

***EAST WELLINGTON - PLEASANT VALLEY  
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN***

***BYLAW NO. 1055***

Schedule 'A'

**SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

***1.1 PURPOSE OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN***

*A Community Plan is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan (s.876 (1) Municipal Act).*

The purpose of the East Wellington - Pleasant Valley Official Community Plan is to provide a comprehensive set of policies and guidelines for managing existing and future uses of land in the Plan Area. These are intended to provide its citizens and the Regional District of Nanaimo with a framework for decision-making in light of pressures of growth and change.

The Plan's fundamental aim is to preserve the unique characteristics which define the Plan Area while recognizing a minimal level of growth which is compatible with, and compliments, the existing rural, agricultural, open space and resource uses within the Plan Area.

The Plan Area is influenced by several significant influences: its historical development as an area of agricultural and resource extraction activities; development of large-lot subdivisions; the presence of environmentally-sensitive creeks, rivers, lakes and associated floodplains; a significant land base designated as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Forest Land Reserve (FLR); the close proximity of the City of Nanaimo; and, the development of the Nanaimo Parkway. All of these factors have been critical in developing this Plan.

An Official Community Plan reflects local interests as well as regional, provincial and, in some cases, federal interests. The Plan recognizes the objectives, direction and philosophy of the Regional Growth Management Plan and other plans which may have direct implications on the preferred pattern of land use and development within the Plan Area.

It is important to distinguish the Community Plan from regulatory zoning and subdivision bylaws. The Community Plan will act as the guiding document for the Regional District Board and other agencies in determining the best uses for land and water surfaces in the community and the means by which these will best be managed. It provides direction and the foundation for the preparation of related bylaws to regulate and control the type, degree and timing of land use and development. The Plan also provides residents and other interested individuals or groups with a framework against which development proposals and actions can be assessed.

## **1.2 THE PLAN AREA**

The East Wellington - Pleasant Valley Official Community Plan Area is located in the Regional District of Nanaimo's Electoral Area 'D.' As of 1991, its population was 955 (Source: Census Canada), representing an increase of 20% over the previous five-year period, or an annual increase of 4%. It is anticipated that the population will continue to grow at a similar rate in the future.

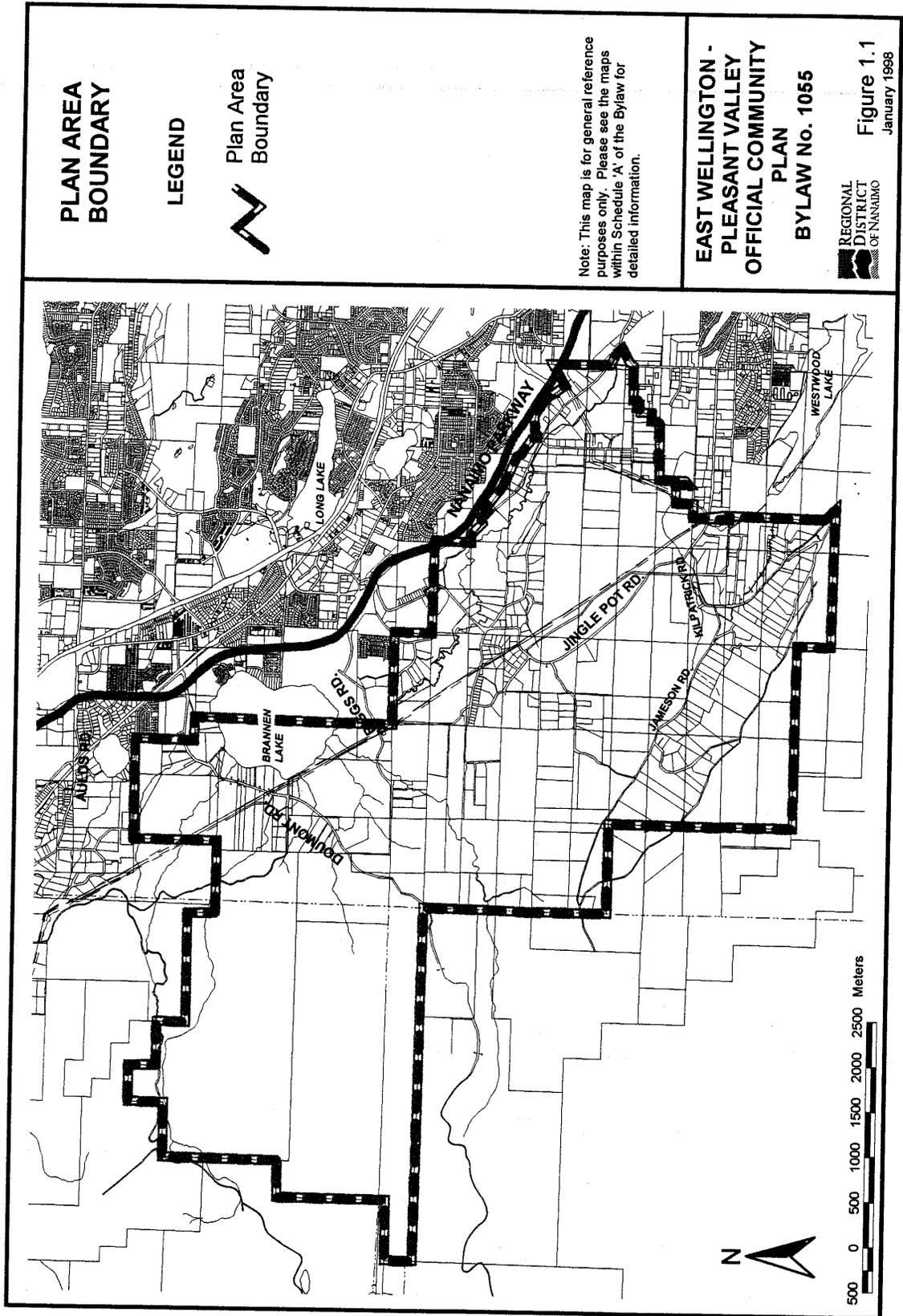
Encompassing a land area of approximately 3330 ha, the Plan Area is bounded to the north by the Lantzville Official Community Plan Area, to the east by the City of Nanaimo, to the south by Electoral Area 'C,' and to the west by Electoral Areas 'C' and 'E' (see Figure 1.1). It is characterized by a diverse mix of natural landscapes and features and a pervading rural atmosphere attributable to rural and agricultural land uses.

Many of the Plan Area's diverse natural landscapes and features, such as the Millstone River system (including various lakes, creeks, streams, and wetlands) are considered sensitive to human activity and land development. These not only serve as valuable natural habitat for animals, birds and fish but also provide local residents with considerable recreational opportunities. Other areas of recreational importance include Mount Benson<sup>1</sup>, the Lantzville Foothills and the Regional District of Nanaimo's only regional park, Benson Creek Falls Regional Park.

---

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the majority of Mount Benson is located in Electoral Area 'C.'

Figure 1.1



### **1.3 COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES**

In developing the East Wellington - Pleasant Valley Official Community Plan a number of broad objectives were identified through the public consultation process. Although these represent general visions and aspirations of the community, they assist in identifying the more specific objectives and policies set out in the Plan:

- *Strengthen* the characteristics that make East Wellington - Pleasant Valley an attractive living and working community.
- *Preserve* the rural character and natural amenities in the Plan Area.
- *Ensure* that human activity and development respects the integrity of the natural environment.
- *Ensure* protection to life and property from natural hazards.
- *Manage* further growth and development in a manner compatible with the community preferences identified in the Plan so as not to jeopardize established lifestyles and activities.
- *Preserve* and protect lands that have agricultural and/or natural resource value.
- *Strengthen* responsiveness to community concerns and preferences.

### **1.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Regional District of Nanaimo recognizes that residents within this Plan Area wish to be informed of, and contribute to, planning issues, which affect their community. To this end, the Regional District will work actively to ensure community access to information on planning issues.

The importance of public awareness and understanding of the policy framework set out in this Plan, as well as in the various methods used in its implementation, are stressed as a broadening of public understanding and participation in decision-making lead to lasting benefits for the community and the District as a whole. Residents of the Plan Area, through their support of the Community Plan and participation in the planning and public hearing processes, are the final arbiters of community values.

Residents of the Plan Area have had a direct influence over this Plan through a broad-based public consultation process. Resident values, preferences and concerns have been determined through community meetings, workshops and a survey. The Area's Advisory Planning Commission has also reviewed and assessed the Plan<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Bylaw No. 1055 Adopted June 13, 2000.

## **1.5 THE PLAN PERIOD**

The East Wellington - Pleasant Valley Official Community Plan is intended to provide direction as to how the Plan Area will develop over the next five (5) to ten (10) years. A general review of the Plan is not contemplated until the community and the Board of the Regional District find that it no longer serves community needs. The Plan may, however, be subject to periodic review by the Board in order to address any major revisions to legislation, new planning issues, or changes to the Regional Growth Management Plan that may have implications in the Plan Area. All reviews and amendments will be in accordance with community wishes.

## **1.6 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

### **1.6.1 Implementation**

The East Wellington - Pleasant Valley Official Community Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Act* of British Columbia. The Community Plan's policies are reflected in land use designations outlined on Map No. 3, which is attached to and forms part of this Plan. The Plan is implemented by the regulatory bylaw of the Regional District, "Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987," and amended as required to reflect its direction and policies.

### **1.6.2 Subdivision Approval**

The subdivision approving authority within the Regional District is the Approving Officer for the Ministry of Transportation and Highways. A proposal to subdivide must be consistent with the Official Community Plan as well as with the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw. To ensure that the public interest is served, the Provincial Approving Officer is requested to carefully consider the direction, objectives and policies of the Plan in the subdivision approval process. The City of Nanaimo's Approving Officer is also requested to consider the Plan when reviewing subdivision proposals located in proximity to the Plan Area. In the event that the Regional District assumes the subdivision approving authority in the future, its approving officer shall similarly be requested to carefully consider the Plan in the approval process.

### **1.6.3 Adoption**

This Official Community Plan has been prepared and adopted pursuant to Part 26, Division (2) of the *Municipal Act*. All bylaws, permits issued and works undertaken within the Plan Area shall be consistent with the provisions of this Plan.

#### **1.6.4 Amendment**

Subject to the *Municipal Act* and the terms of “Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987,” application may be made to amend this Official Community Plan.

This Plan Area is a development approval information area.<sup>3</sup>

### **1.7 REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Growth Management Plan for the Regional District of Nanaimo was adopted in January 1997. This Official Community Plan has been developed in recognition of the Growth Management Plan and the philosophy, direction and approach that it advances. Generally, this Plan supports the broad goals of urban containment, protection of rural integrity, protection of environmentally significant features, improved mobility, the creation of a vibrant and sustainable rural economy, efficient services and resource use, and cooperation among jurisdictions. Specifically, this Plan promotes the establishment and maintenance of an urban containment boundary, the protection of rural lands for rural uses, the protection of valuable agriculture, forestry and other resource lands, and the protection of the environment, particularly water resources.

The Regional Board shall ensure that proposed amendments to this Plan are consistent with the goals and policies of the Regional Growth Management Plan.

### **1.8 PLAN INTERPRETATION**

The Plan is divided into a number of sections each dealing a different element of the community, including natural resource management, development strategy and parks and open space. Some sections are further divided into sub-sections, such as agriculture in the case of natural resource management. Each section and sub-section is comprised of specific objectives and policies.

Objectives are an expression of community values and long-term aspirations. They are the community’s statement of what is important and its vision of the future. In this sense, objectives are the official community plan’s foundation, establishing its overall direction and focus. The time necessary to fulfill objectives may vary considerably. Some may require a significant amount of time that extends beyond this Plan’s timeframe, necessitating an on-going commitment. Others demand less of a time commitment and can be implemented in the short term.

Successful attainment of the Plan’s objectives requires a combination of individual and policy initiatives. The actions and decisions of individuals have a tremendous impact on the realization of community values and aspirations, while an effective and well-crafted

---

<sup>3</sup> Bylaw No. 1055 adopted June 13, 2000

set of policies complement their actions. Policies establish the framework that guides decision-making by the Regional District. Each of the policies in this Plan relate directly to stated objectives. Some policies may be highly specialized and address specific issues, situations or conditions while others may have a more generalized applicability.

In the context of this Plan, policies can generally be categorized as either an *action* or *development activated*. Policies throughout the Plan have been arranged into these categories in an effort to enhance understanding of their rationale and implications. The two policy types are described as follows.

*Action policies* represent the basis of the Plan's decision-making framework by providing clear direction on particular issues, establishing a favoured course of action or stating a preferred scenario, circumstance, set of conditions or outcome. Generally, these policies provide guidance to the Regional District and other levels of government when addressing planning-related issues or situations.

*Development activated* policies apply specifically to proposed changes in land use or development where the likelihood of change or impact on the broader community, including the environment, is considered the greatest. The policies are designed to address these potential impacts by setting out assessment criteria. They remain 'silent' until such time that a change in land use or development is proposed. Once this occurs the policy is 'activated' and its requirements must be fulfilled. Otherwise, the policy has no effect.