SECTION 5 - THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Development Strategy is a key component of the Electoral Area H OCP and sets the parameters for development within the community. The development strategy provides a framework for focusing future growth into village centres and urban containment areas in order to minimize rural sprawl. The strategy for this Plan is driven by the Community Values Statement (see Section 1 of this OCP) and the Development Guideline Criteria (paragraph 5.1) and is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. The Development Strategy is illustrated through mapped ‘Land Use Designations’ that match the written objectives and policies to land uses, densities and parcel sizes. These Designations are shown on Map No. 5.

It should be noted that the Regional District of Nanaimo has not, to date, developed any Board-endorsed policies regarding affordable housing, rental housing or special needs housing. For the purposes of this OCP, this Plan supports the provision of affordable housing and does not prohibit rental or special needs housing in any land use designation in the OCP or any future zone created to implement this OCP.

This Plan encourages and supports Home Based Businesses as an economic activity conducted as an accessory use on any parcel pursuant to Bylaw No. 500, 1987.

5.1 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINE CRITERIA

Electoral Area ‘H’ is designated as a development approval information area pursuant to RDN Bylaw No. 1165, 1999. In Electoral Area ‘H’, prior to considering an application to amend the OCP, rezone or subdivide land to accommodate a development, an applicant must show that the proposal:

1. Reflects the Community Values Statement, objectives of the Official Community Plan and the policies of the Regional Growth Management Strategy;
2. Preserves and protects the rural character of area and contains urban development to the Village Nodes;
3. Identifies watersheds and aquifers from degradation and pollution through a detailed hydro-geological study;
4. Protects and promotes natural, environmental, and geographic features through an environmental impact study.
5. Preserves, enhances, and dedicates useable parkland that provides linkages to public lands, and integrated trail system and waterfront access where appropriate;
6. Proposes a comprehensive approach to management and disposal of sewage and/or septage;
7. Proposes a comprehensive approach to drainage and management of stormwater;
8. Preserves Archaeological Areas through adherence to the provincial Heritage and Conservation Act;
9. All studies to address environmental, hydro-geological, storm-water management and sewage/septage associated with proposed development will include comprehensive public consultation and have representation from the general public, area stakeholders and Local...
Water Boards. The Regional District will facilitate such input and will ensure that all studies are appropriately designed and conducted.

**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

**5.2 RESOURCE LANDS**

This land use designation applies to lands that are used and valued for agriculture, forestry, natural resource extraction, or environmental conservation opportunities. All lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve are in this land use designation. Lands that were formerly in the Forest Land Reserve (major forestry holdings) and large parcel Crown land holdings (other than those designated as Park Lands) are also within this land use designation.

It is recognized that certain matters considered in this section are beyond the jurisdiction of the RDN. The objectives and policies relating to these matters are intended to serve as indicators of community preference and assist senior levels of government in planning and decision-making.

**Objectives**

1. **Maintain** the renewable natural resource land base and protect it from activities that may diminish resource value and potential.
2. **Encourage** more comprehensive management of the resource land base.
3. **Protect** the environment.
4. **Encourage** and protect outdoor recreational opportunities.
5. **Direct** development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

**Policies**

1. Land within the Resource Management designation is shown on Map No. 5.
2. Lands within this designation shall have a minimum permitted parcel size of 50.0 hectares, except for lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
3. For lands within the ALR, an 8.0-hectare minimum permitted parcel size shall be supported by this Plan.
4. Notwithstanding Policy 5.2.2 above, any lands within the ALR having a minimum permitted parcel size of less than 8.0 hectares pursuant to the Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987 at the date of adoption of this Official Community Plan shall retain that minimum permitted parcel size (these parcels are illustrated on Map No. 5).
5. For lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve, the regulations and policies of the Agricultural Land Commission apply.
6. Where land is in the ALR and is proposed for subdivision, a second dwelling unit, or a non-farm use, approval must first be obtained from the ALC.
7. Areas with environmentally sensitive or significant ecological resources within the Resource Management designation are identified on Map No. 3. Protection of these areas shall be encouraged through federal, provincial, Regional District or private initiatives and incentives.

8. All development on Resource Lands will be encouraged to use best practice interface forest fire mitigation techniques for building and landscaping.

### 5.3 RURAL LANDS

This land use designation applies to large lots, not located within the Agricultural Land Reserve, and generally 2.0 hectares or more in size. These lands are intended to provide for traditional rural pursuits, and serve as a buffer between Resource Lands and the more urbanized areas of Electoral Area ‘H’. This designation also applies to lands in the Spider Lake Area, where larger parcel sizes are the typical form of development and where residents in the area promote the retention of large parcel sizes to protect each individual property’s privacy and rural quality of life. Rural lands are characterized by the suitability to accommodate unserviced rural activities. These parcels typically have an adequate water supply and wastewater can be treated and disposed of through on-site ground disposal systems.

**Objectives**

1. *Preserve* the rural character of lands within the Plan Area.
2. *Encourage* farm activities on productive agricultural lands.
3. *Contain* the extent of growth of urban and suburban lands.
4. *Direct* development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

**Policies**

1. Lands within the Rural Lands designation are shown on Map No. 5.
2. Lands within the Rural Lands designation shall have a minimum permitted parcel size of 4.0 hectares.
3. Notwithstanding 5.3.2, any lands within the Rural Lands designation having a minimum permitted parcel size of less than 4.0 hectares pursuant to the Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987 at the date of adoption of this Official Community Plan shall retain that minimum permitted parcel size (these parcels are illustrated on Map No. 2).
4. In addition, notwithstanding 5.3.2, lands within the Rural land use designation may be considered for a rezoning to the 2.0 hectare minimum permitted parcel size where the proposal meets the following criteria:
   a. One dwelling unit per parcel
   b. Bare land strata subdivision shall not be permitted
   c. No frontage relaxation required
   d. No further road dedication to accommodate parcel frontage or additional parcels (as verified as of the date of adoption of this Plan)
e. Provision of a comprehensive plan for subdivision of the area being rezoned with a report from a recognized professional with geotechnical and geohydraulic experience indicating an assessment of the environmental suitability of the subdivision that is accepted by the RDN, Water, Land and Air Protection, and the Environmental Health Officer.

5. While this Plan recognizes an existing Industrial parcel within the Plan Area that is currently zoned for Industrial use, this OCP does not support additional industrial zoning within the Rural Lands designation.

6. All development on Rural Lands will be encouraged to use best practice interface forest fire mitigation techniques for building and landscaping.

5.4 *RURAL RESIDENTIAL LANDS*

The Rural Residential designation recognizes the existing pattern of smaller lots primarily along the coastal areas on the ocean-side of Highway No. 19A. The density of development in this area is established at 5 units per hectare providing that community water services are available through the following water systems: Deep Bay Water District, Bowser Water District, and Qualicum Bay Hornet Lake Water District.

This land use designation applies to lands less than 2.0 hectares in size. While many of the parcels are already subdivided to 1 hectare in size or less, there remains in-fill potential in this land use designation. However, the potential of some of the larger parcels may be constrained due to ground and soil conditions. It is essential that further infilling be provided in compliance with Ministry of Health regulations. The 1.0-hectare minimum permitted parcel size is the smallest parcel generally allowed under current health policies for parcels with on-site water and sewage disposal and this parcel size is supported for unserviced Rural Residential lands.

**Objectives**

1. *Protect* and enhance the characteristics of the Rural Residential neighbourhoods

2. *Ensure* that the rural residential areas with natural hazards along the coastal shore of the Plan Area are identified and the guidelines are provided to protect properties and lives from these hazards, as outlined in Appendix A- Development Permit Areas.

3. *Ensure* that an Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit Area be established for all Rural Residential parcels on the coastline and adjacent to existing watercourses, as outlined in Appendix A- Development Permit Areas.

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

**Policies**

1. Lands within the Rural Residential Lands designation are shown on Map No. 4.

2. The Rural Residential designation maintains the existing single family residential and neighbourhood characteristics of the area.
3. Residential development on Rural Residential designated lands shall be permitted at a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per 2000 m$^2$ (5 units per hectare) with community water and/or community sewer services.

4. Existing small scale commercial uses in Rural Residential areas shall be recognized for their benefits including accessibility and social contribution to the character of their neighbourhoods.

5. All development on Rural Residential Lands will be encouraged to use best practice interface forest fire mitigation techniques for building and landscaping.

6. Any development application must have written confirmation from the local water utility that sufficient quantity and quality of potable water is available for the development before the Regional District Board will consider the application.

5.5 VILLAGE CENTRES

There are three Village Centres within the Plan Area: Qualicum Bay, Dunsmuir and Bowser. These lands are designated as Village Centres. This Plan encourages a mix and concentration of uses within their Village Centre boundaries. It is anticipated that future residential growth in the Plan Area will be accommodated within the Village Centres, and will include a range of housing types. The objectives and policies below are intended to guide the development of these centres as strong community focal points.

The Bowser Village Centre Plan is the principal guiding document for all land use decisions within the Bowser Village Centre boundary. The Bowser Village Centre Plan forms a part of this OCP and has been adopted as an amendment to the Electoral Area ‘H’ OCP.\(^6\)

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.\(^7\)

The three Village Centres are the mixed-use ‘focal points’ of Electoral Area ‘H’, and are intended to support a variety of commercial, recreational, community and professional services, as well as residential development. For Qualicum and Dunsmuir Village Centres, the Village Centre land use designation encourages further commercial zoning of land as part of comprehensive development of the centres.\(^8\) Existing local commercial sites may require redevelopment to benefit the viability, character and form of the Village Centres.

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.

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\(^6\) Bylaw No. 1335.03 adopted June 8, 2010

\(^7\) Bylaw No. 1335.03 adopted June 8, 2010

\(^8\) Bylaw No. 1335.03 adopted June 8, 2010
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.
6. All land use decisions within the Bowser Village Centre boundary must refer to the Bowser Village Centre Plan.⁹

### 5.6 Resort Commercial

Beyond the boundaries of the village centres, it is recognized that there are commercial uses that cater to the traveling public and are generally located along Highway No. 19A corridor. These tourism related commercial uses include a variety of facilities: marinas, cabins, boat launches, destination resorts, motels, and recreation vehicle parks. With improved access to the scenic and recreational resources, it is anticipated that the Plan Area will become even more popular as a tourist destination.

Development of the Qualicum Bay and Bowser Village Centres with a strong tourism orientation will increase the profile of the Plan Area as a resort commercial destination.

**Objectives**

1. *Recognize* existing resort commercial uses in the Plan Area.
2. *Encourage* the development of the coastal zone of the Plan Area as a resort commercial destination with the Qualicum Bay Village Centre and the Bowser Village Centre as the focus for resort services.
3. *Ensure* that the type and scale of new resort commercial development follows community preference as determined through public consultation.
4. *Direct* development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

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⁹ Bylaw No. 135.03 adopted June 8, 2010
Policies

1. Lands designated Resort Commercial is shown on Map No. 5.
2. The OCP recognizes existing Resort Commercial uses in the Plan Area. These uses will be encouraged to continue and the Regional District may consider rezoning for expansion of such facilities subject to Development Permit criteria.
3. Lands designated as Resort Commercial shall be within designated Development Permit Areas.
4. The RDN may consider amendment applications to this OCP for a Resort Commercial land use designation based on individual merit, environmental considerations and the compliance of the proposal with the objectives and policies of this OCP.
5. The RDN shall not support strata conversion of resort commercial uses to residential uses where it would reduce opportunities for tourism.
6. If a proposed development is within a local water utility area, the RDN will require written confirmation from the local water utility that sufficient quality and quantity of potable water is available before the application will be considered.

5.7 Recreation Lands

The Plan Area includes various Recreation Land uses that may be distinguished from Resort Commercial Land uses by their orientation to recreational-type activities benefiting from rural environmental settings. Such uses may include golf courses, recreational campgrounds, or lakeshore cabin type developments. Such Recreation Land uses provide regular seasonal use opportunities to a longer-term resort population than would normally be associated with hotels, motels, overnight campgrounds or RV parks.

Objectives

1. Recognize existing recreation resort uses in the Plan Area.
2. Ensure that recreation resort uses are developed in a manner that does not have negative impact on the environment.
3. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

Policies

1. Lands designated as Recreation Lands are shown on Map No. 5.
2. Lands designated as Recreation Lands shall be within designated Development Permit Areas in order to assure that the type and scale of future expansions or alterations to the recreational development does not impact on the environment or the character of surrounding neighbourhoods.
3. If a proposed development is within a local water utility area, the RDN will require written confirmation from the local water utility that sufficient quality and quantity of potable water before the application will be considered.
5.8 PARK LANDS

Lands that are designated as Park Lands in this OCP are all provincial parks, lands titled to the Regional District of Nanaimo as ‘park’, lands restricted for park use by covenant, and licenses to occupy for park purposes as held by the RDN. Also included are Crown Lands with environmentally sensitive features or which are located immediately over known unconfined aquifers.

Objectives

1. Recognize the importance of regionally significant parks and natural features.
2. Ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive features and the Area’s known unconfined aquifers through the Park Lands designation.
3. Support the development of access points to all waterfront areas, including the coast, watercourses, rivers, streams and lakes.
4. Direct development that is compatible with the Community Values and Development Guideline Criteria Statements.

Policies

1. Lands designated as Park Lands are shown on Map No. 5.
2. Although all existing parks are included in the Park Land designation, future parks obtained through subdivision or by other means are permitted in any land use designation without amendment to this OCP.
3. This OCP designates all Provincial/Crown lands above known unconfined aquifers as Park Lands to protect finite groundwater resources into the future.
4. This OCP designates Department of Fisheries and Ocean owned properties along the Big Qualicum River, at Horne Lake, and that part Block 40, plan 1339R, Alberni Land District as Park Land to protect this important river and regional park area.
5. Partnerships among residents, landowners, business owners, and government agencies to improve Park Lands are encouraged and supported by this Plan.
6. The designation of Park Land shall also protect those lands that are noted as environmentally sensitive in the Plan Area.