



## 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 environment<sup>1</sup>.

*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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2, 3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Bylaw No. 1152.05, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>3</sup> 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.