



ELECTORAL AREA 'F'

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

BYLAW No. 1152, 1999



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Section 1: Introduction

According to the *Municipal Act*, an official 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 geographical area covered by the plan.

The purpose of the Electoral Area 'F' Official Community Plan (OCP) is to provide a comprehensive set of objectives and policies for existing and future land uses. The objectives and policies contained in this OCP reflect community values and co-ordinate with the regulations of regional, provincial and federal agencies with interests in the Plan Area.

The OCP provides direction on how the Plan Area will grow and change over the next 5 to 10 years. However, it should be reviewed periodically to address new legislation, changing attitudes or lifestyles, new planning issues, new information, and amendments to the Regional District of Nanaimo's Regional Growth Management Plan.

The objectives and policies of the OCP will be carried out through a new zoning bylaw and other implementation measures. Applications to amend this Official Community Plan may be made through the Regional District of Nanaimo, in accordance with the process outlined in the *Municipal Act*.

The population of Area 'F' has grown to 5,288 (1996 Census) with an estimated annual increase of approximately 5% per year in each of the last five years. Depending on the rate of population growth, the population of Area 'F' could expand between 7,000 to 9,000 residents by 2021. This would mean that an additional 200 to 500 dwelling units might be required in Area 'F' over the next five years. It is anticipated that housing needs over this time period will generally be accommodated in the village centres and through the subdivision of Rural Residential Lands. This OCP supports types and densities of future housing similar to the form and character of existing residential development in Electoral Area 'F'.

The Plan Area is illustrated on Map 1.



Public Consultation

Residents, landowners and stakeholders in the Plan Area have had direct influence over this Plan through a community-based public consultation program, conducted between the spring of 1998 and the summer of 1999. The values and preferences of the community were verified through the formation of a Community Steering Committee, open houses, a project site office, visioning workshops, kitchen table meetings, working groups on specific issues, a public meeting, and public hearings on the OCP.

The RDN will ensure the community remains involved in planning issues through the formation of an Advisory Planning Commission (APC) and by continuing to keep the community informed on planning issues in Area 'F'.



Community Values

The public consultation process conducted for the Electoral Area 'F' Official Community Plan revealed a series of '*community values*' – that is, the underlying principles consistently voiced by residents, landowners and stakeholders throughout the public process. These values assist in defining and qualifying the community's 'philosophy' and preferred course of action. In addition, these values can be used to guide future decisions on land use and development for the community, the Advisory Planning Commission, the RDN and senior levels of government. In Electoral Area 'F', community values include:

1. Support for only a low level of regulation and the involvement of residents in the development of regulations.
2. Recognition of home based businesses as critical to the lifestyle of Area 'F' residents.
3. Support for a more self-sufficient use of land, where more than one land use activity is conducted on any parcel.
4. Protection of the 'quality of life', rural nature and privacy found in Area 'F'.
5. Recognition of value of a mix of housing types and landscaping, affordable housing, owner-built dwelling units and the ability to relocate moved-on buildings to parcels in the area.
6. Support for no further sprawl in rural areas.
7. Encouragement of sustainable and environmentally sound farming practices.
8. Recognition of the economic and environmental benefits of forested areas.
9. Support for the public's use of forested lands for recreational enjoyment.
10. Protection of lands with potential aggregate or mineral resources development that would limit extraction activities.
11. Recognition that the impact of extraction activities on the environment, residents and other resource uses must be minimized.
12. Recognition of the need to safeguard environmentally sensitive areas; protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats.
13. Support for the protection of watersheds and aquifers from degradation, inappropriate development, and pollution in recognition of the importance of a water supply.
14. Protection of the supply of potable water to ensure water self-sufficiency and assure the provision of a clean, safe water supply.
15. Support for existing businesses that located in the Plan Area under pre-official community plan circumstances and regulations.
16. Support for the creation of an integrated park and trail system in the Plan Area.
17. Encouragement of the preservation of natural and heritage features and encourage public access to these features, wherever possible.
18. Support for road design and construction standards that meet the safety and transportation needs of the community.
19. Support for road systems that include the development of pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle paths as part of the transportation system.
20. Support for safe and effective methods of solid and liquid waste management.



The Regional Growth Management Plan and the Regional Context Statement

Under the legislation defined in the *Municipal Act*, all official community plans in jurisdictions that have adopted growth strategies must comply with the goals and policies of that growth strategy. The Regional District of Nanaimo adopted a Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP) in January of 1997. The Electoral Area 'F' OCP, therefore, must respond to and support the goals of the Regional District of Nanaimo's RGMP.

In response to the RGMP's goal of containing sprawl and focusing development, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP designates Rural Separation Boundaries. These boundaries designate the areas where higher density residential development and/or commercial and industrial uses will be focused.

In response to the RGMP's goal of creating complete, nodal communities, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP directs higher density residential development as well as future commercial and industrial development into the Village Centres at Errington, Coombs, Hilliers and Qualicum River Estates. The OCP encourages local community involvement in future planning for these centres.

In response to the RGMP's goal of protecting rural integrity, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP designates land considered to be rural into two designations: Rural Residential and Resource Lands. Objectives and policies for each of these land use designations are established to protect the rural nature of the Plan Area and encourage home based business activities.

"In response to the RGMP's goal of protecting the natural environment, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP designates a development permit area over specific identified and unmapped watercourses in the Plan Area and establishes objectives to encourage the protection of the natural environment¹.

In response to the RGMP's goal of improving mobility, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP supports community involvement in planning for road development. The Plan also encourages the use of other modes of transportation and contains objectives and policies to support trail development and safe passage for pedestrians, bicycles and horses.

In response to the RGMP's goal of creating a vibrant and sustainable economy, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP supports existing businesses in the Plan Area and encourages future economic development in the Plan Area. It also contains objectives and policies to ensure that the type and scale of existing and future businesses are compatible with the character of surrounding lands.

In response to the RGMP's goal of improving service and resource use efficiency, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP sets out objectives and policies for parks, schools, community facilities, community water services, community sewer services and community storm water maintenance.

In response to the RGMP's goal of encouraging cooperation among jurisdictions, the Electoral Area 'F' OCP recognizes that other jurisdictions have mandates within the Plan Area. The Plan encourages better communications between jurisdictions about planning issues and supports seeking new and innovative ways to involve all stakeholders in planning decisions.

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.05 adopted December 4, 2018



Development Approval Information for Amendments or Permits

The Regional District may require development approval information for amendments to land use designations, zoning, subdivision and/or for the issuance of a temporary use permit. Proposals shall be evaluated, at a minimum, on:

- a) The compatibility of the proposed development with surrounding uses;
- b) The consideration of park land, public spaces and/or amenities;
- c) The impact of the development on groundwater, surfacewater and the environment;
- d) The ability of the development to provide on site water and septic disposal (or to connect to community services, if available, within rural separation boundaries).
- e) The impact of the development on traffic volumes and roads;
- f) If necessary, how the development provides a buffer for adjoining farming areas to ensure no negative impact is caused by the development;
- g) For the Village Centres, the impact of smaller lot or multi family residential development on the form and character of the Village Centre;
- h) For the Village Centres, where a Village Plan has been prepared for the Village Centre, how the development proposal responds to the goals and objectives of the Plan.



Organization of this Plan

The Electoral Area 'F' OCP includes text and corresponding maps. The text is organized in sections around 'issue areas' that were identified through the public consultation process.

Each section contains objectives and policies. **Objectives** express the community's values and long-term aspirations. They are the community's statements of what is important to the residents and landowners of Electoral Area 'F'. **Policies** express the community's response to the objectives. The policies are the 'how' for each objective, and provide specific direction to the RDN Board, the community, and provincial and federal agencies on future land use in the Plan Area. There are two types of policies:

General Policies set out the community's wishes on growth, development, protection, and change. These policies provide guidance to the Regional District and other levels of government when addressing planning-related issues or situations.

Future Impact Policies apply to proposed changes in land use or new development, especially for changes that will likely have an impact on the community or the environment. They provide criteria for an impact assessment of a proposed development.

The Official Community Plan also contains one appendix: Appendix A1 states the regulations for the Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area^{2, 3}.

² Bylaw No. 1152.05, adopted December 4, 2018

³ Bylaw No. 1152.03 adopted January 23, 2007

The abbreviations used in this Plan are:

ALC - Agricultural Land Commission

DP - Development Permit

FLC - Forest Land Commission

OCP - Official Community Plan

RDN - Regional District of Nanaimo

MoTH - Ministry of Transportation and Highways

ALR - Agricultural Land Reserve

DPA - Development Permit Area

FLR - Forest Land Reserve

ha – hectare

RGMP - Regional Growth Management Plan.



Section 2: Land Use Designations

Introduction

The purpose of a land use designation is to 'match' the lands in a Plan Area to the goals, objectives and policies set out in the Official Community Plan. The Land Use Designations are shown on Map No. 2.

Currently, commercial and industrial activities are scattered throughout the Plan Area but are concentrated mainly along Highways 4 and 4A. Institutional uses are generally found in the village centres or along the major highways. Outdoor recreational opportunities are found in the major park holdings in the Plan Area. One major public utility land use is currently contained within the Plan Area (*the RDN Transfer Station on Church Road*). Approximately 20% of the total land base is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and approximately 60% is in the Forest Land Reserve (FLR).

In the future, commercial, institutional, recreational facilities and higher density residential development will be directed to the village centres. Major industrial and commercial land uses and future public utilities (where practical) will be contained within the Bellevue-Church Road Rural Separation Area, separated from residential areas, agricultural lands, forests and protected park lands. The OCP supports the separation of incompatible land uses to minimize future land use conflicts.

It should be recognized by local, provincial and federal government agencies that the community opposes the location of any municipal or regional waste composting facilities, landfills or any stump burning facilities within the Plan Area. These uses will not be permitted in any land use designation or zone. Composting for crop production purposes will be considered an acceptable farm practice.

In addition, in the future, to the extent that the RDN is authorized under Part 26 of the *Municipal Act*, the zoning bylaw will contain regulations and restrictions on subdivision, including subdivisions under the **Condominium Act**, with a view to ensuring that such developments are consistent with the objectives of this official community plan.

It should also be noted that the Regional District of Nanaimo, at the writing of this Plan, has not 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 discriminate against rental housing or special needs housing in any land use designation or any zone to be specified in the future zoning bylaw.

Zoning and Non-Conforming Status for Existing Uses

The objective of the future zoning bylaw will be to zone existing land uses as conforming, to the fullest extent that is reasonable and possible. Non-conforming zoning status will only be considered for land uses that **cannot** meet the criteria outlined below:

1. The use is compatible with surrounding land uses and the character of the area;
2. Has no negative impact on groundwater, surface water or the natural environment;
3. Has an adequate and approved means of sewage disposal; and
4. Meets all requirements of the jurisdictions having authority over the lands or use.



Village Centres

Village Centres are mixed-used 'focal points' of a community or neighbourhood, potentially supporting a variety of commercial, recreational, community and professional services. A Village Centre may also contain multi family or smaller lot residential development. This OCP contains four village centres: the Coombs Village Centre, the Errington Village Centre, the Hilliers Village Centre and the Qualicum River Estates Village Centre.

The Coombs Village Centre contains the largest concentration of commercial and tourist related services in the Plan Area. Currently, the Centre contains the Coombs Market, several retail stores providing a wide range of products and services, the French Creek Elementary School, a church and outdoor amusement rides. Approximately 270 dwelling units could be accommodated in this Centre.

The Errington Village Centre has been the location for commercial, cultural and social activities in the eastern part of the Plan Area since the early 1900s. Currently, the Centre contains a general store, several retail/service stores, a community centre, a sawmill, and the Errington Elementary School. Approximately 60 dwelling units could be accommodated in this Centre.

Qualicum River Estates is located in the northwest corner of the Plan Area adjacent to the Little Qualicum River. Lands have been acquired for a future school site and park land as part of the subdivision approval process. It is anticipated that the Centre will provide the services and facilities needed by local residents. Approximately 153 dwelling units could be accommodated in this Centre.

The Hilliers Village Centre, located on Highway 4 to the west of the Coombs Village Centre, contains a mix of commercial/industrial services and smaller residential lots. There is a long history of commercial activity in the Village Centre, and potential for future commercial/industrial and residential development. Approximately 116 dwelling units could be accommodated in this Centre.

Lands within all Centres are designated Comprehensive Mixed Use. The lands designated as village centres and each centre's corresponding Rural Separation Boundary are shown on Map No. 2.

Objectives

1. Concentrate compatible uses to improve the function of the Village Centres.
2. Establish limits to the Village Centres by designating lands as 'Village Centre'.
3. Establish a Rural Separation Boundary around each Village Centre to allow for community servicing to parcels within the Boundary (the lands designated within each Centre exactly coincide with the Rural Separation Boundary for each Village Centre).

General Policies

1. A mix of uses compatible with the Village Centre may be permitted in the Village Centres without an amendment to the Official Community Plan. Compatible uses include (*but are not limited to*): tourist accommodations, retail stores, smaller lot or multi-family residential developments, tourist information booths, offices, restaurants, recreation facilities, public markets, neighbourhood pubs, public assembly uses, personal care services, and schools.
2. The RDN may, with the participation of local residents and stakeholders, initiate the preparation of a Village Plan for any and/or all Village Centres. A Village Plan shall contain specific goals, objectives and implementation measures for the Centre.

3. The ultimate number of dwelling units to be accommodated within the Village Centres and servicing infrastructure shall be determined through the Village Plans. In the interim, build-out projections are established in the text of this Plan as a guide for future planning. These calculations are based on the amount of undeveloped land, the introduction of community services and the retention of existing business uses. The number of potential dwelling units is based on allowing a ½ acre per unit on a gross area calculation. This calculation may be amended following the Village Plan process.
4. A single or two-storey pedestrian oriented form of development that recognizes the form and character of existing establishments shall be encouraged for properties in the Village Centres.



Rural Separation Boundaries

Rural Separation Boundaries are used to define the limits of mixed-use development. The delineation of a boundary around an area also recognizes that community servicing may ultimately be necessary to deal with septic and potable water concerns on parcels within the boundary or to allow for a higher level of development. There are five areas designated for Rural Separation Boundaries: the Errington Village Area, the Coombs Village Area, the Qualicum River Estates Village Area, the Hilliers Village Area, and the Bellevue-Church Road Area. Map No. 2 designates Rural Separation Boundaries around these Areas. Lands within the Bellevue-Church Road Boundary are designated Industrial or Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use.

Objectives

1. Direct future commercial, industrial, public utility and community services uses to lands within the Rural Separation Boundaries. A compatible mix of uses is supported within the Boundaries.
2. Consider the provision of community water, sewer and stormwater services to parcels within the Rural Separation Boundaries, subject to the community expressing an interest in the provision of services, or for health or environmental reasons.

General Policies

1. The provision of complete community services to lands within the Rural Separation Boundaries shall be supported in principle pursuant to the policies contained in Section 7 of this Plan.
2. A mix of uses is encouraged within the Rural Separation Boundaries
3. Significant areas of park land and open space are desirable within the Rural Separation Boundaries. Not all lands within the boundaries should be developed.



Industrial Lands

In recognition of the substantial investment in the development of land and improvements and the compatibility of the development with surrounding FLR lands an Industrial Lands Area has been designated on Clarke Road, as shown on Map No. 2. The site currently contains the Long Hoh Sawmill. The extension of community servicing to these lands is not anticipated by this Plan.

Objectives

1. Support sawmill/wood processing activities on lands designated Industrial at Clarke Road.
2. Give special consideration to minimizing the impact of development on surrounding land uses.
3. Ensure that operations comply with recognized standards and codes of practice and those unreasonable impacts on the natural environment are avoided.

Future Impact Policies

1. This OCP does not support the designation of any new lands as Industrial beyond those already designated at Clarke Road and at the Bellevue/Church Road Rural Separation Boundary Area.



Tourist Commercial Areas

Parcels within the Tourist Commercial Area designation are mixed use, commercial/recreational types of development oriented toward the natural amenities found in adjacent or surrounding lands. This designation promotes developing eco-tourism as an economic resource in Electoral Area 'F'. Lands designated Tourist Commercial Areas are illustrated on Map No. 2.

Community water and community sewer services are not proposed to be extended to lands designated as Tourist Commercial Areas, except for health or environmental reasons. Development shall only be permitted to the extent that can be serviced by on-site well and septic systems.

Objectives

1. Support existing Tourist Commercial Areas.
2. Support the development of new Tourist Commercial Areas.
3. Minimize impact on the environment and surrounding land uses.

General Policies

1. Permitted uses on lands designated Tourist Commercial Areas include recreation and tourist facilities such as primary and secondary residences, campgrounds, cabins, cottages, hotel, motel, restaurant, pub, resort, store, gas station, gift shop, entertainment centre, bed and breakfast, ancillary recreation uses, as well as other accessory uses.



Rural Residential Lands

Rural Residential Lands are designated on Map No. 2. This land use designation predominately applies to smaller parcels less than 2.0 hectares in size. Certain parcels designated as Rural Residential are vacant or can be further subdivided. This land base is anticipated to fulfill the demand for Rural Residential growth over the next five years.

However, this land use designation also applies to a number of properties used for commercial or industrial activities. These activities and land uses are not considered incompatible with the Rural

Residential Lands designation in this OCP and will be recognized in the future zoning bylaw, subject to meeting other criteria in this OCP.

The 1.0 hectare minimum permitted parcel size is the smallest parcel generally allowed under current health regulations for parcels with on-site water source and septic disposal. It is not anticipated that community servicing will be extended to parcels in this designation. Should connections to community services be provided for health or environmental reasons, no additional development will be supported beyond what would be allowed without servicing.

Objectives

1. Preserve the semi-rural character of these neighbourhoods.
2. Protect the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources.
3. Support and encourage home based businesses on Rural Residential Lands.

General Policies

1. Despite the size of current lots in these areas, lands within this designation shall have a minimum permitted parcel size of 1.0 hectare.
2. The density of future residential development shall be 1 dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare. However, existing dwelling units may be recognized on certain parcels subject to the conditions outlined in the zoning bylaw and the criteria outlined in this OCP.
3. Permitted uses shall be residential uses, home based businesses, and accessory uses.



Rural Lands

Rural Lands are designated on Map No. 2. This land use designation applies to parcels greater than 2.0 hectares in size. In many cases, individuals have purchased these properties for the privacy, quiet and the quality of life perceived to be available in Electoral Area 'F'. However, this land use designation also applies to a number of properties used for commercial or industrial activities. These activities and land uses are not considered incompatible with the Rural Lands designation in this OCP and will be recognized in the future zoning bylaw, subject to meeting other criteria in this OCP.

Rural Lands are characterized by their suitability to accommodate unserviced rural residential activities. These parcels typically have an adequate water supply and wastewater can be treated and disposed of on-site through ground disposal septic systems. The expansion of community sewer, water and stormwater drainage services to Rural Lands is not anticipated in this Plan. Lands designated Rural Lands are illustrated on Map No. 2.

Objectives

1. Preserve the rural and residential character of these areas.
2. Protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater.
3. Minimize conflict between residential developments and agriculture, silviculture and aggregate extraction activities.
4. Support and encourage home based businesses on parcels within the Rural Lands designation.

General Policies

1. Despite the size of current lots in these areas, newly created lots within this designation shall have a minimum permitted parcel size of 2.0 hectares.
2. Permitted uses shall be rural uses, home based businesses, and accessory uses.
3. Residential development shall be permitted at a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare to a maximum of 2 dwelling units per parcel.
4. Additional existing dwelling units may be recognized on certain parcels subject to the conditions outlined in the zoning bylaw and the criteria outlined in this OCP.



Resource Lands

This designation applies to lands that are valued for agriculture, forestry, natural resource extraction or environmental conservation opportunities. This Plan designates as Resource Lands, lands located within the Agricultural Land Reserve, Forest Land Reserve, as well as Crown lands other than lands designated as Park Land. Lands designated Resource Lands are illustrated on Map No. 2.

It is recognized that there is a wide range of home based business activities occurring on ALR lands in Electoral Area 'F'. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall negotiate with the Agricultural Land Commission to obtain a General Order for Electoral Area 'F' to allow for an expanded definition of home based businesses beyond what is normally permitted by the ALC.

Objectives

1. Support the long-term viability of the natural resource land base and protect it from activities and land uses that may diminish its resource value and potential.
2. Ensure that resource operations comply with recognized standards and codes of practice and that unreasonable impacts on the natural environment are avoided.

General Policies

1. For properties within the ALR or FLR, the regulations and policies of the ALC and FLC apply. These properties may also be subject to other local government bylaws.
2. A 4.0-hectare minimum permitted parcel size for future subdivision shall apply to all lands designated Resource and currently situated in the ALR.
3. A 50.0-hectare minimum permitted lot size for future subdivision shall apply to all lands designated Resource and currently situated in the FLR or Crown lands.
4. Future residential development on Resource Lands shall be limited to one dwelling unit per parcel. Two dwelling units per parcel may be permitted where approval has been received from the ALC or FLC, if necessary, and subject to the zoning on the property.
5. Permitted uses shall be associated with those uses supported by the ALC and FLC, such as agriculture, forestry, primary processing and outdoor recreation uses, including campgrounds.
6. Where land is removed from the ALR or FLR, the Resource Lands designation shall remain and the permitted uses shall be limited to rural/resource activities as defined in the OCP and zoning.



Park Lands

Park Lands are those lands currently defined as: all provincial parks, community parks, lands restricted for park use by covenant, lands that have been donated to the Crown for park use, and licenses to occupy for park purposes held by the Regional District of Nanaimo. Lands designated as Park Lands are illustrated on Map No. 2. Section 6: Parks, Recreation and Trails of this Plan sets out additional objectives and policies for all lands within the Plan Area.

Objectives

1. Recognize the importance of regionally significant parks and natural features.
2. Enhance existing community parks, where justified.

General Policies

1. Although existing parks are included in the Park Land designation, future parks obtained through subdivision or other means are permitted in any land use designation.
2. Partnerships to benefit park lands and community facilities in the Plan Area with owners of lands designated Tourist Commercial Areas, private organizations, other levels of government and non-profit organizations will be encouraged.



Section 3: Natural Resources

The use of the lands for agriculture, forestry and aggregate extraction shapes the community's values and provides employment, recreational and economic benefits. These land uses are profiled below. 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.



Agriculture

Throughout the public consultation process, residents have expressed two goals for agriculture:

1. To ensure that residents and government understand that the terms 'agriculture' and 'rural' are not interchangeable. The former refers to a business, the latter to a chosen way of life. That is: Rural is a *lifestyle*...Agriculture is an essential *life support*.
2. To increase the local farmers' ability to provide the food supply to area residents. A target of 50% of the local market (from Nanoose Bay to Bowser) has been established.

The objectives and policies of this Plan are intended to support these goals and assist the agricultural industry in becoming increasingly profitable, competitive and economically viable.

Approximately 20 % of the Plan Area is designated as within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) under the provincial *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. This Plan recognizes the Agricultural Land Commission as the primary agency responsible for protecting the ALR and supports the mandate and regulations of the Agricultural Land Commission. Lands within the ALR are illustrated on Map No. 2.

Objectives

1. Protect the agricultural land base for present and future food production or other agricultural uses.
2. Encourage sustainable and environmentally sound farming practices.

General Policies

1. Encourage the involvement of the farm community in preparation of the OCP and zoning bylaws.
2. Improve access water for agriculture and to allow for adequate drainage of the land base.
3. Encourage soil conservation practices to reduce environmental impact on soils and watercourses.
4. Encourage compliance of Electoral Area 'F' farmers with *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* and the *Strengthening Farming in BC- A Guide to Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

Future Impact Policies

1. Future higher density and intensity land uses shall be directed to Village Centres and within the Rural Separation Boundaries to reduce development pressures on agricultural lands.



Forests

Forest lands in Electoral Area 'F' are predominately privately owned. These lands are subject to the *Forest Lands Reserve Act* and are designated as within the Forest Land Reserve (FLR). In addition, the Ministry of Forests has jurisdiction over land use in Provincial Forests and harvest on any Crown Lands. There are some parcels of land within the FLR that are Crown Land within the Provincial Forest. Use of these lands is regulated by the *Forest Practices Code of BC Act*. Harvesting on any Crown land requires authority from the Ministry under the *Forests Act* and Private Forest Lands Agreements. This Plan recognizes the jurisdiction of the Forest Land Commission (FLC) and supports the mandate and regulations of the FLC. Lands within the Forest Land Reserve are illustrated on Map No. 2.

Objectives

1. Recognize the economic importance of a sustainable forest industry to the Plan Area.
2. Support the public's use of forested lands for recreational enjoyment.
3. Minimize the impact of residential settlements on forested lands, and minimize the impact of forestry activities on residential settlements.

General Policies

1. FLR lands may only be used for uses specified under Section 13(2) of the *Forest Land Reserve Act*.

Future Impact Policies

1. All FLC application referrals received by the RDN shall be referred to the RDN Board for comment. The comments of the Board shall be forwarded to the FLC as part of the RDN's review.



Aggregates and Mineral Resources¹

The management of mineral resources falls primarily under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Energy and Mines. In addition, approval from the Agricultural Land Commission is required prior to conducting extraction activities pursuant to the *Soils Conservation Act* on ALR lands. However, processing activities are recognized as being subject to this OCP, zoning and other potential local government regulations.

The location of gravel resources shown on Map No. 5 is limited to existing, active gravel pit operations, which are known to provide some potential for future extraction activities.

Objectives

1. Protect known resources from development that would render the resource unviable or inaccessible.
2. Minimize the conflicts between extraction activities and adjacent land uses.

General Policies

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.05, adopted December 4, 2018

1. The Ministry of Energy and Mines shall be encouraged to consider this OCP and the zoning bylaw in its review of applications for permits, and to refer proposals for lands in Area 'F' to the RDN.
2. The Ministry shall be encouraged to make information available to residents and consider residents' comments prior to decision making on any application, and give consideration to the impact of the development on ground and surface water, other land uses, traffic, noise and visual intrusion.

Future Impact Policies²

1. Any sorting or processing of aggregates shall be subject to the policies of this OCP, shall only occur on an appropriately zoned site, and shall minimize potential adverse impacts on the community.

² Bylaw No 1152.05. adopted December 4, 2018



Section 4: The Natural Environment

Many residents of Electoral Area 'F' are drawn to the area for its green space, water resources and natural features. These features all contribute to the character and livability of the Plan Area. Throughout the public consultation process, residents emphasized the importance of protecting the natural environment, particularly from forms of land use and development that could impact the environmental well being of the Area.

It is recognized that certain matters are beyond the jurisdiction of the Regional District of Nanaimo. The Plan's objectives and policies relating to these matters are intended to serve as indicators of community preference, and to guide and assist senior levels of government in their planning and decision-making.



Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas are natural features in the Plan Area that are susceptible to damage from use or development. Sensitive areas include watercourses, wetlands, areas of rare plant species, woodlands, steep slopes and fish and wildlife habitats. Groundwater is also included as a feature sensitive to contamination, although the extent of groundwater resources is not fully mapped in the Plan Area. Archaeological sites, historic sites, wildlife areas and areas with scientific significance may also be considered as environmentally significant areas, but these sites and areas are not designated in this Plan. In addition, no lands subject to hazardous conditions have been identified within the Plan Area.

In this Official Community Plan, individual and community stewardship are emphasised as the primary means of protecting environmentally sensitive areas. That is, residents in the Plan Area accept the responsibility of protecting natural features through personal and community efforts.

Objectives

1. Protect the natural environment.
2. Encourage and support community stewardship of environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Promote soil conservation.
4. Manage development to minimize the potential for personal injury or loss of property.

General Policies

1. Support economic activities that are compatible with the rural nature of Electoral Area 'F' (e.g. fisheries, forestry, agriculture and eco-tourism).
2. Support tourism and recreation with an interconnected system of parks and trails.
3. Support the provision of setbacks, screening, vegetative buffers and berms to separate developed lands from natural features.
4. Encourage senior governments to consider wildlife habitat and important corridors and linkages in development approvals beyond the jurisdiction of the RDN.
5. Discourage the filling and draining of wetlands.
6. Encourage safe storage of industrial equipment, materials and chemicals.



Surface and Groundwater Systems

The watersheds in the in Area 'F' are a short run distance from the mountain to the sea (average distance less than 20 kilometres) and steep grades carry water rapidly to the Georgia Strait. Activities such as land clearing, development, hard surfacing, clear cut logging ditching for roads and draining wetlands increases the intensity of this run-off water. Recharge areas, such as wetlands, are also impacted by development. As recharge areas are eliminated (that is, as wetlands are filled in or water is diverted), water production from local wells can be reduced. This can lead to a lower volume of clean, uncontaminated water in summer months or dry periods throughout the year.

Groundwater resources can be contaminated by heavy runoff, failed or improperly maintained septic systems, agricultural operations, chemicals from commercial or industrial operations, and other non-point sources. The siting of higher density residential and industrial development in areas sensitive to contamination should only proceed with wastewater treatment mitigation.

Any deterioration to the natural supply of clean, fresh water will have a detrimental effect on residential well water, tourism, agriculture, commercial and recreational fishing, indigenous fish species reproduction, shellfish harvesting and other water related activities. Land use and development must be carefully planned to minimize impacts on groundwater and maintain the quality and quantity of surface water in Electoral Area 'F'.

Objectives

1. Preserve and protect water quality and quantity.
2. Encourage the RDN to improve mapping of watercourses and wetlands.

General Policies

1. Storm water management through the use and construction of settlement ponds, structured wetlands, dugouts and other measures is supported.
2. The restoration of streams, rivers, wetlands and adjacent riparian areas through stream protection and repair programs is encouraged in this Plan.
3. Measures to minimize human or animal waste, pesticides, herbicides, chemicals or industrial waste from adversely effecting water quality are supported.
4. Road construction through environmentally sensitive areas is discouraged.
5. The relocation of natural watercourses shall not be supported by this Plan.
6. The protection of environmentally sensitive areas shall be supported through the following means:
 - a. Dedication or purchase of environmental sensitive areas by the RDN;
 - b. Dedication or purchase by a private land trust or nature conservatory for conservation purposes;
 - c. Registration of a restrictive covenant for conservation purposes with the RDN, the province, and/or a non-governmental organization eligible to hold conservation covenants; and
 - d. Creative development proposals, which enhance watercourse protection.

Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area¹

The Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area is designated on Map No. 3 of this Official Community Plan, and applies to the riparian assessment areas of mapped and unmapped streams subject to the Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) of the Riparian Areas Protection Act, as well as all other mapped lakes, wetlands, ponds and watercourses not subject to the RAR. The zoning bylaw sets out the guidelines of the Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area.

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.05, adopted December 4, 2018

² Bylaw No. 1152.03 adopted January 23, 2007



Section 5: Business and Economy

Compatibility between the type and scale of economic activities and the rural nature of the Plan Area is one of the primary issues in this Official Community Plan.

The majority of existing commercial and industrial uses are located within Village Centres and Rural Separation Boundaries. There are also existing commercial and industrial developments scattered throughout the more residential neighbourhoods in the Plan Area. Many of these uses are fully compatible with the surrounding neighbourhoods and will be recognized in the zoning bylaw. However, there are also certain activities that do have an impact on surrounding properties and may not meet the zoning criteria outlined in this OCP. This OCP encourages these activities to consider relocation to designated commercial or industrial areas, therefore lessening the impact of the business on nearby residential or rural properties and potentially contributing to the economic viability of the business through the availability of community servicing.

While there is no record of the number of home based businesses in the Plan Area, public consultation would indicate that it is a common and community-supported use of property. This OCP **fully** supports existing and future home based businesses. The future zoning bylaw will allow for a broad definition of home based business to include uses that could occur both within the residence and in accessory buildings. This OCP also recognizes that residents are opposed to any form of business licensing.

Objectives

1. Accommodate existing businesses and encourage home based businesses through supportive land use designations and zoning.
2. Encourage businesses to use local people, products and markets.
3. Ensure businesses in the Area meet current standards of 'good business' by conforming to existing legislation for health, highways, waste management and environmental codes.
4. Minimize 'red tape' and regulations on businesses.
5. Balance economic activity with the preservation of the rural nature of Electoral Area 'F'.

General Policies¹

1. The future zoning bylaw will provide for higher density development and commercial and industrial zones within the Village Centres and Rural Separation Boundaries as designated on Map No. 2.
2. The use of buffers or setbacks to separate adjacent and incompatible land uses is supported.
3. The recognition and implementation of BC Fire Codes is supported.

Future Impact Policies

1. New commercial and industrial development (beyond the scale of a home based business) shall be directed to appropriately designated lands within the Village Centres and Rural Separation Boundaries.

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.05, adopted December 4, 2018



Section 6: Parks, Trails and Recreation

The varied natural environment of Electoral Area 'F' offers tremendous scenic, habitat and recreation resources. The Area contains several significant parks, such as Little Qualicum Falls and Englishman River Falls, as well as approximately 15 smaller community parks. Formal and informal trails (used for hiking, horseback riding and cycling) located along gazetted or dedicated rights-of-way and through park corridors are also found in the Plan Area. In addition, there are unofficial trails over private FLR lands. Lands designated as Park Lands are illustrated on Map No. 4.

Objectives

1. Preserve existing green space and parks to benefit local residents, tourism and wildlife.
2. Ensure that park-related policies and implementation measures include consultation with the Advisory Planning Commission and the residents, landowners and stakeholders of Area 'F'.
3. Encourage the preservation and construction of multi use trails to connect parks and green spaces.
4. Encourage public/private partnerships or private interests to provide recreation services.
5. Encourage School District No. 69 to consult with the community on the use of current and future school facilities in the Plan Area for public and recreational use.
6. Recognize that natural resource development must be considered in the designation of future parks.

General Policies

1. Develop a Master Parks Plan for Electoral Area 'F' to identify the types of park land desired by residents, identify significant sites for proposed parks, trails and recreation areas and to promote the integration of a parks and trail system into other recreational opportunities in the RDN.
2. Encourage the community to consult with land owners on community access to private forested lands.
3. Preserve Arrowsmith Trail (old CPR Trail) near Cameron Lake.
4. Support the retention of Crown land parcels for recreation and environmental protection.
5. Encourage a trail network connecting the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District and the RDN.
6. Ensure consultation takes place with affected landowners in the development of trails and open spaces and consider appropriate buffering to prevent negative impacts on adjoining lands.

Future Impact Policies

1. At the time of subdivision or development of land, the Regional District shall, in accordance with the policies of this Plan and at the direction of the Electoral Area 'F' Parks Master Plan, determine whether the applicant of the land being developed shall:
 - a) Provide, without compensation, park land equivalent to 5% and school land equivalent to 5%; OR
 - b) Pay to the RDN cash in lieu of park land dedication and cash in-lieu-of school land dedication in an amount equal to the market value of the land to be determined pursuant to RDN policy; OR
 - c) Provide a combination of land and cash in-lieu-of to the satisfaction of the Regional Board.
2. Where a site is determined by the Regional District to be acceptable for park purposes and the land has been determined not to be suitable for school site purpose, the Regional District may require a maximum of 10% of the land area of the property being subdivided for community park purposes

pursuant to the **Municipal Act** and the School Sites Acquisition Agreement between the Regional District of Nanaimo and School District No. 69.

3. Where cash in-lieu-of park land is received as a result of development in the Plan Area, this cash shall be reserved for future park land acquisition in suitable locations in the Plan Area.
4. Parks and trails resulting from future subdivision, acquisition or donation shall be permitted in any land use designation or zone.
5. The future donation of private lands (full or partial title), and/or the protection of lands through restrictive covenants are encouraged.



Section 7: Infrastructure, Transportation & Utilities

This section establishes strategies for Transportation, Schools, Community Facilities, Community Sewer Services, Community Water Services, and Community Storm Drainage Services.

Currently, the Ministry of Transportation and Highways is responsible for public roads and drainage in the Plan Area. School District No. 69 has jurisdiction over providing public education to residents. Private, charitable non-profit groups, societies and agencies provide community facilities. The RDN provides local government services and facilities such as the Church Road Transfer Station. Part of the City of Parksville's community water system and several private water utilities are also located in the Area.

It is recognized that certain matters are beyond the jurisdiction of the RDN. The Plan's objectives and policies relating to these matters are intended to serve as indicators of community preference to help guide senior levels of governments in their own planning and decision-making.



Transportation

A safe and efficient road network is important to the community in Electoral Area 'F'. Given the dispersed residential development pattern, the rural nature of the Plan Area and the need to travel extensive distances to obtain goods and services, the private automobile will remain the primary mode of travel for residents. Provisions should also be made for non-automobile alternatives such as pedestrian, equestrian and cycling links through the Plan Area.

Highways 4, 4A and the Inland Island Highway are the major transportation routes through the Plan Area. The remaining roads in Electoral Area 'F' are characterized by a standard to narrow road surface with no provisions for pedestrian or bicycle travel.

Currently, transit service is not available in the Plan Area. Pursuant to the Regional District of Nanaimo's Transit Plan, should population and potential use levels increase in the Plan Area, transit services could be considered first for the Village Centres then for outlying points.

This Plan recognizes and supports the recent Vancouver Island Highway Agreement, developed in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and the province.

As the road authority, the Ministry of Transportation and Highways has designated existing roads and the approximate location of proposed major roads, as illustrated on Map No. 5. It is not anticipated that any major public roads will be constructed during the next 5-year period.

Objectives

1. Support the Ministry of Transportation and Highways development a safe and efficient road network.
2. Promote safe pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle travel as alternatives to automobile travel.
3. Consider the provision of transit services to the Plan Area when necessary and appropriate.

General Policies

1. The Ministry of Transportation and Highways Network Plan shall be encouraged to note that residents in the Bellevue Road area have expressed concerns with the possible extension of Bellevue road due to potential traffic volumes, impact on rural lifestyles, and issues concerning the extension of a road through Little Mountain and Morison Creek Regional Parks.
2. The RDN supports the management of activities along the new Inland Island Highway to protect the integrity of the corridor through the Vancouver Island Highways Master Implementation Agreement signed with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways.

Future Impact Policies

1. The Ministry of Transportation and Highways shall be encouraged to consider signage on road rights-of-way to identify businesses, Tourist Commercial uses, and individual agricultural enterprises.
2. The Ministry shall be encouraged to consider providing pathways for the safe and convenient use by pedestrians, horseback riders and cyclists when planning for any new road development.



Schools

There are four schools in Electoral Area 'F', two under the jurisdiction of School District No. 69 and two private schools: the Errington Elementary School, the French Creek Elementary School, the Morning Glory School, and the Seventh Day Adventist School. The School District is also developing a new school site at the intersection of Grafton Road and Fairdowne Road. A school site has also been designated on Corcan Road in Qualicum River Estates. Public school facilities are available outside the Plan Area for students attending higher grade levels.

Objectives

1. Cooperate with School District No. 69 in planning for the current and future needs of the community.
2. Initiate discussions with School District No. 69 on the future use of the Errington Elementary School.

General Policies

1. The development of new school and educational facilities on lands within the Village Centres and Rural Separation Boundaries shall be supported.
2. The broader use of school facilities by the community shall be encouraged. The use of schools for community centres, evening events, continuing education and community recreation shall be investigated in partnership with School District No. 69.
3. School site and parks planning shall continue to be coordinated through signed agreements.
4. Industrial land use designations on properties adjacent to school sites is not supported.

Future Impact Policies

1. All subdivision of land shall comply with the school site acquisition requirements pursuant to the *Municipal Act*. Where there is an agreement between the School District and the Regional District, and lands are being proposed for subdivision, provisions outlined the Future Impact Policies in Section 6: Parks Trails and Recreation shall apply.



Community Facilities

Community and institutional facilities in Electoral Area 'F' are found throughout the Plan Area. There are three churches, the Mid Island Pensioners and Hobbyist Association/Bradley Centre, the Errington War Memorial Hall, the Coombs/Hilliers Recreation Organization Rodeo Grounds, the Arrowsmith Agricultural Association Fairgrounds, and four firehalls. Private, charitable non-profit groups, societies and agencies provide and maintain these community facilities. Community facilities are illustrated on Map No. 4.

Objectives

1. Encourage community use and support of community facilities.
2. Encourage the innovative use of available resources to improve facilities.
3. Support the establishment of future community facilities on lands within the Village Centres and Rural Separation Boundaries.
4. Support local fire departments and recognize their importance to the community.

General Policies

1. The innovative siting of community services is encouraged. For example, the use of school sites for water storage facilities, benefiting both the local community and the schools, shall be supported.



Community Water and Sewer Services

The designation of Rural Separation Boundaries and Village Centres enables the possible provision of water and sewer services to properties within these designated areas. While no community water and sewer services are currently available to lands within the Village Centres or Boundaries, the future provision of community water and sewer services to these areas is supported in principle.

The provision and timing of water and sewer services will depend on a number of factors, such as the feasibility of servicing, the cost of servicing, and the outcome of the village planning processes. No expansion of services to the Village Centres and Rural Separation Boundaries has been scheduled or proposed as part of the RDN capital works program.

The cost of community water and sewer services will be on a user pay basis. That is, only those benefiting from the service will be required to pay for the service. It is anticipated that the cost of community water and sewer systems will be funded through connection charges and user fees on a proportional per lot basis. The Community Sewer Service Areas and Community Water Service Areas are designated on Map No. 6.

Objectives

1. Minimize the cost of community services to residents through efficient management.
2. Minimize the impact on the natural environment during service extension and construction.
3. Ensure community service extension does not compromise rural character.
4. Ensure community services are planned for designated growth areas in the community and for those areas in need due to environmental or public health concerns.
5. Support the right of all residents to potable water.

General Policies

1. The use of pump and haul services for wastewater removal will only be supported if an existing system has failed and there is no other means of resolving the treatment problem on site.
2. The consideration of package treatment plants for existing development to address health or environmental issues is encouraged.
3. The location of the community service infrastructure shall be sited to avoid the disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas and to pose no negative impact on the environment.

Future Impact Policies

1. The RDN shall recommend that the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks review all waste management permit applications which propose to use innovative package treatment plants to facilitate additional development if the land is located within a Community Sewer Service Area.
2. The RDN shall recommend to the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks that no new private water utilities be approved to facilitate the development of land.
3. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans shall be consulted before approving the location of infrastructure in proximity to fisheries sensitive areas, to assist in mitigating any negative impact on fish and habitats.
4. The Ministry of Environment, Land and Parks and the Central Vancouver Island Health Region shall be encouraged to expand approved sewage treatment methods to include non-polluting or innovative technologies, such as those that minimize water consumption.
5. Prior to approvals being given for development within parcels with multi-lot or phased development potential, applicants shall be required to grant a blanket easement for the extension of community sewer services to the areas indicated in the Community Sewer Service Area unless otherwise provided by statutory rights-of-way or conveyance to the RDN.



Community Storm Drainage Service

The Ministry of Transportation and Highways is currently responsible for ensuring adequate drainage for public roads. The Ministry also approves drainage plans for the development and subdivision of land. The RDN has recently obtained the authority to establish drainage service areas. While no local storm drainage service areas have been established in Electoral Area 'F' by the RDN, flexible storm drainage standards that are cost efficient and minimize impact on the environment are favoured.

Objectives

1. Identify priority areas for developing specific storm water management strategies.
2. Produce an updated and verifiable map of aquifers and recharge areas.

General Policies

1. Storm drainage standards for land within Rural Separation Boundaries shall be investigated.
2. Landowners are encouraged to be accountable for drainage on their own and neighbouring properties.
3. Water conservation through the catchment of water is supported.

Future Impact Policies

1. Proposals for new development and road construction must consider storm water management to ensure that lands are not negatively impacted by the development or road construction.
2. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will be consulted where new drainage facilities may impact fisheries-sensitive watercourses.
3. The province shall be encouraged to develop an accessible topographical map of drainage systems.

Appendix A1^{1 2}

Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area

1.0 PURPOSE

The Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area is designated a development permit area for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity, and protection of development from hazardous conditions pursuant to Section 488(1)(a) and (b) of the *Local Government Act*.

2.0 AREA

The Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 3, and applies to the riparian assessment areas of mapped and unmapped streams subject to the *Riparian Areas Regulation* (RAR) of the *Riparian Areas Protection Act*, as well as all other mapped lakes, wetlands, ponds and watercourses not subject to the RAR. Specifically, the Development Permit Area is defined as follows:

1. All mapped and unmapped riparian assessment areas as defined in the RAR as follows:
 - a) for a stream, a 30 metre strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark;
 - b) for a ravine less than 60 metres wide, a strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark to a point that is 30 metres beyond the top of the ravine bank; and
 - c) for a ravine 60 metres wide or greater, a strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark to a point that is 10 metres beyond the top of the ravine bank.
2. All mapped watercourses, lakes, wetlands, and ponds, that are not subject to the RAR; 15 metres as measured from the natural boundary or top of ravine bank, whichever is greater. This includes estuarine areas (areas of tidal influence) of all watercourses and streams. For clarity, in estuarine areas the Marine Coast Development Permit Area also applies.

The following definitions are used for the purpose of defining the development permit area as above:

'ravine' means a narrow, steep-sided valley that is commonly eroded by running water and has a slope grade greater than 3:1.

'stream' includes any of the following that provides fish habitat:

- a) a watercourse, whether it usually contains water or not;
- b) a pond, lake, river, creek or brook; and
- c) a ditch, spring or wetland that is connected by surface flow to something referred to in paragraph a) or b).

'top of the ravine bank' means the first significant break in a ravine slope where the break occurs such that the grade beyond the break is flatter than 3:1 for a minimum distance of 15 metres measured perpendicularly from the break, and the break does not include a bench within the ravine that could be developed.

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.03 adopted January 23, 2007

² Bylaw No. 1152.05 adopted December 4, 2018

3.0 JUSTIFICATION

Freshwater and riparian ecosystems perform a number of valuable services to humans, plants and animals alike. They support a diversity of plants and animals, provide important refuges and migration routes for birds and wildlife, and support fish life processes. Vegetation in riparian areas moderates the volume and rate of water flowing through the watershed contributing to effective rainwater management and stabilizes stream banks by holding soil in place. Plant root systems enhance the soil's ability to absorb water by making it more porous. This allows water to be stored and released slowly into the watercourse, reducing erosion and flooding. Soils also filter impurities and sediment from runoff water, improving water quality in the stream channel.

Riparian vegetation provides food and shelter for fish. Shade from trees within the riparian area regulates water temperatures within the stream, which is critical for salmon, trout and other fish species that need cool water to survive. Logs and other woody debris fall into streams from the riparian area, influencing stream channel morphology, dissipating the stream's natural erosive energy and providing habitat for a diverse range of species. Erosion of banks and steep slopes can also pose a hazard to development, and maintaining and enhancing natural features and vegetation and siting buildings and structure appropriately, can reduce this hazard.

Land use practices including land clearing, road building, construction of buildings and structures, and location of wastewater disposal systems in or near riparian areas can jeopardize these habitats and water quality. Protection of riparian vegetation and watercourses is therefore necessary to protect the natural environment, ecosystems and biological diversity of the Plan Area. Land use practices can also change the hydraulic flow of a stream and create or exacerbate a flooding hazard.

Furthermore, the Province of British Columbia's *Riparian Areas Protection Act*, requires that local governments establish regulations to protect riparian areas, and not allow development to proceed until the requirements of the RAR are met.

The objectives of this development permit area are:

1. To protect freshwater ecosystems to maintain their natural habitat and environmental quality.
2. To restore freshwater ecosystems to improve their natural habitat and environmental and hazard mitigation quality if they have been previously degraded.
3. To protect riparian areas from development so that the areas can provide natural features, functions and conditions that support fish life processes.
4. To protect development from flood and slope hazard.



Section 8: Climate Change and Energy¹

Bill 27, enacted by the Government of British Columbia (Province) in 2008, requires official community plans (OCPs) to address how the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) will provide direction and take action to reduce GHG emissions in its electoral areas. Specifically, OCPs must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases and policies and actions with respect to achieving those targets.

The Province has set a target to reduce GHG emissions to 33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The amount of GHG emitted is influenced by many factors. The RDN can directly and indirectly influence the level of emissions generated due to land use patterns, housing form, transportation systems, construction standards, and landfill operations. The RDN can also be instrumental in:

- Recognizing the role sustainable forestry practices play in offsetting GHG emissions by storing carbon;
- Helping to slow global warming and supporting adaptation to the impacts of climate change by protecting the health of ecosystems; and
- Promoting and supporting the use of renewable energy and district energy systems.

Energy consumption is strongly influenced by land use patterns, density and mobility choices. Subdivision design, site planning, building design, and construction technologies are also significant factors in the amount of energy consumed. Reducing energy consumption means building compact, complete communities that are not auto-dependent, increasing the number of multi-unit dwellings, supporting (near) net-zero building design and construction, and supporting the use of renewable energy and district energy systems.

The RDN is in the process of preparing a Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP) that will provide a framework for reducing energy consumption and GHG emissions within the region and establish specific targets for the reduction of emissions in specific areas - for example, building construction, transportation, and energy source. This information will be used to help develop more detailed area specific targets, policies and actions to be included in this Plan.

It is also important to plan for adaptation to the potential impacts of climate change. In particular, OCPs may include policies that address the need to adapt to potential sea level rise, water deficits, flooding, and wildfires, etc.

Policy Target

Support Province targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 33% below 2007 levels by 2020, and 80% below 2007 levels by 2050.

Policies

1. **Growth Management** - Encourage population growth within village centres to reduce transportation based greenhouse gas emissions.

Encouraging the majority of growth in village centres helps to facilitate more people living close to existing services, which decreases their need to drive. Designated growth areas coupled with policies

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.04 adopted May 25, 2010

to increase population densities in areas with improved services should decrease transportation related emissions, which are the largest source of emissions in the region.

Actions

- Support redevelopment in village centres which will result in higher densities and a greater mix of uses;
- Support changes to the Urban Containment Boundary only if the result is a decrease in GHG emissions.

2. Compact Communities - Support neighbourhood form that provides opportunities for energy efficient modes of transportation such as walking, cycling or public transit.

When dwellings are located close to shopping, work and leisure activities residents are less reliant on driving. Higher population densities within existing communities can also support both improved public and commercial services within walking distance of residences.

Actions

- Support a variety of housing types within village centres;
- Support a mix of land uses that will contribute to having more complete and compact communities;
- Support the establishment of commercial or retail services in village centres that will provide for the needs of the residents in the village centre and in the immediate surrounding area;
- For development proposals within village centres consider how land use and transportation can be coordinated.

3. Buildings and Energy – Encourage the incorporation of green building features into the siting and construction of buildings.

Compact communities include more energy efficient forms of housing. By sharing walls, attached dwellings require less energy for space heating, the largest household energy expenditure. Specific green building features should be incorporated in the siting or design of buildings to make them more energy efficient and also make use of renewable energy sources.

Actions

- Consider green building features as a community amenity for zoning amendments consistent with this plan;
- Review the site layout in zoning amendments to consider how buildings may use energy more efficiently;
- Consider partnerships with the private sector for green building demonstration projects;
- Support the development and use of locally produced renewable energy.

4. Forest Land and Carbon Sinks - Recognize the importance of natural areas for carbon absorption and develop tools to encourage development in existing developed areas as a means to redirect development away from greenfield sites.

Plants, and in fact all living biodiversity within natural areas capture and store carbon from the atmosphere. A growing forest is a carbon sink capable of absorbing emissions from other sources such as transportation and settlement. But these areas are threatened by land use change and deforestation. The RDN should develop tools and incentives to encourage development in existing developed areas as a means to redirect development away from greenfield sites.

Actions

- Develop tools and incentives to facilitate the encouragement of the redirection of development from greenfield sites to village centres;
- Develop tools and incentives to encourage the retention of trees and vegetation on private property.

5. Food Production – *Support efforts to maintain a sustainable locally produced source of food.*

Escalating costs, competition with cheap imported foods and cumbersome regulations on operations have all diminished local agriculture and the ability of farmers to maintain viable farms. Support for local agriculture will cut the number of commercial vehicles transporting food into the region and provide the security to local farmers to adopt more sustainable practices.

Actions

- Review the zoning bylaw to reduce obstacles to maintaining efficient farming operations, agricultural processing or compatible land uses;
- Support the provision of services and infrastructure necessary to the efficient and sustainable farming operations;
- Support the development and provision of resources to support agricultural sales;
- Encourage the retention of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve and other productive farm lands.

6. Transportation and Infrastructure – *Promote private and public infrastructure that may use energy more efficiently.*

Infrastructure and services provided in compact complete communities provides opportunities for personal and institutional choices that conserve energy. Efficient use of infrastructure may reduce transportation related emissions through integrating active transportation with existing road networks or it may reclaim energy resources from waste streams to service public and private facilities.

Actions

- Provide trails and pathways that are functional and support efficient pedestrian movement;
 - Support transit and transportation alternatives that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Recover energy and materials from both public and private sector waste streams that may be used to service communities or facilities.



Section 9: Implementation¹

The Electoral Area 'F' Official Community Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Act*. The objectives and policies of this Plan are reflected in land use designations, illustrated on Map No. 2.

All proposed changes to this Official Community Plan must follow the amendment procedures pursuant to the *Municipal Act*. In addition, any proposed changes will be referred to the attention of the Electoral Area 'F' Advisory Planning Commission and advertised to allow the residents, landowners and stakeholders of Electoral Area 'F' to provide comment.

The Electoral Area 'F' Official Community Plan is intended to be implemented through a variety of measures, ranging from the creation of new bylaws, improved communication with senior levels of government and the direct involvement of residents, landowners and stakeholders through advisory and citizen committees. Certain measures are to be implemented immediately; others may require months or years to be completed. Some implementation measures, such as increased education on Plan matters, are intended to be ongoing.

The RDN is not the only party responsible for the implementation of this Plan. Certain issues are fully under the jurisdiction of senior levels of government and any actions must be initiated and implemented by the relevant agency. Other measures will be implemented by the residents of Electoral Area 'F'. Business interests and private individuals also play a role in implementing the objectives and policies of this Official Community Plan.

The following chart outlines key implementation actions and the responsible party or parties for each action. **Senior government** refers to provincial or federal agencies with interests and jurisdiction in the Plan Area. **RDN** refers to the Regional District of Nanaimo Board and all departments within the Regional District of Nanaimo. **Community** refers to the residents, landowners and stakeholders of Electoral Area 'F'.

The timing of implementation actions is broken down into four categories:

1. Immediate (to be initiated in 1999);
2. Short term (to be completed within 5 years, prior to the next scheduled review of this OCP);
3. Long term (to be completed over 10 to 20 years); and
4. Ongoing (to be initiated in the short term with no planned date of completion).

The following outlines the implementation strategy for this Official Community Plan:

¹ Bylaw No. 1152.04 adopted May 25, 2010

Implementation Actions	Timing	Responsibility and involvement of:		
		Senior Gov't	RDN	Community
Creation of a zoning bylaw	Immediate		4	4
Adoption of a zoning bylaw	Immediate	4	4	
Creation of subdivision standards	Immediate	4	4	
Adoption of subdivision standards	Immediate		4	
Appointment of the Electoral Area 'F' Advisory Planning Commission	Immediate		4	4
Creation of a village centre plans	Short term		4	4
Investigation of servicing requirements and design of community services infrastructure for the Rural Separation Boundaries	Short term	4	4	4
Improved signage for business, tourism uses and agriculture on public rights-of-way	Short term	4		4
Update cadastral maps to show streams and wetlands	Short term		4	
Investigate incentives to relocate existing high impact businesses to lands with an appropriate commercial/industrial land use designation	Short term		4	4
Create a Master Parks Plan for Area 'F'	Short term		4	4
Initiate discussions with School District No. 69 about the future of Errington School and the possibility of locating community fire fighting equipment on school sites.	Short term	4	4	4
Initiate discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways on residents' concerns regarding Bellevue Road and consideration for future trail opportunities along existing, undeveloped and proposed road rights-of-way.	Short term	4	4	4
Community education on land use in environmentally sensitive areas	Ongoing	4	4	4