

## Welcome!

Today's open house is the starting point for the Area H Village Planning Project. We are here today to:

- **provide information on the village centre areas**, including background information on the Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan (OCP) and The Regional Growth Strategy
- **share what has been happening at the Regional District of Nanaimo** since the last Electoral Area 'H' OCP Review, particularly as this relates to concerns about sustainability;
- **listen and hear from you** on what changes have occurred in your area since the last OCP Review, what is important to you, and what you think this project should address;
- **encourage you to fill out a feedback form** so that the RDN has a good sense of what the community's thoughts are about the village centres and the kind of village planning that should take place, before a Terms of Reference is drafted for this project.

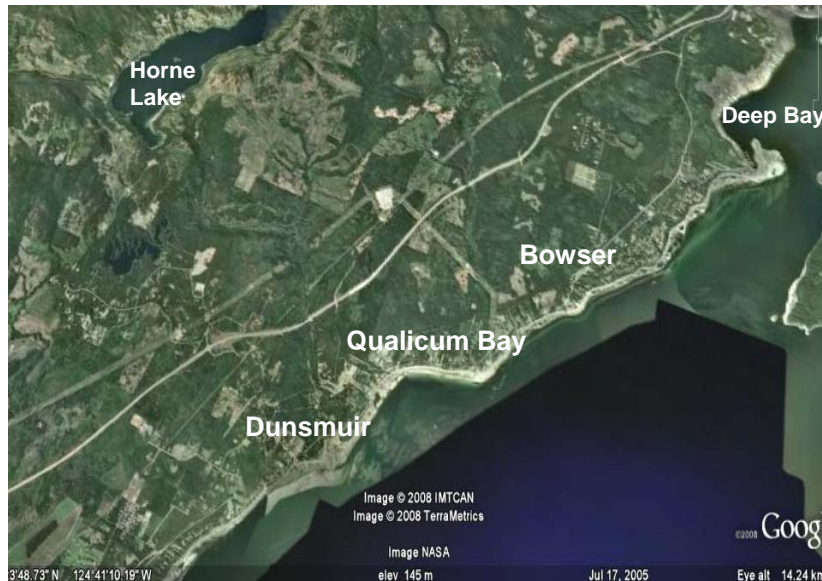
## What is the Area H Village Planning Project about ?

The Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan (OCP), adopted in 2004, identifies and provides guidance on the development of three village centres in Electoral Area 'H'. They are named the Dunsmuir, Qualicum Bay and Bowser Village Centres.

The OCP directs that village centre plans be carried out within 5 years or before the next OCP review.

At the request of the Area Director, and based on community interest and OCP direction, the RDN has allocated funding in 2008 to start working with the community to look at village planning.

Before the RDN drafts a Terms of Reference for this project, we'd like to hear what the community has to say about the village centres and village planning.



Aerial photo of part of Electoral Area 'H', showing general location of Area 'H' village centre areas, and surrounding context

### What should this project be about ?

We look forward to  
hearing your thoughts....

## What is a Regional Growth Strategy?

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a vision of the region, adopted by the Regional Board, to establish the economic, social and environmental objectives that promote healthy communities.

The objectives of the strategy provide guidance to the affected municipalities and the regional district in the development of local Official Community Plans and other bylaws.

For the Regional District of Nanaimo, eight goals have remained consistent since the RDN Regional Growth Strategy was introduced in 1997:

### Strong urban containment

## Nodal structure

## Rural integrity

## Environmental protection

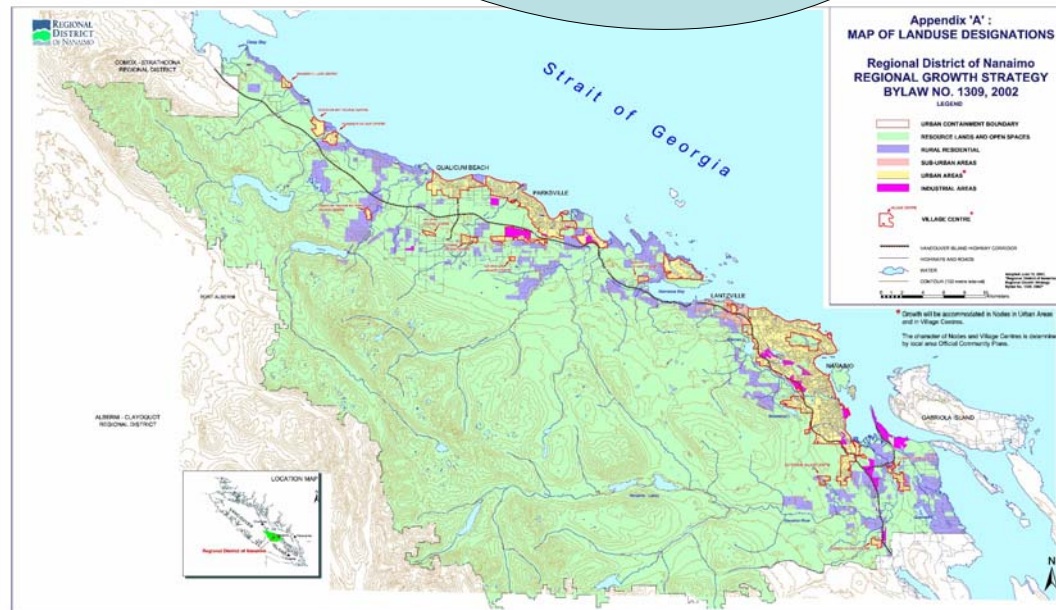
## Improved mobility

## Vibrant and sustainable economy

## Efficient services

## Cooperation among Jurisdictions

The RDN Regional Growth Strategy is currently under review in 2008.  
More information can be obtained by:  
Visiting the project website: [www.ShapingourFuture.ca](http://www.ShapingourFuture.ca)  
Contact Person: Paul Thompson  
Manager of Long Range Planning  
Regional District of Nanaimo  
Tel (Toll Free) 1-877-607-4111



**area h village planning project** taking a closer look at village centres and village planning...

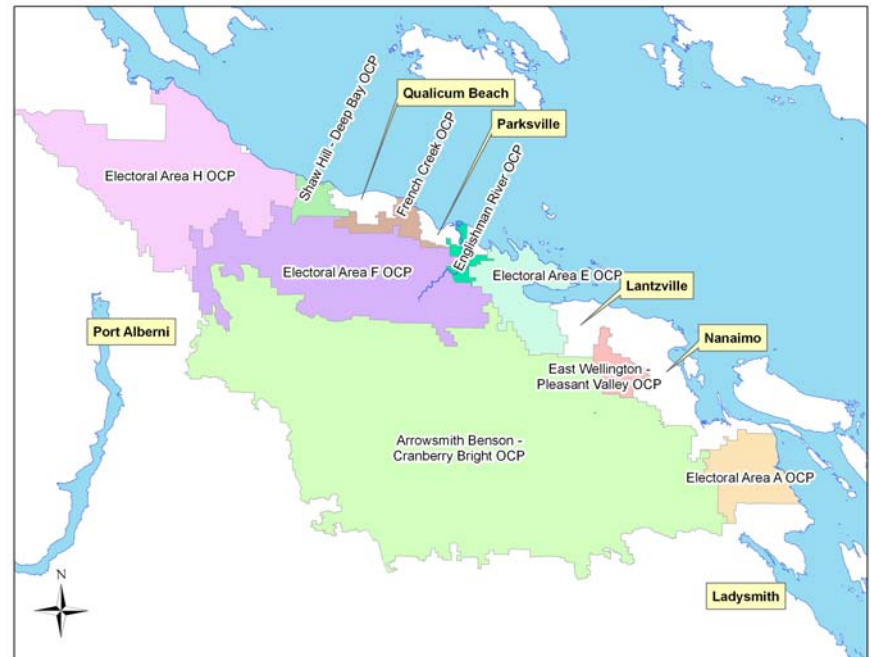
# What is an Official Community Plan ?

## What is an Official Community Plan (OCP) ?

The Local Government Act defines an official community plan (OCP) as a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan. It must consider anticipated housing needs, schools, service requirements, public facilities, location and requirements for commercial, industrial, agricultural and other land uses, and restrictions on lands that are environmentally sensitive or hazardous.

An official community planning or OCP is a long-term strategy to land use, development and servicing. The goals of an OCP are implemented through its zoning bylaw.

In January 1997, the RDN Board adopted a Growth Management Plan that provides a regional framework to guide land use planning and servicing and protect quality of life in the region. OCPs in the RDN's Electoral Areas and municipalities have developed "context statements" to show how they are consistent with the goals of the growth management plan.



**The current OCP for Area H is called the Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan. It was adopted in 2004.**

**A limited number of copies of the OCP are available at the open house today. The OCP can be found on-line at [www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca).**

## Area 'H' Official Community Plan Overview

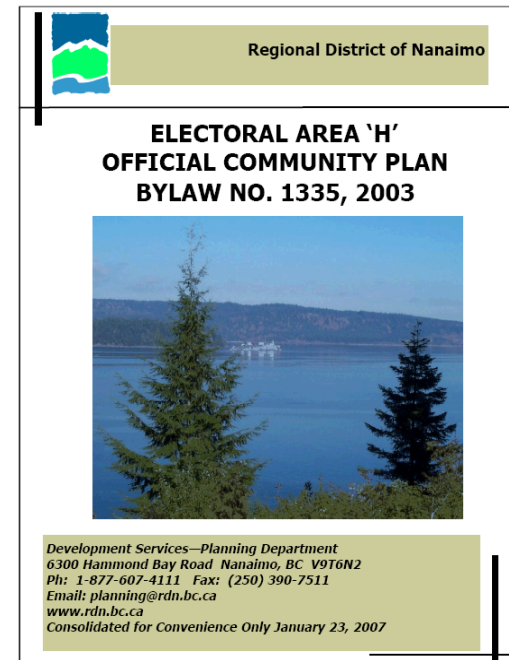
**The Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan** was adopted in 2004, and replaced the former Shaw Hill-Deep Bay Official Community Plan for Area H properties.

The plan reflects community values and the regulations of the local, provincial and federal governments with interests in the Plan area.

When the plan was prepared in 2004, there were approximately 3,100 people living in the Plan area. The plan expects that with a modest growth rate of 2% on average, approximately 6,150 people will live in the area by 2026. The plan anticipates that housing needs over this time will generally be accommodated in the village centres and through the infill and subdivision of existing rural and rural residential lands.

The Plan was prepared based on the direction provided by the community in the “**Community Values Statement**”, and the **Regional Growth Strategy**, and planning benefitted from previous work contained in the Shaw Hill – Deep Bay OCP (1996).

The intent of the OCP is to provide direction of how the Plan area will grow and change over the next 5 to 10 years. With changes to legislation, growth projection expectations, changing attitudes of the residents and landowners and amendments to the Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), it is recommended that the Plan be reviewed, as necessary.



**A limited number of  
Official Community Plan documents  
are available at the open house  
today.**

**The document can be  
found on-line at [www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca)**



## Community Values Statement

**“Area ‘H’ is made up of distinct neighbourhoods that have a diverse range of activities and interests but share many common values. Over the years, the area has developed to accommodate a broad mix of rural, residential, recreational, tourist, small scale commercial, and resource uses with an emphasis on mutual respect and diversity. The combination of climate, spectacular natural environment, outdoor recreation opportunities, water resources, entrepreneurial spirit, and the progressive attitude of residents have resulted in a highly desirable and vibrant community.**

**Given the attributes of the area, the residents of Area ‘H’ recognize that there will be pressure for change and development in their neighbourhoods. As the future unfolds, the residents of Area ‘H’ will embrace compatible development, while at the same time maintaining the values that are fundamental to the health and prosperity of the community. These values have been formed based on the input and priorities of the residents who make up the neighbourhoods of Electoral Area ‘H’ and will be used to help guide future decisions on development proposals, environmental protection initiatives, and infrastructure development for the community, the Regional District of Nanaimo and senior government agencies.**

**These values include:**

1. Protect rural character and contain urban development to village nodes;
2. Identify and protect watersheds and aquifers from degradation, inappropriate development and pollution to ensure a continued safe water supply;
3. Recognition that the sustainable development of the area must be linked to groundwater quality and quantity for all residents;
4. Protection and promotion of natural, environmental, and geographic features;
5. Support for development regulations to protect environmentally sensitive areas, natural hazard lands, the marine/freshwater foreshores, and aquifer recharge areas;
6. Recognition that a comprehensive approach to managing sewage/septage is required;
7. Recognition that a comprehensive approach to storm water management is required;
8. Support for a diversified economy, focusing on small scale commercial, human service sectors, and tourism within the village nodes;
9. Support for economic diversity in new and existing developments that compliment the rural integrity of Area ‘H’;
10. Recognition of the importance of home based businesses in the growth and diversification of the area;
11. Consultation with First Nations to develop approaches to issues of mutual interest;
12. Protection of resource lands for suitable resource uses;
13. Minimize the encroachment of incompatible land uses;
14. Recognition of Horne Lake as a unique recreational opportunity;
15. Support for environmentally responsible shellfish aquaculture, recreational and commercial fishery, and salmon enhancement;
16. Recognize and support Deep Bay Harbour as a viable commercial and recreational port;
17. Preservation and enhancement of green space, access to public lands, integrated trails and beaches;
18. Recognize the need for and continued support for Electoral Area ‘H’ local schools and community centres;
19. Promotion of a mixed community providing economic opportunities, affordable housing, and services for all residents;
20. Recognition and support for enhanced transportation corridors; and
21. Require comprehensive public consultation with respect to decisions about the future development of all lands and services within our communities.”

## Regional Growth Strategy Goals

Strong urban containment

Nodal structure (village centres)

Rural integrity

Environmental protection

Improved mobility

Vibrant and sustainable economy

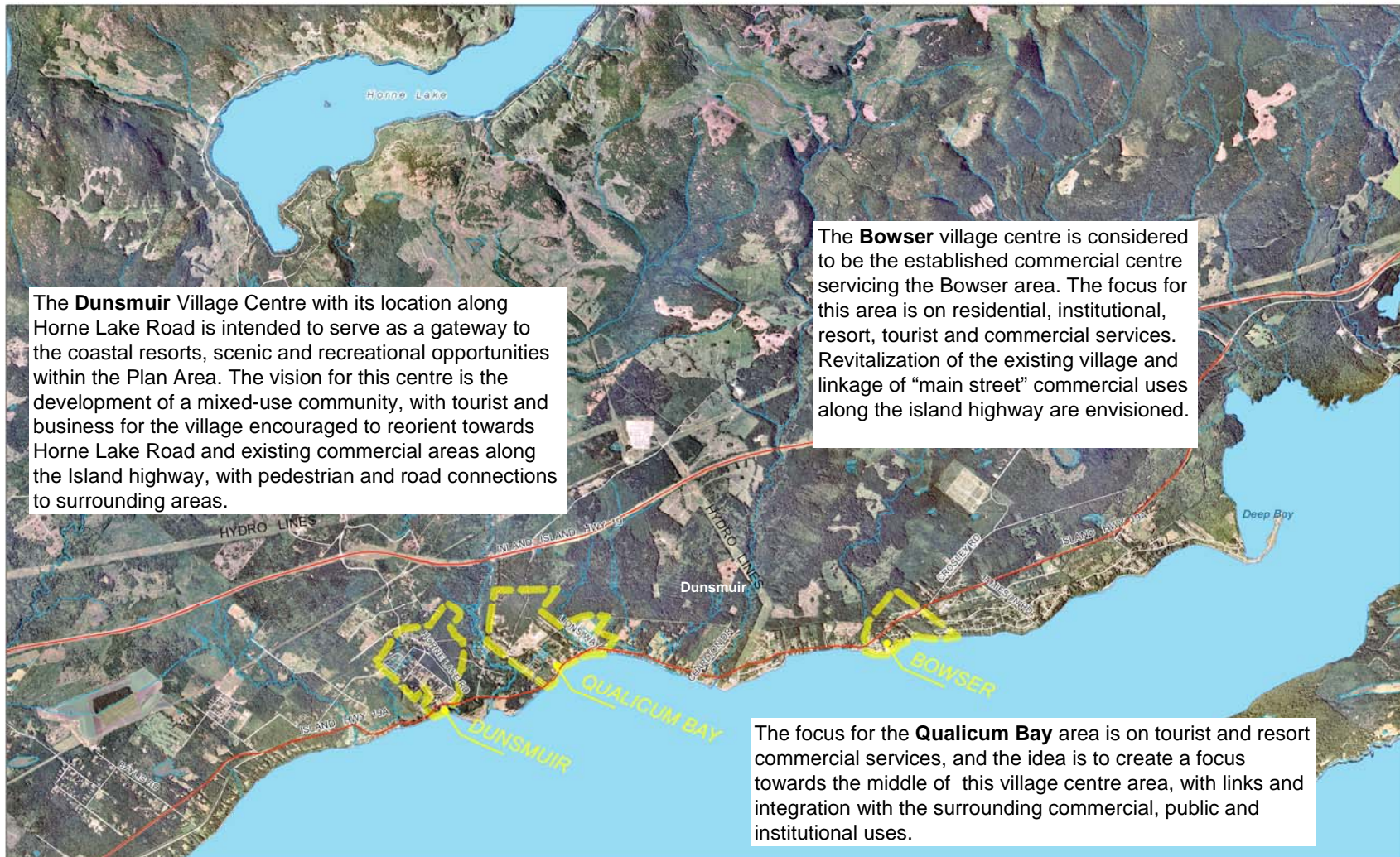
Efficient services

There are 4 main policy sections to the plan.  
Development proposals may need to respond to one or more policy sections of the plan.



## What does the Area 'H' Official Community Plan say about village centres ?

The Electoral Area H Official Community Plan identifies three mixed-use village centres named Dunsmuir, Qualicum Bay and Bowser.



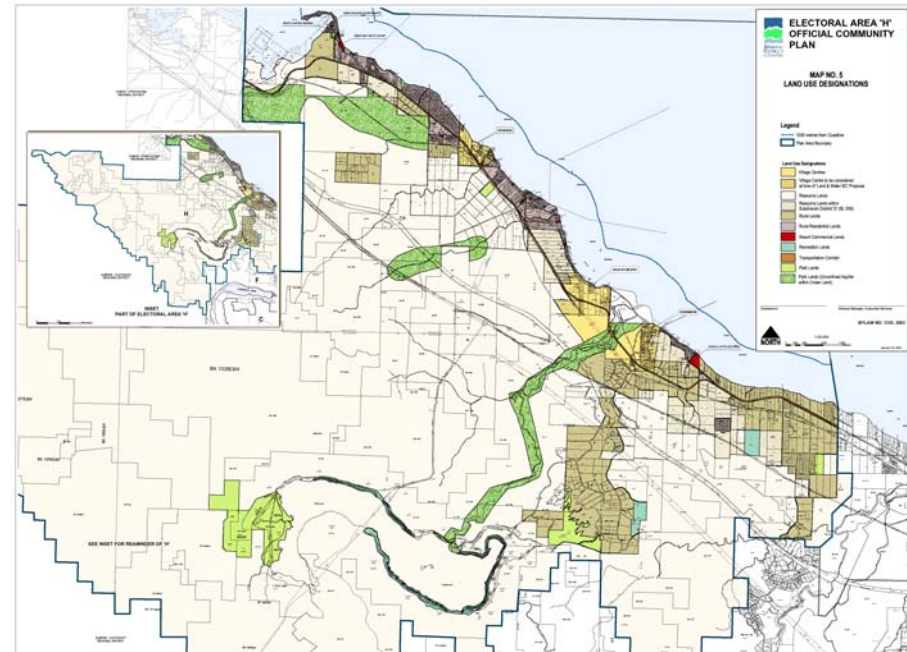


## OBJECTIVES

1. *Concentrate* compatible uses within the Village Centres.
2. *Promote* the provision of full community services (sewer, water and storm) to parcels within the Village Centre Comprehensive Development Areas.
3. *Provide* controlled development of commercial uses in the Plan Area.
4. *Avoid* conflicts between residential and commercial uses.
5. *Ensure* that the type and scale of commercial development follows community preferences.
6. *Reorient* the location of commercial development and services to support Village Centres and serve the needs of local residents and the traveling public.
7. *Direct* development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

## POLICIES

1. Lands designated Village Centre are shown on Map No. 5.
2. New commercial sites shall only be located in areas designated as Village Centres.
3. Lands designated as Village Centres shall be within designated Development Permit Areas.
4. Prior to considering proposals for comprehensive village development, the Regional District will provide opportunities for comprehensive public consultation as noted in the Community Values Statement in this OCP.
5. Prior to considering proposals for development the applicant must provide written confirmation from the local water utility that sufficient quality and quantity of potable water is available for the development.



**The OCP provides general guidance on the character and design of residential and commercial areas within the village centres:**

## **Commercial development**

- Integrate with/enhance character of existing development
- Mix of building styles, small scale, low rise structures in clusters
- Orient towards adjacent streets where possible
- Break up form of buildings
- Natural building materials
- Compatibility with Community Values Statement

## **Residential Development**

- In keeping with village character & surrounding residential/rural areas
- A range of housing types
- Clustered in small groups
- Ground oriented where possible
- Landscaping to separate residential clusters
- Natural building materials
- Compatibility with Community Values Statement

**The OCP provides additional design guidelines for:**

- safe pedestrian, cycling routes/linkages
- no gated/walled communities
- riparian vegetation protection/enhancement
- lighting
- signage
- landscaping
- off-street parking
- outdoor refuse/storage areas
- buffering/transition of village centres with adjacent ALR lands
- soil contamination
- interface fire mitigation
- water supply verification from local water utility provider

## Current OCP direction for village centres

further studies & initiatives required

The Area H OCP Review process did not have the resources or opportunity to address the village centres in more detail. In response, the OCP identifies as part of the implementation section of the plan, further initiatives which should be carried out, including the creation of village centre plans.

Implementation Actions	Timing	Responsibility and Involvement of:		
		Senior Gov't	RDN	Community
Investigation of sewer servicing requirements for village centres	Immediate		✓	✓
Initiate discussions with School District No. 69 on the future of Bowser Elementary School	Immediate	✓	✓	✓
Initiate watershed study with specific reference to aquifer water quality and quantity	Immediate	✓	✓	✓
Aquaculture zoning- review in light of changing provincial government agricultural regulations	Immediate	✓	✓	✓
Initiate evacuation disaster preparedness plan in cooperation with other government agencies	Immediate	✓	✓	✓
Publish and encourage interface fire mitigation techniques for all building and landscaping	Immediate	✓	✓	✓
Creation of village centre plans	Short term		✓	✓
Improved signage for businesses on New Inland Island Highway	Short Term	✓	✓	✓
Design of sewer servicing infrastructure	Short term		✓	
Review Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw to ensure compatibility with OCP	Short Term	✓	✓	✓
Update inventory of Environmentally Sensitive Lands	Short Term	✓	✓	✓
Conduct feasibility assessment of implementing a Tree Removal Bylaw along the Inland Island Highway	Short Term	✓	✓	✓
Development of existing and acquisition of new trails	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓
Improve watercourse and aquifer mapping	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓
Work with School District on ongoing importance of educational facilities in the Plan Area	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓
Investigate protection strategies for sensitive ecosystems	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓

### The OCP does not currently provide guidance on:

The recommended location of residential, commercial, open space, or other land uses within the village centre areas;

Appropriate scale of development (amount of commercial, residential densities) within the village centres;

Road patterns & other built linkages (trails, rail) within the village centres and connections to surrounding areas;

Servicing requirements (water,sewage,storm);

Types of infrastructure and/or infrastructure upgrades within or outside of the village centre areas which might be required as a result of village centre development (e.g. roads, sewage systems, water systems, stormwater management).

Phasing of development within village centres, or between village centres;

These are some of the things that village planning could help to address...

Immediate = 2004

Short-term = within 5 years or before next OCP review

Ongoing = to be initiated in short term with no planned date of completion

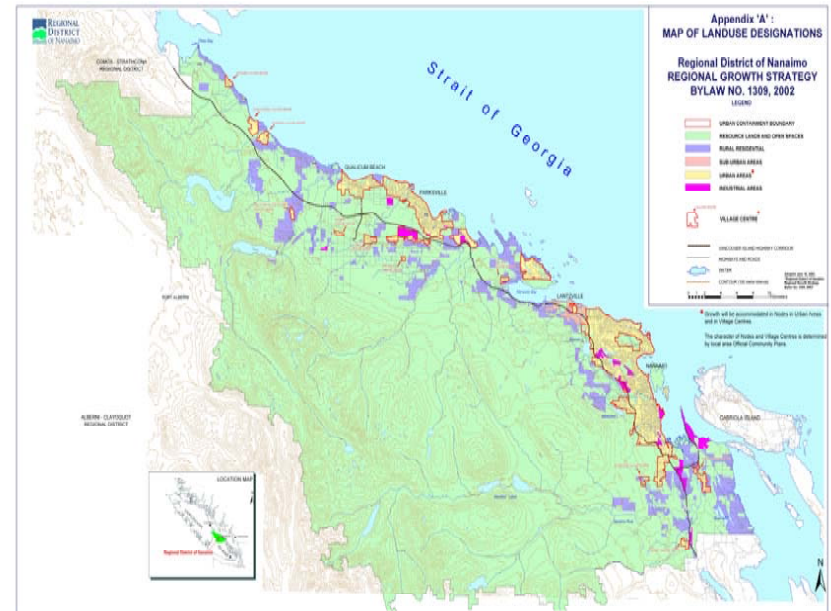
# What are village centres and why are they important ?

## The Regional Growth Strategy Perspective

One of the objectives of the **Regional Growth Strategy** is to direct growth in a way which results in more compact, mixed-use nodes within communities, which have places to live, work, learn, play, shop, and access services.

If planned and developed successfully, compact mixed-use nodes or centres offer more opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to meet more of their social and economic needs closer to home. Mixed-uses closer to home mean that residents do not need to drive as long for some of their trips, and more people are able to make some trips by foot or bike. More compact communities can help reduce land and energy consumption, and provide a more efficient footprint for infrastructure (e.g. sewers, roads) and services provision such as public transit. From a social perspective, mixed-use centres can become focal points for community life, and can contribute to community character and identity.

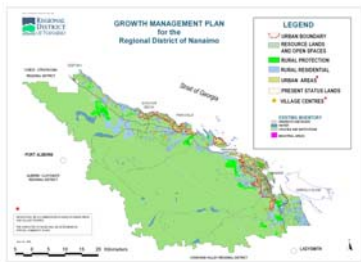
In rural areas, mixed-use areas are referred to as Village Centres. Village centres differ from their urban counterparts in that they may be smaller and have fewer residents, less variety of uses, typically serve the people living within the centre and people living in the surrounding rural area, and the character is semi-rural.



**The Regional Growth Strategy Land Use Map (adopted in 2003) identifies the location of village centres in rural areas. The strategy accepts that the design, character, land uses and ultimate level of development in these areas should be developed collaboratively at the local level by governments, residents and business interests.**



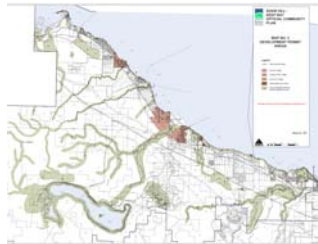
## 1993-1997 The first RDN Regional Growth Strategy



The concept of village centres was first introduced in the 1997 version of the Regional Growth Strategy.

The 1997 RGS map showed the general locations of village centres, noting that local plans should define nodal boundaries, population, character and design of these areas.

## 1995-1996 Shaw Hill – Deep Bay OCP



The Shaw Hill – Deep Bay Official Community Planning process (1995-1996) took the next step of defining village centre boundaries, and establishing policies and development guidelines for village centres (residential densities, density bonusing, development permit requirements for design and character, and the use of a design panel process). Prior to rezoning, further assessment of the Dunsmuir node was required to address environmental and transportation impacts and potential development impacts on the Bowser and Qualicum Bay village centres.

## 1999, 2003 Regional Growth Strategy Updates



The Regional Growth Strategy was updated in 1999 and 2003. New maps reflected the outcomes of local planning for village centres in Area H.

## 2003-2004 Electoral Area 'H' OCP



The Shaw- Hill Deep Bay OCP was reviewed and replaced by the Electoral Area 'H' OCP in 2004. In terms of the village centres, the Plan carried forward the boundaries of the village centres. The Plan built upon the design and character guidelines of the former plan. The plan removed a number of the original village centre policies, in favour of completing village centre plans.

## 2008-2009

**Regional Growth  
Strategy Review**

**Village  
Planning  
Project**

**It is anticipated that plans produced through the village planning project would be incorporated as an amendment to the Area H OCP and an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy.**

**The 2006-2009 Strategic Plan is entitled “ Leadership in Creating Sustainable Communities”.** The strategic plan sets out the short term priorities for 2006 to 2009 that correspond to the Board’s current term of office, as well as the Board’s longer term priorities for 2009 and beyond. The Strategic Plan is the most senior policy document at the RDN, and influences the direction of all new policy development (e.g. Regional Growth Strategy Review) and operational decisions.

### The Strategic Plan recognizes a number of trends and issues, including but not limited to:

#### Environmental Protection

Protection of the natural environment within and around the communities in the RDN is critical to maintenance of its water supplies, ecosystem integrity and livability. The Strategic Plan recognizes that people are part of the ecosystem and that the economic and social lives of people should be integrated into the environment in ways that maintain or enhance the environment, rather than degrade or destroy it.

#### Affordable Housing & Aging in Place

Volatile construction and energy prices and population growth have contributed to a growing housing affordability problem. As our population ages, how can we provide more opportunities for people to stay within their communities if they’d like to, even if their housing needs change ?

### How can village planning help to respond to these and other Sustainability issues ?

#### Climate Change

Globally, there is a growing recognition that the climate is getting warmer, and this could have far reaching environmental, social and economic consequences. One of the key reasons the climate is getting warmer is because we are consuming more fossil fuels in transportation, manufacturing, heating, cooling and electricity generation, and this increased consumption results in increased greenhouse gas emissions which warm the earth’s atmosphere...There is a need to identify and pursue ways of reducing our consumption of fossil fuels.

The warming climate also means that winters will be shorter and warmer, resulting in less snowmelt to recharge the groundwater. Consequently, the RDN will need to monitor changes in groundwater recharge and the availability of water to residents in the region.

The RDN is working to address climate change through the Regional Growth Strategy, the BC Climate Action Charter, and the Green Buildings Project, among other initiatives.

The RDN Board of Directors intend to make decisions and undertake projects over the next twenty-five years to achieve the vision defined below...

***“In the year 2030,  
the Regional District of Nanaimo  
is a socially, economically and  
environmentally healthy region,  
where residents meet their needs  
without compromising the ability  
of future residents  
to do the same.*”**

**Source: The RDN 2006-2009  
Strategic Plan**

*The Strategic Plan establishes short  
term priorities for 2006-2009 that  
correspond to the Board's current term  
of office, as well as the Board's longer  
term priorities for  
2009 and beyond.*

#### ...OUR ENVIRONMENT

Residents have a safe, sufficient supply of drinking water. Important ecosystems and ecological features are protected, healthy, and productive. Natural resources in the region are conserved, and renewable resources continue to be available. The air is clean and safe to breathe. Greenhouse gas emission levels have stabilized and are beginning to decrease. Residents' energy requirements are reduced, and energy is obtained in ways that minimize negative impacts on the environment. Land and resources are efficiently used, and the negative impacts of land use and development are minimized.

#### ...OUR SOCIETY

Residents in the region are healthy, and healthcare services and facilities are available when needed. Residents have education and training that qualifies them for employment in the region. Poverty in the region is minimized, and residents can meet their basic needs. Housing is affordable, and a variety of different types and sizes of housing are available to accommodate the current and future needs of residents. The region is a safe place to live, and residents care for and respect each other. There are a wide variety of opportunities for people to interact with each other and nature, and historical attributes that are important to the region are acknowledged, celebrated and preserved.

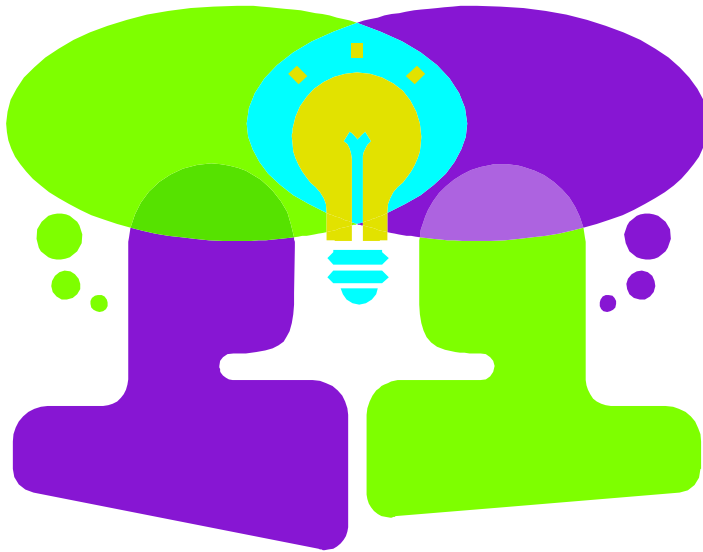
#### ...OUR ECONOMY

Residents in the region are employed in a wide variety of interesting and rewarding occupations. Our downtowns are vibrant places, and there is a wide variety of different sizes and types of businesses in the region. The economy of the region is healthy and continues to diversify and grow. Businesses in the region are environmentally responsible, and there are systems in place to favour these businesses. It is economically viable to produce goods and services in the region that are environmentally friendly, and residents favour these goods and services over those made available from outside the region.”

## What should this project be about ?

**Community insights most welcome!**

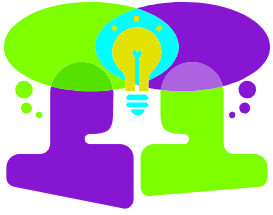
The Regional District of Nanaimo would like to hear the community's thoughts about the village centres, and village planning before drafting a Terms of Reference for the project.



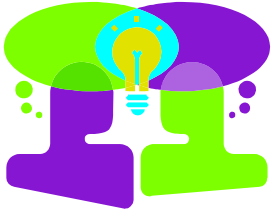
### Share your ideas with the RDN by:

- **Talking with us today**
- **Writing on the following boards...**
- **If someone has already shared your idea on the boards, place a dot by that idea to show your support...**
- **Filling out the questionnaire**

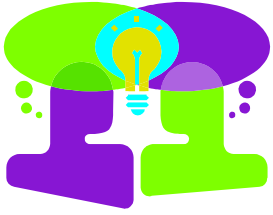




**What has been happening in Area 'H' since the OCP Review in 2004 ?**

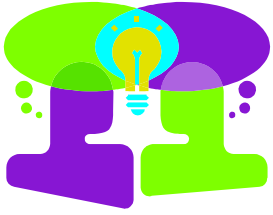


**What kinds of things do you think are important to think about as we begin to look at planning for village centres in Area 'H' ?**



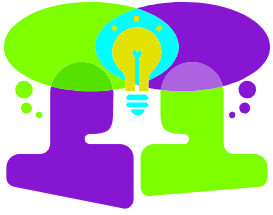
**Should we, at the beginning of the project, have a set of sustainability principles that village planning would need to address ?**

**Could we use the Area 'H' OCP Community Values Statement, the RDN's Strategic Plan vision and the Regional Growth Strategy Goals as a basis for developing these principles ?**

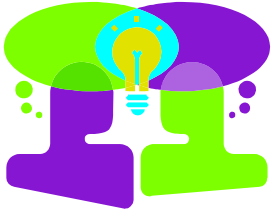


**Are there planning opportunities or issues that relate to all three village centre areas ?**

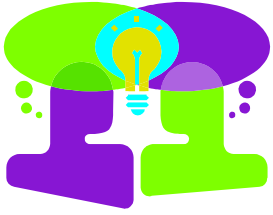




**Are there planning opportunities or issues that relate to a particular village centre area or surrounding area ?**

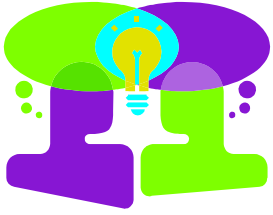


**Are there thoughts or questions about the location, size or boundaries of any of the village centres ?**



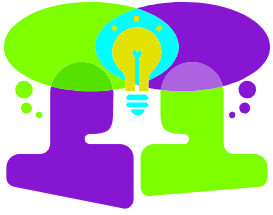
The OCP directed that “Village Centre Plans” be created. On first read, this would imply a plan that only covers the area of a Village Centre. However some village centres, such as the Bowser village centre area, are surrounded by residential neighbourhoods...

**Is there a need or a desire to prepare a “village plan” which provides a more complete picture of a Village, it’s centre and it’s relationship to the surrounding area ?**



**Who needs to be involved in village planning ? (e.g. specific groups, clubs, business associations, others)**





**How should the RDN communicate with you about this project ?**

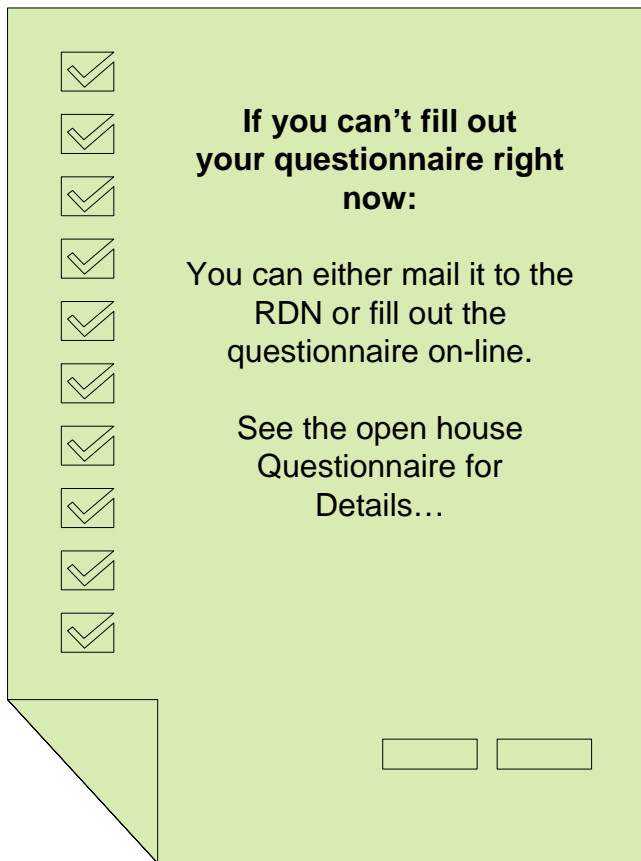
**Thank you for coming today and  
for sharing your ideas...**

**Please encourage your neighbours and friends  
from Area H to share their ideas too...**

**Questionnaires and further information on the village  
Planning project can also be found at:**

**[www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca)**

**Please have comments  
to the RDN by:  
June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008**



**If you can't fill out  
your questionnaire right  
now:**

You can either mail it to the  
RDN or fill out the  
questionnaire on-line.

See the open house  
Questionnaire for  
Details...

## Next Step

Please watch our website for a summary of the Open House input. Over the summer, staff will be drafting the Terms of Reference for approval by the RDN Planning Committee. We will be in touch with the Community as a whole again in the fall.