemployment.

2. Special Program Characteristics

- a. Individualized recruitment - program staff carry out in-home counselling prior to persons entering the program. The decisions to relocate is absolutely voluntary.
- b. Selection Criteria - only young couples with some formal education (Grade 8-12) are accepted. Ages approximately 20 to 30 years old with possibly one, two or three children. Prior to relocation families have to have a medical examination. Families with low educational levels and, or older are acceptable if very aggressive.

- c. Family Relocation Counselling - the total family which relocates have a committment to the program staff to take part in the counselling services provided in the areas of:
- personal adjustment to the urban way of life
 - work expectations
 - home maintenance
 - family budgeting
 - total community integration etc.
- d. Employment Training - highly individualized on-the-job counselling program.
- e. Transitional Housing - the participating families are provided with subsidized rent geared to income. The housing is provided jointly with the Alberta Housing Corporation. In order to encourage these families to become permanent residents of the community there is an attractive "option to purchase", financial arrangement available.

The participating towns are deeply involved in the planning of housing locations and community integration of participating families. Client style and type are planned jointly by Alberta Housing Corporation and Advanced Education and Manpower Counselling staff.

3. Program Results

- a. The main objective of assisting families in making a successful transition from rural environment to an urban setting has been realized in Slave Lake and the project has expanded to Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray. Occupation of the units is presently:
- 64 houses in Slave Lake
 - 20 homes in Grande Prairie
 - 17 houses in Fort McMurray
- 101 homes TOTAL
- b. There have been 95 families relocated to Slave Lake since the program started in 1971. Out of the 95 families, 20 families have moved back to home communities due to unemployment or under employment due to closure of plants at the Mitsue Industrial Park. An additional 11 families have moved on to other towns for the same reason.

4. The Town of Slave Lake's Committment

The Town of Slave Lake feels that this program should continue.

We feel that the program is without question one of the most important and successful social programs across Canada.

We are proud of our association with this highly successful program and we continue to endorse the transition of Native people into our society.

APPENDIX

Attached you will find the following support documents.

1. "Employment and Relocation Counselling Project", Slave Lake Office, Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower, 1975.
2. An excerpt from "A Regional Centre in Downtown Slave Lake, Alberta", Provincial Planning Branch Alberta Municipal Affairs, November 1973.
3. "A Comprehensive Planning Report on Slave Lake's Application for New Town Status", Planning Services Division, Alberta Municipal Affairs, November 1975.
4. "Slave Lake - A Regional Growth Centre in the North: A Habitat Demonstration Project", Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower, April 1976.

TOWN OF SLAVE LAKE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA - T0G 2A0

November 12, 1976

The Honorable Peter Lougheed
Provincial Legislative Building
Box 307
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Mr. Premier:

On behalf of the Slave Lake delegation whom you met in September, I wish to thank you and your Ministers for granting us time to expose you to certain aspects of the Slave Lake dilemma. While it is impossible to give you an in-depth exposure to all our major problems in one single meeting, and I refer specifically to the delicate social issues involved, the delegation feel, as we hope you do, that the session was of benefit to all who attended.

If one acknowledges that the above is in fact the case, then it would seem appropriate for me to paraphrase the comments made on the most salient issues discussed and to restate those points we feel require some elaboration.

We understand Slave Lake falls within your government's policy of supporting growth centres outside the two metropolitan areas of the province who display regional and local initiative. The form this support can take was not clear, however, we would like to suggest developments which result in the following expenditures that would qualify.

The ring road and other major streets construction necessitated by the long-range plan.

Other physical changes to the town infra-structure arising out of the long-range plan, such as the re-housing of regional social and health facilities serving many people unused to living in an urban environment, which are at present accommodated in unsuitable scattered locations.

The provision of expertise to the town which is available within existing line departments.

Since our meeting we have become aware that as a result of your directive, certain investigations necessary to arrive at an assessment of Slave Lake's position have been commenced, a move which

we certainly appreciate. In this regard, I would like to emphasize, if I may, the point brought out in our letter to you of September 27, 1976, to which all those in Slave Lake who hold a civic responsibility are committed, that our aims and objectives can only be achieved if they are in tune with government policy, and a strong method of two-way communication is inaugurated. We have suggested in the past that this could best be achieved by channelling communications through one Minister, such as was the case some time ago when the Honorable A.J. Adair, was Minister of Northern Affairs. On the other hand, of course, should your Cabinet approve the town's application for New Town Status which was the subject of a public hearing held by the Provincial Planning Board early this year, a decision upon which is still awaited, our suggestion would be superfluous as in that event, the Minister of Municipal Affairs would automatically fill such a role.

I would now like to raise the question of Mitsue Park and the DREE programme, and in doing so realize from your remarks during our discussion that it is a sensitive area.

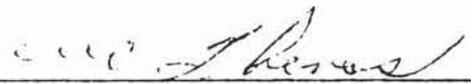
For those who hold office of any kind in Slave Lake today, and none of us who visited you in September were active at the time the DREE programme was commenced. In consequence we have no proprietary interest in perpetuating the policies which brought about the development of Mitsue Park. However, Mitsue Park is the principal source of impact on the town's economic and social life and as such we must be directly concerned with its state of health. Bearing this in mind, we are not idiosyncratic about the source of assistance. We simply wish to ensure we are not lacking in our efforts to do everything possible to bring stability to Mitsue Park upon which so much of the welfare of the natives and whites alike in our town depend. It would seem from our discussion you would prefer we made direct contact with Mr. Lessard of the DREE organization, which is a suggestion we intend to follow in the coming weeks. In this regard we would like to receive the name of your appointee whom we would contact, so that should these discussions prove fruitful, the necessary Provincial approvals can be processed. May we also suggest it would be of benefit to all, if this appointee could be the same Minister as the one suggested be designated, earlier in this letter.

Thank you again for meeting the delegation and the beneficial way the meeting was conducted. We still hope you will visit Slave Lake, as only in this way can one appreciate the work of the Native Employment and Relocation Programme, its significance within the Slave Lake Region and its more general application in the Province.

Yours truly,


DEPUTY MAYOR

Letter being endorsed as being representative of the views of Council.


MAYOR

cc: Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Larry Shaben, M.L.A.