

7.0 Protecting Rural Integrity and Functioning Rural Landscapes

Residents, throughout the plan area have expressed a desire to preserve and protect the rural atmosphere of their community and lands which are capable of agricultural and resource production. As a result of this commitment, the OCP provides policies to protect and enhance the unique attributes of rural lands and to ensure that changes, which may occur on the rural lands, contribute to, rather than detract from, the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of the plan area.



The focus for lands located outside the GCB is agriculture and resource uses. However, it is recognized that there are significant opportunities for additional rural residential development in both the Rural Residential and Agricultural land use designations and to a lesser extent the Rural land use designation.

This section of the OCP contains the objectives and policies for four rural land use categories: Rural Residential Lands, Rural Lands, Ecoforestry, and Rural Resource Lands. The policies are intended to protect and enhance the rural character of the plan area.

Sustainability Implications

Environment

Functioning rural landscapes, in addition to their aesthetic appeal also serve to maintain biological diversity and provide many ecosystem functions such as clean air and water. The way in which land is used and developed has significant environmental implications. Most notably the development of land can result in habitat fragmentation and the loss of the ability of natural ecosystems to be self-sustaining and able to adapt to changing conditions. This is especially important in the remaining sensitive ecosystems types within the Coastal Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone within the plan area.

Land development patterns, more than anything else within the scope and jurisdiction of this plan, have an impact on GHG emissions. This is directly attributable to the heavy dependence on the automobile which is a result of the large distances separating rural residents from the services which are required as a part of normal everyday life.

Society

As a result of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway land grants in the 1880's on the east coast of Vancouver Island, Electoral Area 'A' has very little crown land. This places an increased emphasis on working with land owners to encourage environmental stewardship. This plan supports environmental stewardship and works towards limiting the amount of additional residential development in rural areas to reduce land fragmentation, to reduce GHG emissions, and to reduce future expectations of servicing in these areas.

Economic

Rural uses such as agriculture, forestry, and mining contribute substantially to the local economy and are recognized as part of a '*rural lifestyle*'.



Strategic Direction and Goals

Section 7.0 helps achieve the Community Vision by contributing towards community goals 1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Please refer to Section 3.3 for a list of community goals.

7.1 Rural Residential

The Rural Residential land use designation includes lands located outside of the GCB’s within established rural residential neighbourhoods which typically share some of the same characteristics of larger rural acreages. Some of the lands within this designation are serviced with community water from the North Cedar Improvement District or the RDN.

This designation recognizes historic development patterns and includes lands located within South Wellington, Cedar and along the coastline. In addition, this designation sets limits for future rural residential development to assist with maintaining and enhancing the rural character of the plan area and reducing the increase in auto dependence.

Objectives and Policies

Section 7.1	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.1.1	Limit opportunities for additional rural residential development.
Policy 7.1.1	Lands within the Rural Residential Lands designation are shown on Map No. 3.
Policy 7.1.2	The minimum parcel size for lands within the rural residential land designation shall be 1.0 ha.
Policy 7.1.3	Residential development shall be limited to one dwelling per ha to a maximum of two dwelling units per parcel.
Policy 7.1.4	Permitted land uses shall be residential, home based business uses, and agriculture on parcels one hectare or greater. This is not intended to prohibit small scale non-commercial food production such as backyard gardens or the keeping of animals in accordance with “Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987” as amended or replaced from time to time.
Policy 7.1.5	The conversion of buildings into strata units pursuant to the <i>Strata Property Act</i> for the purposes of creating new property with separate titles is not supported.

Implementation Actions	Timing (Immediate, Short Term, Long Term, Ongoing)
Conduct a public process for considering implementation of minimum parcel sizes.	Refer to Appendix 3 for more information



7.2 Rural

The Rural land use designation is characterized by larger parcels (greater than 2 ha) and low population density. Traditional rural activities such as agricultural operations and hobby farms, mixed with large lot residential subdivisions, dominate the landscape. The Rural land use designation applies to those lands that are *not* situated within the ALR or previously the Forest Land Reserve. These lands strengthen the rural ambiance of the plan area and contribute towards the plan area’s capacity for local food production. Area ‘A’ residents value the rural qualities these lands provide to the community.

Objectives and Policies

Section 7.2	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.2.1	Limit opportunities for additional residential development.
Policy 7.2.1	Lands within the Rural Lands designation are shown on Map No. 3
Policy 7.2.2	The minimum parcel size for lands within the Rural Lands designation shall be 2.0 ha.
Policy 7.2.3	Residential development shall be limited to one dwelling unit per ha with the total number of dwelling units limited to two per parcel provided the parcel is greater than 2.0 ha in size.
Policy 7.2.4	<p>Subject to being consistent with the RGS and despite policy 7.2.2 or 7.2.3 above, the RDN may support the creation of more compact residential clusters through a rezoning on lands within this designation and designated Rural Residential in the RGS which may include smaller parcels and/or a subdivision pursuant to the Strata Property Act subject to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The proposal must include a significant agricultural or resource component which would contribute towards making Electoral Area ‘A’ a leader in local food production, contribute to the rural economy, and/or result in the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands; b. The proposal does not result in more dwelling units and/or parcels than what is permitted by the zoning in place at the time the application is made. The overall density and/or number of parcels shall be determined based on the buildable area of the subject property and not the total site area and should be equal to or less than the number of lots that could be created without clustering; c. Where the proposed development is adjacent to agricultural operations or land within the ALR, the proposal must include a vegetated buffer designed and constructed in accordance with the “A Guide to Edge Planning Promoting Compatibility Along Urban-Agricultural Edges” as amended from time to time; d. With the exception of a building strata parcel, park, or public use no parcel of less than 1.0 ha shall be created; e. Park land shall be considered in accordance with Section 10.0 of this plan; f. All development must be serviced with onsite sewer and water systems, unless serviced by the North Cedar Improvement District or other existing water local service area;



Section 7.2	Policy/Objective
	g. The remainder of the property must be protected against further subdivision and development through zoning and/or covenant.

Section 7.2	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.2.2	Preserve the Rural Character of the Rural Lands Designation.
Policy 7.2.5	Permitted uses within this designation include agriculture, resource uses, rural residential uses, and uses which are compatible with and contribute towards making agriculture more viable.
Policy 7.2.6	<p>For lands designated rural residential in the RGS and rural by this plan, the RDN may consider rezoning for an eco-village subject to the provisions contained in Policy 7.2.4 above and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The primary focus of the development must be sustainable agricultural production which may include traditional, organic, and intensive permaculture practices which promote ecosystem function and biodiversity; b. The subject property must be proven to have agricultural potential which coincides with the agricultural uses being proposed; c. The residential component of the development must be located on the least fertile portions of the land and must not negatively impact the environment; d. Residential use must be limited in scope and be accessory to the principle agricultural use and should be located away from neighboring property lines where soils and site conditions warrant. Traditional residential developments shall not be considered under this policy; e. Energy and water efficiency must be maximized in all aspect of development; f. The RDN may support ‘<i>off grid</i>’ residential development subject to the approval of the authorities having jurisdiction; g. The RDN shall give preference to applications that use alternative green building materials and construction methods subject to compliance/equivalency with the British Columbia Building Code; h. An accessory educational component related to sustainable agriculture, ecological preservation, green building methods, or other similar studies may be considered; and, i. Accessory small business uses may be considered which complement and make the use more viable.
Policy 7.2.7	Except where considered under policy 7.2.4 above, the conversion of buildings into strata units pursuant to the <i>Strata Property Act</i> for the purposes of creating new property with separate titles shall not be supported.
Policy 7.2.8	This plan recognizes commercial recreational uses which existed prior to the adoption of this plan. A rezoning may be supported to recognize these uses and make them more viable without an amendment to this plan.



Implementation Actions	Timing (Immediate, Short Term, Long Term, Ongoing)
Conduct a public process for considering implementation of minimum parcel sizes.	Refer to Appendix 3 for more information

7.3 Rural Resource

Lands within the rural resource land use designation are valued for their resources such as agriculture, forestry and natural resource extraction. The rural resource lands include lands that are Private Managed Forest Lands or were previously in the Forest Land Reserve. These lands play a significant role in protecting the plan area's future resource potential.

Objectives and Policies

Section 7.3	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.3.1	Protect the plan area's future resource potential.
Policy 7.3.1	Lands within the rural lands designation are shown on Map No. 3
Policy 7.3.2	The minimum parcel size for lands within the rural residential lands designation shall be 50.0 ha.
Policy 7.3.3	Residential development shall be limited to a maximum of two dwelling units per parcel provided the parcel is greater than 2 ha in size.
Policy 7.3.4	Permitted uses within the rural resource lands designation shall be generally limited to those activities associated with natural resource harvesting, resource extraction, and primary processing that are deemed compatible with a rural resource lands designation.
Policy 7.3.5	This plan recognizes commercial recreational uses which existed prior to the adoption of this plan. A rezoning may be supported to recognize these uses and make them more viable without an amendment to this plan.

Implementation Actions	Timing (Immediate, Short Term, Long Term, Ongoing)
Conduct a public process for considering implementation of minimum parcel sizes.	Please refer to Appendix 3 for more information



7.4 Ecoforestry

The Ecoforestry land use designation includes lands within Area ‘A’ which are valued for their continued ecoforestry use and provide an example of a sustainable land use ethic which sees the human economy as a subset of the environmental economy.

Included within these lands is the Wildwood Ecoforest established in 1938. According to the Land Conservancy of British Columbia, it is the oldest ecoforest on the west coast of North America. This site is very unique to Area ‘A’ as a working example of sustainable forestry. Wildwood offers opportunities to learn about sustainable forestry practices and maintain biodiversity.



Objectives and Policies

Section 7.4	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.4.1	Provide opportunities for existing and potential ecoforestry operations in Electoral Area ‘A’.
Policy 7.4.1	Lands within the Ecoforestry designation are shown on Map No. 3
Policy 7.4.2	The minimum parcel size for lands within the Ecoforestry designation shall be 50.0 ha.
Policy 7.4.3	Residential development shall be limited to two dwelling units per parcel provided the parcel is greater than 2.0 ha.
Policy 7.4.4	Permitted uses within the Ecoforestry designation shall be limited to sustainable forestry and activities associated with sustainable forestry which may also include accessory education, value added activities, research, and public assembly.
Policy 7.4.5	Notwithstanding policy 7.4.4 above, for the Wildwood Ecoforest only, in recognition of historic uses, up to 3 small cabins for temporary accommodation may be supported within the Wildwood Ecoforest properties (not per parcel) in addition to the dwelling units supported by policy 7.4.3 above.
Policy 7.4.6	The RDN shall support the Land Conservancy’s initiative to register a covenant on the property to protect it against development in perpetuity.
Policy 7.4.7	Expansions to this designation may be supported where other land owners come forward wanting to protect forest land and/or opportunities for sustainable forestry initiatives.
Policy 7.4.8	This plan supports public access to lands within the Ecoforestry designation for the purpose of increasing knowledge and understanding of sustainable forestry initiatives.



Implementation Actions	Timing (Immediate, Short Term, Long Term, Ongoing)
Amend ‘RDN Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987’ to increase the minimum parcel size to 50.0 ha.	Immediate
Work with The Land Conservancy to develop an ecoforestry zone and subsequently amend ‘RDN Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987’ by adding the new zoning classification.	Short Term

7.5 Kirkstone Place

The Kirkstone Place land use designation applies to one parcel of land located north east of Kirkstone Way. This property has been identified as a potential candidate for inclusion into the Growth Containment Boundary.

The purpose of this designation is to support an opportunity for a model sustainable neighbourhood that showcases green residential design. For the purpose of this OCP, the development supported by this designation is considered intensive residential.

Objectives and Policies

Section 7.5	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.5.1	Limit development potential on land located outside of the Growth Containment Boundary.
Policy 7.5.1	Lands within the Kirkstone Place designation are shown on Map No. 3
Policy 7.5.2	Unless the subject property is included within the Growth Containment Boundary (GCB), the policies contained in the rural land use designation shall apply.

Section 7.5	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.5.2	Develop a green residential neighbourhood.
Policy 7.5.3	This plan supports an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) to include Kirkstone Place within the GCB.
Policy 7.5.4	If the subject property is included within the GCB, a rezoning may be supported to allow a ground oriented residential development with a maximum density of up to 20 dwelling units per hectare including secondary suites.

Section 7.5	Policy/Objective
Objective 7.5.2	Incorporate green principles, materials, and designs that reduce the impact of residential development.
Policy 7.5.5	In addition to all other requirements of this plan, applications for rezoning must satisfy the following:



Section 7.5	Policy/Objective
	<p>Design and Planning Process The RDN shall encourage the use of an Integrated Design Process (IDP) which brings together key stakeholders and design professionals to work collaboratively and interactively from the early planning stages through to building occupancy.</p> <p>Development Rating and Performance The RDN shall strongly encourage development to achieve Built Green Gold, Leed for Neighbourhood Development (if available), EnerGuide 80-85, or other high level equivalent or recognized standard.</p> <p>Road standards and Parking Road widths and surface area should be minimized to what is necessary to serve the proposed development.</p> <p>Wastewater Treatment If a connection to an RDN owned and operated community sewer service is not available, the RDN may support community sewer services including the use of alternative forms of sewage treatment such as solar aquatics, vegetated tertiary filter, tertiary packaged treatment plant, or other system which has been proven reliable, produces high quality effluent, and provides opportunities for treated water reuse and/or energy recovery.</p> <p>Transportation and accessibility The site must be designed to encourage the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists, both around the site and connecting to lands beyond. Charging stations for electric vehicles should be provided.</p> <p>Landscape and siting With the exception of access and egress, a significant treed buffer must be established and/or maintained on all sides of the subject property. The RDN shall encourage the use of a site adaptive design approach to maximize land use efficiency and ensure that the proposed dwelling units, driveways, roads, etc. respect the topography of the site.</p> <p>Local Materials To strengthen/accentuate regional context in design, designs shall explore opportunities to incorporate local building materials in construction such as site cut timber and rock.</p> <p>Water Conservation The use of vegetated swales and other means of onsite rainwater management shall be required. Development should be designed to minimize impervious surface. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall require the applicant to provide a water conservation strategy prepared by a qualified professional which provides recommendations for water conservation.</p>



Section 7.5	Policy/Objective
	<p>Energy Conservation</p> <p>Development must be designed to maximize energy efficiency and should take advantage of opportunities for passive solar gain and other methods of capturing and storing heat energy.</p> <p>The RDN shall require the applicant to provide an energy conservation strategy prepared by a qualified professional which includes an assessment of the potential/suitability for onsite renewable energy. Development within this designation must be designed to meet at least ten percent of its energy needs from renewable sources on an annual basis.</p> <div data-bbox="521 638 1386 1209" data-label="Diagram"> <p>The diagram, titled "Five Elements of Passive Solar Design", shows a cross-section of a house. On the left, two sun icons represent "Winter Sun" (lower angle) and "Summer Sun" (higher angle). A "Control" element (shading device) is positioned above a window "Aperture". Arrows show solar radiation entering the room, hitting the "Absorber" (floor), and being distributed by "Distribution" elements (radiators or vents). "Thermal Mass" is shown as a concrete slab under the floor. The house is supported by two pillars on a ground level.</p> </div> <p>Dwelling Unit Characteristics</p> <p>The floor area of dwelling units within this designation must reflect the intent of this designation as a model green community.</p> <p>Amenities</p> <p>The RDN shall consider the use of amenity zoning to acquire amenities which are suitable to the scale of development and are desired by the community.</p>