



Section 1

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1 Introduction

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1.1 Bowser Village Centre Plan Overview

Based upon sustainability principles and goals, the Bowser Village Centre Plan provides direction and policies that reflect how the residents of Electoral Area 'H' wish to see the Bowser Village Centre change and grow over time.

The Land Use Concept and Designations together with Policies and Development Permit Area Guidelines, detail the desired types and arrangements of land use within the Bowser Village Centre.

This plan provides direction on community priorities for environmental protection (including aquifer protection), safety from crime, resilience to disasters, pedestrian friendly development, affordable housing, seniors housing, access to alternative transportation and recreation, fiscal accountability, transparency in governance and inclusive planning processes.

The Bowser Village Centre Plan also addresses key issues relating to **reducing green house gas emissions (GHG)** and the associated **impacts of climate change** by:

- Encouraging compact housing, employment, and transportation choices that promote the efficient use of energy and resources.
- Supporting the use of planning and design to adapt or mitigate predicted impacts of climate change including sea level rise, and weather extremes.

1.2 Benefits of Village Planning

By capturing the community's direction for future change, the Bowser Village Centre Plan will:

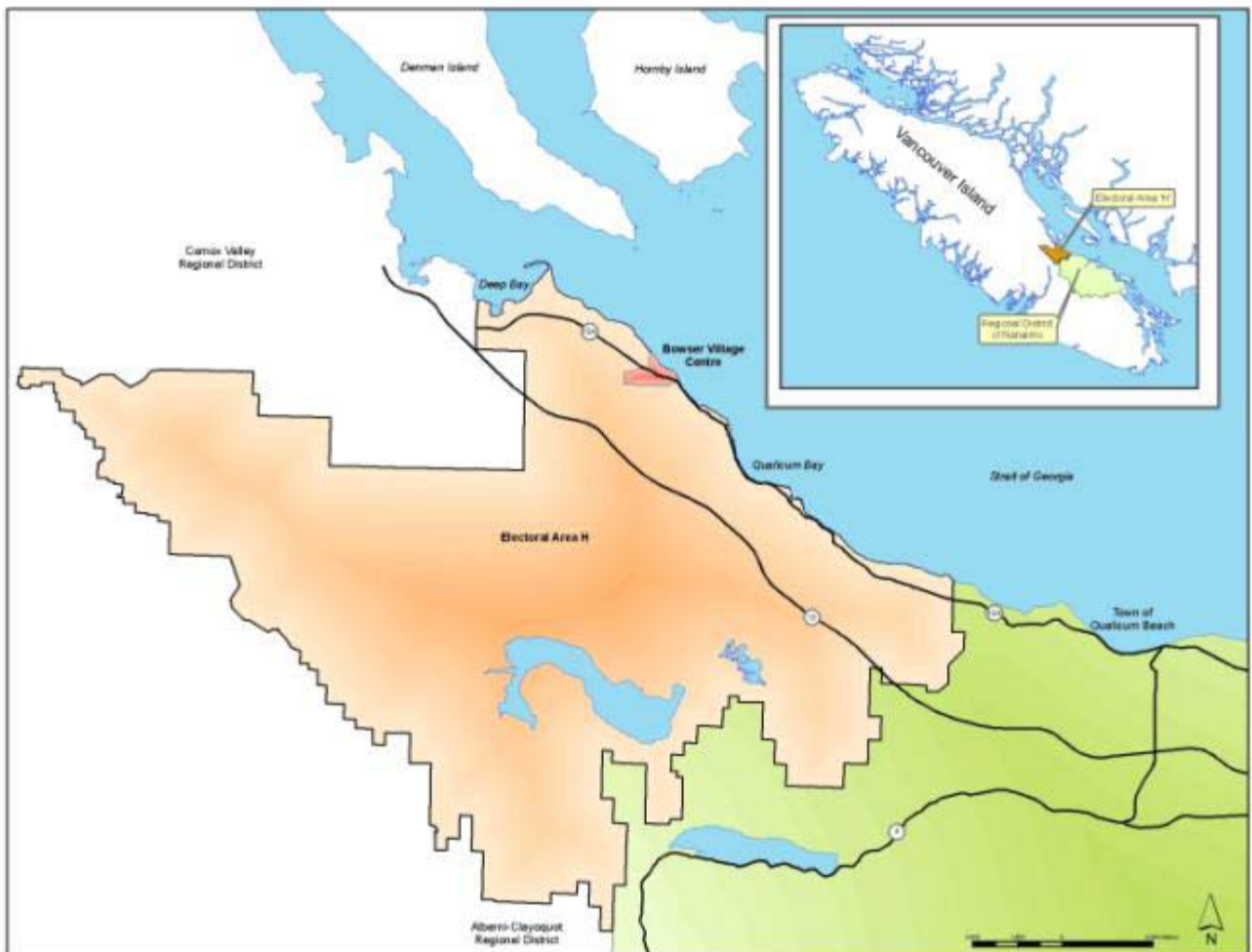
- Provide a structure for residents to focus on priority issues and opportunities, develop solutions, and ultimately influence decisions about future change.
- Give developers a clear understanding of what the community wants to see built in the Bowser Village Centre so that they are better able to develop projects that meet community expectations.
- Provide the RDN Board and Planning Staff with a better understanding of how residents would like to see Bowser Village Centre evolve to accommodate growth sustainably.
- Be used as a valuable tool to assist the RDN Board and Planning Staff in evaluating how well development proposals meet community expectations as reflected by the plan.
- Act as a resource/ reference that shows community direction in order to leverage funding for projects that are consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the plan.

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1.3 Regional and Provincial Context

Bowser Village Centre is located in Electoral Area 'H' of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). Overlooking the Strait of Georgia and the coastal mountains of the B.C. Lower Mainland, this seaside village is part of an area known as 'Lighthouse Country'. Situated on Highway 19A (Old Island Highway), Bowser is approximately 35 km (21 miles) south east of the City of Courtenay and 21 km (13 miles) north west of the Town of Qualicum Beach.

Map 1.3.1: Location of Bowser Village Centre in relation to Area 'H', RDN and Vancouver Island



1.4 Plan Area

The Plan Area consists of an area of 92.5 hectares outlined in red on Map 2 (below) which is a combination of two areas: the triangular shape of the “Original Boundary Area” of the Bowser Village Centre as it was identified in the OCP (approximately 50.7 hectares/125.5 acres), plus an additional rectangular area called the “Future Use Area” to the west along Crosley Road (approximately 41.8 hectares/103.5 acres).

Map 1.4.1: Bowser Village Centre Plan Area



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1.5 Plan Authority

The Bowser Village Centre Plan is adopted as a bylaw amendment to the Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan (OCP, Bylaw No. 1335, 2004).

The Bowser Village Centre Plan is the principal guiding document for all land use decisions within the Bowser Village Centre boundary.

Where a particular issue is not covered by the Bowser Village Centre Plan, the Area 'H' OCP will be consulted for direction. Where a conflict exists between the OCP and the Bowser Village Centre Plan, the designations and/or policies of the Bowser Village Centre Plan will take precedence within the designated Bowser Village Centre Plan Area.

The Bowser Village Centre Plan takes precedence over, and replaces references to the Bowser Village Centre in Section 5.5 and Appendix A: 2 of the 2004 Electoral Area 'H' OCP.

1.6 Plan Application

The Bowser Village Centre Plan will be applied in the review of all planning and land use matters within the Bowser Village Centre Plan Area. Applications for development, re-development and public improvement projects must be consistent with plan policies.

The land use direction of the Bowser Village Centre Plan will be used to review and revise RDN Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw 500, 1987 (Zoning Bylaw 500) to ensure that future applications for re-zoning are consistent with the direction provided in the Village Centre Plan.

Variances to Zoning Bylaw 500 may be required to meet the policies and guidelines of this Plan.

It is recognized that some current land uses and development allowed under existing

zoning are not consistent with the **land use designations** shown on the land use concept map.

This plan is intended to illustrate a preferred pattern of land use as development and re-development occurs. It is not intended to change the use of land in the immediate future. Future zoning changes will be initiated by property owners and not imposed by the RDN.

This plan identifies a variety of desirable community amenities. The provision of community amenities will be considered as part of re-zoning applications.

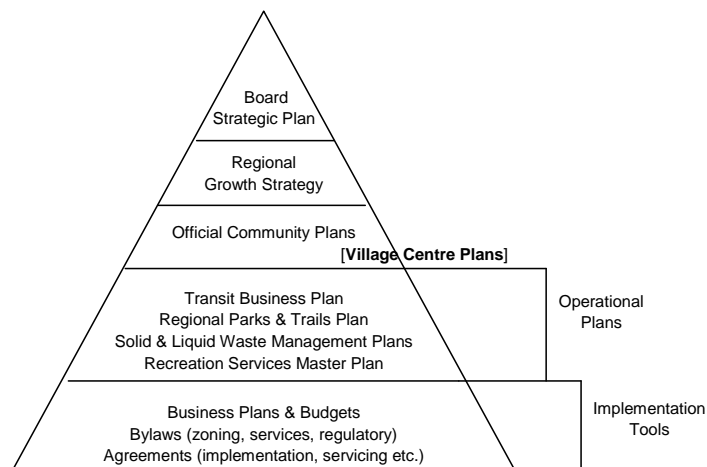
1.7 Plan Monitoring & Review

The Bowser Village Centre Plan will be reviewed in conjunction with the Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan review process.

1.8 Relationship to other RDN plans

This section describes briefly how the Bowser Village Plan relates to other key RDN strategic plans and regulations.

The diagram shows how the Bowser Village Centre Plan fits into the hierarchy of RDN plans and strategies.



The 2006-2009 RDN Board Strategic Plan “Leadership in Creating Sustainable Communities” outlines the RDN vision for a sustainable region: *“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.”*

The Strategic Plan provides direction to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) which in turn provides direction to several community level strategic plans (including OCP’s and Village Centre Plans).

The policies and actions of the Electoral Area ‘H’ OCP and Village Centre Plans are implemented through regulatory bylaws (including zoning, subdivision and servicing bylaws) along with the allocation of resources through departmental business plans and budgets.

1.9 Village Centres in the RDN

Village Centres are intended to be the focus of housing, employment and service provision in unincorporated rural areas of the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Village Centres are part of the RDN’s Regional Growth Strategy focus of managing growth in order to achieve sustainability goals.

Directing and encouraging denser development within rural Village Centres will help protect and enhance rural qualities of life and interrelated environmental values by:

- Creating conditions that increase opportunities to live, work, learn and play in compact, complete rural village centres.
- Increasing the feasibility of providing

cost effective servicing and amenities by concentrating demand.

- Linking adjacent suburban areas to Village Centres through the use of bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, and senior and handicapped accessible scooter pathways to increase healthy, energy efficient modes of transportation, and reduce private vehicle use.

Bowser, Qualicum Bay and Dunsmuir were first designated as Village Centres during the Shaw Hill-Deep Bay Official Community Planning Process in 1996, and subsequently incorporated into the 1997 Regional Growth Strategy and later revisions to the Electoral Area ‘H’ Official Community Plan in 2004.

Each of the three Village Centres were designated in recognition of their existing and anticipated future role in concentrating retail, service, institutional, recreational and tourist activity.

In addition, following the decision to focus on developing a plan for Bowser Village Centre first, the majority of the Village Planning Advisory Group agreed that the Deep Bay Area should be reviewed along with Qualicum Bay and Dunsmuir when considering the role and status of other Village Centres in Electoral Area ‘H’.

1.10 Initiation of the Area ‘H’ Village Planning Project

Working with the community to develop detailed Village Centre plans is an implementation action item of the 2004 Electoral Area ‘H’ OCP.

The OCP provides some general policy direction for Village Centres, but does not detail the types and arrangement of land uses that are desirable within Village Centres.

1 Introduction

Initiated in June 2008, the purpose of the Area 'H' Village Planning Project was to work with the community to:

- Carry out a planning process based on Sustainability Principles, and which assists the Area 'H' Community in determining how it would like to address these principles through village centres and village planning.
- Prepare a village plan(s) which provides comprehensive guidelines for the development of village centres, and which recognizes the relationship of the village centres to one another and to the surrounding areas.

1.11 Focus on Bowser Village Centre

In March 2009, the Area 'H' Village Planning Advisory Group decided to focus planning efforts on Bowser Village Centre. This decision reflected the community's view of Bowser as the current and historical concentration of commercial activity in Electoral Area 'H'.

Choosing Bowser as the first village centre to be planned was regarded as an effective way of focusing resources between March and fall 2009. Lessons learned from the Bowser Village Centre planning process may be applied during the review and planning for other village centres.

1.12 Community Participation

The Bowser Village Centre Plan is the product of active community participation and guidance. Dedicated community members, community leaders and business owners worked collaboratively with RDN staff, and design professionals to share knowledge and ideas that resulted in the direction and policies in this plan.

The community participation/ public consultation process included:


- The formation of an open Community Advisory Group
- Open Houses and an Information Event
- Booths at community events
- A two day village planning charette

Appendix B provides a more detailed overview of community participation.

Area H Village Planning Open House Bowser Village Centre Plan

As part of the Area 'H' Village Planning Process, residents of Electoral Area 'H' are invited to view and provide feedback on a draft plan for Bowser Village Centre.

Based on sustainability principles, the draft plan outlines proposed policies, future land uses and design guidelines for land within the Bowser Village Centre Boundary.



EVERYONE WELCOME


**Wed. October 28th
6:30—8:30 pm**

Lighthouse Community Centre
240 Lions Way, Qualicum Bay

Please Drop By
to let us know your thoughts
on the draft Plan for a
Sustainable Bowser Village Centre

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DRAFT PLAN
The draft plan can be viewed online at
www.rdn.bc.ca/Area'H/VillagePlanning.
Hard copies of the draft are also available at
the Beacon Office in Bowser.



1.13 Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in this plan include the following:

BCAS	BC Ambulance Service
BCT	BC Transit
BWD	Bowser Water District
BHBVFD	Bow Horn Bay Volunteer Fire Department
COP	Citizens on Patrol
DBVFD	Deep Bay Volunteer Fire Department
DBID	Deep Bay Improvement District
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
DPA	Development Permit Area
DP	Development Permit
GHG	Green House Gas
ICF	Island Corridor Foundation
ILMB	Integrated Land Management Bureau
LCBA	Lighthouse Country Business Association
LRC	Lighthouse Recreation Committee
MCRD	Ministry of Community and Rural Development
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MHLS	Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
MOFR	Ministry of Forests and Range
MOTI	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
OCP	Official Community Plan
POSAC	Area 'H' Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee
QFN	Qualicum First Nation
RCL	Royal Canadian Legion
RDN	Regional District of Nanaimo
RGS	Regional Growth Strategy
VIHA	Vancouver Island Health Authority
VIU	Vancouver Island University