SECTION 4 – COMMUNITY RESOURCES

4.1 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Electoral Area ‘H’ includes two Class ‘A’ Provincial Parks, Horne Lake Caves and Spider Lake, which are important day use recreational destinations. In addition, the Provincial Government has included an expansion of Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park and an ecologically sensitive wetland west of Deep Bay as candidates for its Protected Areas Strategy.

There are significant publicly owned (Federal Fisheries) river protection corridors on Big Qualicum and at Horne Lake that provide opportunities for water-based recreation and nature appreciation as well as fishery management.

The Regional District has numerous community parks generally concentrated in the rural residential areas in the coastal portion of the Plan Area (with the exception of Spider Lake Community Park, located inland in the Spider Lake neighbourhood). In addition, the Plan Area contains a Regional Park at Horne Lake. Many community parks in rural residential areas are small greenbelt areas and a few provide opportunities for linear pedestrian/cycling connections, shoreline access or outdoor recreational activities.

The Plan Area includes field sport recreational opportunities at Lions Community Hall and at Wildwood Community Park. It should be noted that the Wildwood Community Park is leased Crown Land and includes sport fields. There is also a community park adjacent to the Village Centre of Dunsmuir, which has a small tennis court and basketball half-court. This park could provide significant recreational opportunities when the Dunsmuir Village Centre develops.

Along with these existing provincial, regional, and community parks, the residents of Area ‘H’ have stated a need for additional parkland developed for the:

1. protection of known unconfined aquifers;
2. linear walking trails;
3. stream protection and access;
4. beach access;
5. protection of wetlands and natural features; and
6. outdoor recreational and leisure neighbourhood park opportunities;

Objectives

1. Ensure that parks and recreational uses form an integral part of the community infrastructure.
2. Implement a comprehensive parkland acquisition strategy.
4. Improve public beach access and linear recreational connections along creeks and river corridors as well as waterfront areas.
5. Maintain close cooperation with public and private institutions to encourage institutional uses such as schools, community halls, the E&N Rail Corridor, and associated open space as an integral part of the community parks and open space system and where possible, available for public use.
6. Encourage the availability of the area’s forest lands for recreational enjoyment and education while safeguarding recreational appeal.
7. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

Policies

1. Parkland shall be permitted in all land use designations.

2. At the time of subdivision or development of land the Regional District may consider the parcels as potential parkland acquisition areas in the Rural Residential or Village Comprehensive Development designations. To satisfy the requirements of the Local Government Act, the Regional District shall determine whether the owner of land being subdivided shall:
   a. provide without compensation, useable park land equivalent to 5% of the parcel size and in a location acceptable to the Regional Board, or
   b. pay to the Regional District an amount that equals the market value of the land that may be required for park purposes, or
   c. provide a combination of land and cash to the satisfaction of the Regional Board.

3. Where cash in lieu of park land is received from development within the Plan Area, it shall be reserved for useable park land acquisition in any suitable location within the Plan Area.

4. The Regional District shall endeavour to obtain park land for community recreation, nature preservation, linear connections, greenbelt and access to the waterfront.

5. All streams, watercourses and unknown unconfined aquifers within a proposed development are to be considered first for their potential as park lands or as publicly accessible greenways.

6. The Regional District shall support the Province in the designation and protection of candidate areas identified through the BC Protected Areas Strategy Process.

7. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall encourage management of Crown Lands as Parks/Reserve or BC Forest Recreation sites south and west of Bowser along Nile Creek, Thames Creek, Lymn/Chef Creek, Gainsburg Swamp, Annyes Woods and the Old Douglas Fir Forest in District Lot 72, District Lot 37, and the unconfined aquifer on Crown Land in District Lot 86 (see Map No. 2).

8. This Plan supports the creation of a regional parks development cost charge bylaw to assist achieving the acquisition objectives of the Regional District Park System Plan.

9. The Regional District shall encourage the Province and forest companies to protect the natural woodlands and landscape features of the area and provide opportunities for controlled use of private logging roads during non-operation periods for outdoor recreation except during times of high and extreme fire hazard.

10. The Regional District shall encourage appropriate agencies to allow public access or use of corridors intended as public utility rights-of-way or transportation corridors.

11. The Regional District will not support encroachment applications into rights of way to beach areas, the foreshore, streams, or watercourses in the Plan Area.

12. The Regional District shall encourage and support volunteer assistance in the development and management of community parks, streamkeeper projects and trails.

13. The Regional District recognizes that public involvement is essential in the planning, acquisition, and development of the community and regional parks. Consultation with the
public, as well as recreation commissions, volunteer groups and service organizations is encouraged and is considered vital for the success of the Parks System.

4.2 **COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL USES**

Community and institutional facilities include, but are not limited to, schools, religious and service organizations, community halls, community care facilities and fire halls, police stations, ambulance stations, and marinas and wharfs in the Plan Area.

These uses generally require appropriate institutional zoning prior to the use of land for such purposes. It is important to note, however, that some community care facilities are exempt from zoning regulations pursuant to the *Community Care Facilities Act*.

Institutional uses will be permitted in all land use designations in this Plan but may require institutional zoning. Future institutional uses shall be encouraged to locate within the Village Centres Land Use Designation where appropriate and where lands are available. This OCP supports the current land uses on existing Public zoned lands within Electoral Area ‘H’.

**Schools**

School District No. 69 has jurisdiction for the Bowser Elementary School, the single public school within the Plan Area (high school students attend school in Qualicum Beach or Courtenay). This Plan supports the future location of schools within the Village Centre Land Use Designation. Map No. 3 identifies the location of existing and known potential school sites within the Plan Area.

**Objectives**

1. Work with School District No. 69 in planning for the future needs of the community.
2. Initiate discussions with School District No. 69 on development plans for Bowser Elementary School.
3. Encourage coordination of school site and parks and open space planning with the School District.
4. Support the centralized location of future school sites in Village Centres.
5. Direct development compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

**Policies**

1. The Regional District shall encourage the integration of future school sites into Village Centres and integrate their location with the parks, trails and open space network.
2. This Plan supports the continued service of Bowser Elementary School. The Regional District shall initiate discussions with School District No. 69 as to the long-term plans for this school.
3. The Regional District shall encourage the School District to complement other community facilities by continuing to be make available schools and school grounds for recreation, cultural activities, and educational programs during non-school hours.
4. The Regional District will consider future agreements with the School District to implement the School Site Acquisition Provisions in the *Local Government Act*. 
5. The Regional District encourages public consultation with District 69 School Trustees on any future plans or uses for area schools.

Community Facilities

Community and institutional facilities in the Plan Area include the Wildwood Church located at McColl Road in Bowser, the Bowser Legion, and the Lighthouse Community Centre. In addition, community fire protection is provided by three volunteer fire departments in the Plan Area: Bow-Horn Bay Fire Protection, Deep Bay Waterworks, and Dashwood Fire Protection Specified Area. While current community and institutional facilities are found throughout the Plan Area, future uses shall be encouraged to locate within the Village Centres. Existing facilities are illustrated on Map No. 3.

Objectives

1. Encourage community use and support of community facilities.
2. Support the establishment of future community facilities within Village Centres.
3. Recognize the existing emergency services provided within the Plan Area.
4. Encourage improved coordination for providing emergency services for existing and future residents.
5. Support the strategic location of firehalls and future ambulance and police stations to serve the growing needs within the Plan Area.
6. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

Policies

1. The Regional District shall encourage new proposals for institutional facilities to be situated within the Village Centres.
2. The Plan recognizes the location of existing firehalls, and fully supports the valuable volunteer fire fighting and emergency services provided by the Deep Bay Waterworks District, Bow Horn Bay Volunteer Fire Department and the Dashwood Fire Protection Area.
3. The Regional District will seek better coordination with Improvement Districts and volunteer fire departments to ensure that adequate fire fighting services are able to accommodate the future development of the Village Centres at Dunsmuir, Qualicum Bay, and Bowser and to improve fire protection service to rural areas, to include, but not limited to, development of emergency evacuation plans, disaster preparedness plans, in coordination with the appropriate federal and provincial government agencies and encourage interface fire mitigation techniques in all building and landscaping.

Community Water and Sewer Systems

There are three community water systems that serve the developed coastal area. These are Deep Bay Water District, Bowser Water District, and Qualicum Bay Horne Lake Water District. The Plan Area relies on groundwater resources in the vicinity of Bowser and Dunsmuir. These areas have an undefined quantity of water in unconfined Quadra Sands and associated
aquifers. The water quantity and quality continues to be sufficient and is expected to remain so if precautions are taken to protect this valuable resource.

**Objectives**

1. **Encourage** the efficient location of public utilities to serve the needs of residents.
2. **Liaise** with the local water purveyors to ensure water quantity and quality is sufficient and can be sustained for future development options.
3. **Advocate** the environmentally safe and economically feasible development of community sewer systems.
4. **Ensure** that community sewer services are proposed first for the Village Centres then for those areas in need due to environmental or public health concerns.
5. **Direct** development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

**Policies**

1. The Regional District recognizes the important role played by Improvement Districts in providing community water and will liaise to ensure adequate quantity and quality of water is available for any future development.
2. This Plan supports the comprehensive development of community sewer systems within the Village Centres, and secondly to those areas with identified environmental or public health needs.
3. This Plan supports locating future community infrastructure only where it will avoid disturbing environmentally sensitive areas and will pose no negative impact on the environment.
4. The Regional District requires written confirmation from the area water utility that there is a sustainable quantity and quality of water supply available for any development to be considered.

**4.3 TRANSPORTATION**

Island Highway No. 19A had long been the sole vehicular route connecting north and south Island communities until the completion of the Inland Island Highway No. 19 in the late 1990’s. The Plan Area includes two major new intersections connecting the Inland Island Highway with Island Highway No. 19A. The intersections are located at Horne Lake and Cook Creek Roads. Both of these intersections have been constructed so that they can be converted into interchanges in the future. The highways and major roads in the Plan Area are shown on Map No. 3.

**Objectives**

1. Accommodate safe and efficient passenger, freight, and service transportation throughout the Plan Area.
2. Encourage the eventual upgrading of Inland Island Highway No. 19 intersections to overhead interchanges at Horne Lake and Cook Creek Roads.
3. Encourage the Ministry of Transportation to provide opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian routes on Island Highway Nos. 19 and 19A.
4. Support the visual protection of the Inland Island Highway Corridor with buffer areas including setbacks, greenways, and landscaping requirements.
5. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

Policies

1. The Regional District encourages improvements to the efficiency and safety of Island Highway No. 19A. In particular, the RDN supports improvements and shoudering of two-lane sections and the creation of linkages to village centres, rural residential neighbourhoods, and scenic coastal resources within the Plan Area.
2. The Ministry of Transportation and Highways shall be encouraged to upgrade the Inland Island Highway No. 19 intersections in Electoral Area 'H'.
3. The Regional District shall seek the opportunity to provide input and consultation with the Ministry of Transportation for developing bicycle and pedestrian routes along Island Highway Nos. 19 and 19A.
4. This Plan shall establish a 30 metre Development Permit Area on either side of the Inland Island Highway and Highway 19A for protecting the visual integrity of the Inland Island Highway and Island Highway 19A corridor.

Public Transportation

VIA Rail's passenger train service passes through Area 'H' on the E & N Railway. This train service links communities along the eastern corridor of Vancouver Island. The development of Village Centres at Qualicum Bay, Dunsmuir, and Bowser may provide opportunities for more formal commuter stations in these communities.

The growth of population and the development of Village Centres may in the future make it viable to provide alternative transportation opportunities. This may include private or mini-bus commuter services for the handicapped or elderly, carpooling and "park and ride" connections to Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Routes. These initiatives should be coordinated with Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Services.

Objectives

1. Support the development of commuter and public transportation opportunities for residents of Area ‘H’.
2. Encourage railway transportation services to the Plan Area.
3. Protect the E & N railway line as a continuous linear transportation corridor by designating the lands as a transportation corridor including non-vehicular mobility options.
4. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

Policies

1. The E&N Railway corridor lands shall be designated Transportation Corridor with a minimum parcel size of 2 ha.
2. The Regional District shall support the development of commuter railway stations as part of the Village Centres.

3. The Regional District shall encourage rail services to the Plan Area.

4. The Regional District shall encourage the development of alternative transportation opportunities such as mini-bus commuter services for the handicapped and elderly, and car pooling and park and ride connections to Regional District Transit routes in consultation with Regional District Transit Services.

**MARINE TRANSPORTATION**

The Deep Bay Harbour provides opportunities for recreational and commercial transportation. Commercial fishing, shellfish aquaculture, and recreational boat travel are accommodated within the Deep Bay Harbour. The Government Wharf provides facilities for commercial fishing, shellfish aquaculture and recreational vessels. The Deep Bay Harbour Authority manages the federal government wharf on behalf of DFO Small Craft Harbours Division.

**Objectives**

1. Recognize the role of the Deep Bay Harbour Authority in managing the federal government wharf at Deep Bay.

2. Encourage opportunities for recreational and commercial transportation from Deep Bay Harbour.

3. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

**Policies**

1. The Regional Board recognizes the role of the Deep Bay Harbour Authority in managing the federal government wharf for DFO Small Crafts and Harbours Division.

2. The Regional District encourages opportunities for recreational and commercial transportation from Deep Bay Harbour.

3. The Regional Board shall not consider rezoning the surface of the water in Deep Bay Harbour without consultation with the Deep Bay Harbour Authority and local residents.