

GOAL 6 – CREATE A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

To facilitate a vibrant and sustainable economy, the Plan identifies the economic strengths of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright and provides objectives and policies to support these strengths.

The Plan supports the protection of forestry and agriculture, and establishes a strategy for aggregate resource extraction and processing which is environmentally responsible and which complements the development strategies of this Plan.

General Objectives:

- *Provide* a framework for a compatible and unified approach for the management of natural resource related, commercial and industrial economic activity.
- *Provide* for a diversified economy that is consistent with the changing global and regional economy.
- *Balance* economic growth with the protection of the environment and the maintenance of rural integrity.

FORESTRY

Forestry is a dominant component of the economy. In addition to its economic value, residents appreciate the recreational opportunities afforded by the forested landscape. The majority of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright is within the provincial Forest Land Reserve (FLR). The location of FLR boundaries, as of the date of the adoption of this Plan, are as shown on Map No. 2, Land Reserves, Sheets 1 to 3. The FLR was established to prevent the conversion of forestry lands to non-forestry uses, not to regulate forestry operations. While regulations governing the FLR largely ensure that lands within the FLR are protected for forestry use, land use conflicts may occur at the interface between FLR lands and residential development.¹

In addition to the policies of this Goal, forestry lands are protected from residential encroachment through the urban boundary and rural integrity protection policies of Goals 1 and 3.

Objectives:

- *Protect* forestry lands for harvesting and reproduction.
- *Protect* the needs and activities of forestry operations when considering non-forestry uses on or adjacent to forestry lands.
- *Support* the use of Provincial Forest lands for recreational enjoyment and education.

¹ Land within the Forest Land Reserve that is also Provincial Forest is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forests with regard to use.

Policies:

- 1) The Forest Land Commission's mission to preserve the integrity of the productive forest land base to provide economic, social and environmental benefits to the community will be supported.
- 2) Prior to the consideration of zoning amendment applications for non-forestry purposes within the FLR, approval must first be granted by the Forest Land Commission prior to the application being considered by the Regional District. The Regional District will consider applications for rezoning to allow the non-forestry use within the FLR independent of a decision by the Forest Land Commission to permit such as use.
- 3) Applications to remove land from the FLR for agricultural purposes may be supported where the land is more suitable for agriculture provided the land is placed within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- 4) Subdivision, within the FLR, to a parcel size less than 50.0 hectares will not be supported.
- 5) Where appropriate, land use will be used to create a transition between the FLR and non-FLR lands.
- 6) Forest Land Commission application referrals will be directed to the Regional District Board for comment.
- 7) The Regional District will be encouraged to examine, on a regional basis, the feasibility of density transfers to protect FLR lands from residential encroachment.
- 8) The Ministry of Forests shall be encouraged to manage Provincial Forests for recreational use where appropriate.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is an important economic activity in Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright, particularly in the eastern portion of the Plan Area. Agricultural operations include a large dairy farm, cattle/pig farm, chicken farm and a number of smaller holdings geared to beef cattle.

Large segments of the eastern portion of the Plan Area are within the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The location of ALR boundaries, as of the date of the adoption of this Plan, are as shown on Map No. 2, Land Reserves, Sheet 1 to 3. The Agricultural Land Commission is the principal agency responsible for protecting the ALR and promoting agricultural activities through the regulation of land use and subdivision.

While regulations governing the ALR largely ensure that lands within the ALR are protected for agricultural use, land use conflicts may occur at the interface between the ALR and residential development. *The Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* provides protection for farm operations within the ALR from nuisance suites and incompatible local government regulation. Additional protection is also provided through the *Land Title Act*, which enables an Approving Officer to require that a subdivision does not unreasonably interfere with adjacent farming

operations due to inadequate buffering or separation and provides for the elimination of unnecessary road endings. In addition to the policies of this Goal, the ALR is protected from residential encroachment through the urban boundary and rural integrity protection policies of Goals 1 and 3 and the development permit area established in² Appendix A.

Objectives:

- *Protect* agricultural land resources for present and future food production.
- *Encourage* sustainable and environmentally sound farming practices, which protect surface water, groundwater and soil quality.
- *Protect* the needs and activities of agricultural operations when considering non-agricultural uses on or adjacent to agricultural lands.

Policies:

- 1) The Agricultural Land Commission's mandate of preserving and encouraging agricultural production will be supported.
- 2) Applications for the use of lands within the ALR for non-farm purposes will only be considered where permission for the proposed use has first been granted by the Agricultural Land Commission. Regional District approval for the non-farm use will be based independent of a decision by the Agricultural Land Commission to permit such a use.
- 3) Applications to remove land from the ALR for forestry purposes may be supported where the land is more suitable for forestry provided the land is placed within the Forest Land Reserve.
- 4) The retention of large land holdings within the ALR will be encouraged to maintain the option and feasibility of farm use.
- 5) Subdivision, within the ALR, to a parcel size less than 8.0 hectares will not be supported.
- 6) Broad-based agricultural activities, including livestock and horticultural uses of a farm and the processing, production, distribution and sale of agricultural products grown and reared on that farm, will be encouraged and supported on agricultural lands. To ensure that such activities, including those of an intensive nature, do not give rise to conflicts with adjoining uses or the environment, the following will be encouraged:
 - a) such activities be conducted in accordance with recognized codes of practice, standards and environmental guidelines; and
 - b) lands within the ALR which are adjacent to the Extension Village, Urban Boundary be used for agricultural uses which are compatible with, and supportive of, Village land uses.
- 7) Where appropriate, land use will be used to create a transition between ALR and non-ALR lands.

² Bylaw No. 1148.07, adopted December 4, 2018

- 8) A Farmland Protection, Development Permit Area will be established. (See Appendix A – Development Permit Areas.)
- 9) Road, utility and communication right-of-way extensions through, or adjacent to, lands within the ALR will not be supported when a viable alternative exists. Such extensions should not negatively affect existing farm operations. Roads should be designed to discourage through traffic and further road expansion within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Alignments should be established in consultation with affected local landowners. Utility and communication right-of-way extensions through, or adjacent to, lands within the ALR should not negatively impact the long term agricultural viability of the land. (Extensions require the approval of the Agricultural Land Commission.)
- 10) The Regional District will encourage the Approving Officer to ensure subdivision does not unreasonably interfere with adjacent farming operations due to inadequate buffering or separation and provide for the elimination of unnecessary road endings.

AGGREGATE AND MINERAL RESOURCES

While historically coal mining was prominent and some interest has been expressed in natural gas exploration, aggregate extraction (i.e. sand and gravel) is the focus of mining activity in Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright. Aggregate and mineral extraction and primary processing is supported provided concerns regarding compatibility with residential development and environmental impacts are addressed.

Management of aggregate and mineral resources falls principally within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Energy and Mines. However, the Regional District has the responsibility to regulate where processing is permitted and may regulate the location of sand, gravel and soil removal operations through the enactment of a soil removal bylaw. The feasibility of such a bylaw is currently being examined as part of a joint Regional District/Ministry of Energy and Mines, aggregate study. The Regional District will work with the Ministry of Energy and Mines to avoid potential land use conflicts and minimize environmental impacts.

Objectives:

- *Protect* lands with aggregate or mineral resources from development which would render them unviable or inaccessible.
- *Minimize* conflicts between extraction/processing activities and residential land uses.
- *Minimize* the impact of extraction and processing activities on the natural environment.
- *Support* the site rehabilitation and reclamation of mined landscapes for future productive use and for environmental and aesthetic considerations.

Policies:³

- 1) Lands with aggregate or mineral resource potential will generally be included within the Rural and Resource land use designations in accordance with the policies of Goal 3 – Protect Rural Integrity.
- 2) The rezoning of lands to permit primary processing will generally be limited to areas where such operations would have a limited impact on residential development and the natural environment, including groundwater resources, in accordance with the policies of Goal 4 – Protect the Natural Environment.
- 3) The Ministry of Energy and Mines will be encouraged to ensure compatibility with residential development and the minimization of environmental impacts in the approval of new aggregate or mineral extraction operations or the re-establishment of a derelict pit. Particular attention should be focused on assessing the potential impacts of resource removal on traffic volumes and dynamics and the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater. The Ministry will be encouraged to make this information available to the Regional District and surrounding landowners for comment prior to a decision.
- 4) The Ministry of Energy and Mines will be encouraged to ensure environmentally-sound and aesthetically-sensitive reclamation and conservation practices are undertaken at all aggregate and mineral extraction operations. Where an extraction operation may cause significant disturbance to the surface of the land or where environmental damage is a possibility, the Ministry will be encouraged to require that a performance bond be posted of an amount sufficient to ensure that all required reclamation works and conservation practices are fully and properly completed.
- 5) The Regional District encourages public consultation and referral to the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks prior to consideration of approval of aggregate or mineral extraction or processing applications by the Ministry of Mines.

COMMERCIAL

In recognition of the rural character of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright and tradition of home based businesses, as opposed to stand alone commercial developments, commercial uses are primarily restricted to small scale developments within the Extension Village, Urban Boundary.

Objectives:

- *Ensure* that the location, scale, form and character of commercial developments complement the existing rural character of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright and the tradition of home based businesses.

³ Bylaw No. 1148.07, adopted December 4, 2018

Policies:

- 1) Commercial development will be limited to lands within the Extension Village, Urban Boundary in accordance with the policies of Goal 2 – Create Complete Communities. Excluded are accessory commercial uses to the following on lands designated Rural or Resource:
 - a) outdoor recreation;
 - b) activities associated with historical or archeological sites; and
 - c) campgrounds or recreational vehicle parks which provide seasonal and temporary accommodation.

HOME BASED BUSINESSES

While the Plan allows for limited, small scale, commercial developments within the Extension Village, Urban Boundary, home based businesses are preferred by the community. Expanded allowances for compatible, home based businesses within the Extension Village, Urban Boundary and on lands designated Rural Residential, Rural or Resource are a reflection of the rural character of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright, the tradition of home based businesses and the community's identification of the natural landscape as a potential stimulus for the development of a local, tourist/recreation service sector. (In addition to home based businesses, tourist/recreation uses are permitted in the Rural and Resource land use designations in accordance with the policies of Goal 3 – Protect Rural Integrity.)

Objectives:

- *Support* expanded opportunities for home based businesses as an alternative to commercial development and to *facilitate* the development of local tourist/recreation services based on the natural landscape.
- *Ensure* home based businesses are compatible with surrounding land uses.
- *Ensure* home based businesses do not compromise rural integrity, or the historic form and character of development within the Extension Village, Urban Boundary.

Policies:

- 1) The Regional District will be encouraged to amend zoning regulations to provide for expanded opportunities for home occupations (i.e., businesses conducted within a dwelling unit as opposed to an accessory building such as a garage) within the Extension Village, Urban Boundary in accordance with the following principles:
 - a) compatibility with surrounding land uses;
 - b) compatibility with the historic form and character of development; and
 - c) consideration of a wide range of home occupations including hospitality, tourism, service and retail operations.

- 2) The Regional District will be encouraged to amend zoning regulations to provide for expanded opportunities for home based businesses on lands designated Rural Residential, Rural or Resource in accordance with the following principles:
 - a) compatibility with surrounding land uses;
 - b) protection of rural integrity; and
 - c) consideration of cottage industries and bed and breakfast operations.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM

Mount Arrowsmith Regional Park is located in the northwest corner of the Plan Area; vehicle access is by a logging road, which originates in the Alberni – Clayoquot Regional District. Although the Park is owned and operated by the Alberni – Clayoquot Regional District, land use planning is the responsibility of the Regional District of Nanaimo. The possible expansion of the privately run ski hill which is located within the Park and on a portion of adjacent Crown Land has raised concerns regarding the maintenance of unrestricted public access to existing facilities such as trails and the preservation of environmental features. In recognition of the need for interjurisdictional cooperation between the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District and the Regional District of Nanaimo, these lands have been designated as Mount Arrowsmith Alpine Recreation Area.

Objectives:

- *Recognize* Mount Arrowsmith Regional Park as a significant, inter-regional park which includes a ski facility.
- *Achieve* a balance between maintaining environmental integrity of the natural landscape and the development of a ski facility.
- *Protect* the environmental integrity of Mount Arrowsmith Alpine Recreation Area through the appropriate regulation of development.
- *Recognize* the contribution of Mount Arrowsmith Alpine Recreation Area to the tourist-recreational service sector.

Policies:

- 1) The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District will be encouraged to maintain the following aspects of Mount Arrowsmith Regional Park:
 - a) environmental integrity of the natural landscape;
 - b) traditional public uses; and
 - c) unrestricted public access to existing public facilities such as trails.
- 2) Lands designated Mount Arrowsmith Alpine Recreation Area are as shown on Map No. 1, Lands Use Designations, Sheets 1 to 3.
- 3) Mount Arrowsmith Alpine Recreation Area will be recognized as providing for nature-based, outdoor activities including a ski facility.

- 4) The Regional District of Nanaimo may support the limited development of accessory uses on lands designated Mount Arrowsmith Alpine Recreation Area where the use is of a nature customarily incidental, subordinate and exclusively devoted to an outdoor recreational use (e.g. equipment rentals, washrooms, day lodge including restaurant and lounge facilities, and up to a maximum of 50 units of temporary, seasonal accommodation) without compromising the following:
 - a) environmental integrity of the natural landscape;
 - b) other natural amenities;
 - c) traditional public uses;
 - d) unrestricted public access to existing public facilities such as trails; and
 - e) other recreational uses.

INDUSTRIAL

Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright has an extensive resource based economy centred on forestry, agriculture and aggregate extraction. Services to control the environmental and social impacts of industrial development are limited. To protect the economy, communities and the environment, additional industrial development within Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright is not supported.

Objectives:

- *Limit* further industrial development.
- *Support* industrial development on existing industrial sites which are compatible with surrounding land uses, the natural environment and the road network.

Policies:

- 1) Lands designated Industrial are as shown on Map No. 1, Land Use Designations, Sheets 1 to 3.
- 2) The following policies apply to the Industrial land use designation:
 - a) No additional lands will be designated as Industrial;
 - b) Development proposals for new or expanded industrial uses may be supported provided the development is compatible with surrounding land uses, the natural environment and the road network; and
 - c) Community water or sewer will not be provided to facilitate a more intensive land use than would otherwise be permitted.