

4.0 - Creating Complete Nodal Communities

In recognition of the community's values of managing growth and change within the Plan Area, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan identifies two areas where growth will be encouraged to create more complete communities. The neighbourhood centre at Wembley Mall and the French Creek Mixed Use Area have been primarily recognized, due to the existing zoning status of private lands at these locations and the ability of the remaining developable lands to receive new growth. This growth is intended to be directed away from rural lands and established neighbourhoods in order to protect the remaining rural integrity of the Plan Area.

The Plan includes policies to guide development within these areas to ensure that it is compatible with existing development and sensitive to the character and proximity of surrounding neighbourhoods and land uses, both in the Plan Area and the adjacent municipalities.

4.1 Wembley Neighbourhood Centre

The Wembley Neighbourhood Centre is adjacent to the Wembley Mall shopping centre. This area is currently characterized as a neighbourhood centre or urban node with a concentrated level of activity focusing on a mix of housing types and retail facilities and services accessed by residents housed in surrounding residential subdivisions situated both in the Plan Area and the City of Parksville. This area is recognized as being attractive for a mix of future residential and neighbourhood commercial developments due to the remaining undeveloped lands which are in close proximity to a range of commercial services located in the City of Parksville.

The majority of the nodal area, including the Wembley Mall Shopping Centre, is located in the City of Parksville and has been designated for expanded retail and service uses as well as for multi-residential housing by the City. As these uses are planned to be further developed at the boundary of the Plan Area by the City, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan has considered and planned for uses which will create a more complete nodal centre for residents and recognize and implement the nodal development and servicing policies of the Regional Growth Strategy on those lands within this centre.

The anticipated development of the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre may occur over a long period of time and will also be driven by development within the City of Parksville. However, it is important to establish objectives and policies, as part of this Plan, which reflects the values of Electoral Area 'G' residents to ensure that the relationship and influence of the Centre on existing neighbourhoods and residents is considered. The Centre will remain as one of the primary focal points of the Plan Area.

This section of the Plan presents the objectives and policies for the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre.

Objectives:

1. Recognize the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre as a nodal development area and provide for the changing housing and local commercial needs of the population.
2. Amend the boundaries of the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre to fit the anticipated range of housing options supported by this Plan (requires Regional Growth Strategy Amendment).

3. Establish limits to the size of the Neighbourhood Centre, as it relates to lands within the Plan Area, by restricting the density and height of residential development for the benefit of form, character, and servicing efficiency.
4. Require the design and installation of efficient community water and community sewer servicing systems within the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre in order to facilitate the densities supported by this designation.
5. Encourage development that is compatible with adjoining neighbourhoods and development on lands within the City of Parksville.
6. Require safe pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the Neighbourhood Centre.

Policies:

1. The Wembley Neighbourhood Centre land use designation is shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations).
2. This Official Community Plan recognizes that the Urban Containment Boundary amendment proposed for Wembley Neighbourhood Centre (as shown on Map No.3 Inset) will come into effect only following an amendment to the Urban Containment Boundary and the Regional Growth Strategy.
3. The community strongly supports the completion of the Church Road to Stanhope Road connector as a major network road. Therefore, the proposed Urban Containment Boundary amendment for Wembley Neighbourhood Centre shall only be supported if the Church Road to Stanhope Road connector is complete.
4. The Plan recognizes the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre as an urban node, which consists of the Wembley Mall shopping centre and its peripheral residential area, including areas within the Plan Area and within the City of Parksville. The comprehensive development of land in this Centre will be coordinated with the City of Parksville in order to ensure compatibility with development guidelines and servicing approaches for adjoining areas, which are oriented to this Centre.
5. The densities supported by this designation are subject to the provision of community water and community sewer. Without these services, the densities supported by this designation are not supported. Provision of community water and sewer servicing must be in accordance with the policies in Section 7.3 and 7.4 of this Plan.
6. Applications to rezone lands to increase the density within the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre must take into consideration the impacts of additional traffic on the surrounding community, which may trigger the requirement for roadway improvements, including, but not necessarily limited to, those identified on Map No. 8 – Mobility Options and Road Network Plan as approved by the Ministry of Transportation.
7. Provided that the parcel coverage does not exceed a maximum of 35% and a minimum of 20% green space is provided, the base density for lands within the Wembley Neighbourhood designation shall be 20 dwelling units per hectare. However, this Plan

- supports the retention of parcels within the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre that have existing zoning that permits densities higher than 20 dwelling units per hectare.
8. Notwithstanding Policy 7 above for lands within the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre designation, a bonus density may be considered through rezoning to a comprehensive development zone as follows:
 - a. Up to an additional 20 units per hectare may be considered where at least 30% of the proposed development is multi-residential and at least 25% of the land area is maintained as green space and a public amenity acceptable to the Regional District of Nanaimo is provided, or
 - b. Up to an additional 25 units per hectare may be considered where at least 40% of the proposed development is multi-residential and at least 30% of the land area is maintained as green space and a public amenity acceptable to the Regional District of Nanaimo is provided, or,
 - c. Up to an additional 30 units per hectare may be considered where a comprehensive mixed residential development concept is proposed and must include, but is not limited to two or more of the following housing types and options: detached single residential, town homes, cluster housing, flex housing, low cost housing, seniors care, apartments, and secondary suites and at least 35% of the site area must be maintained for green space and a public amenity acceptable to the Regional District of Nanaimo is provided, and
 9. In reviewing applications for rezoning to permit bonus density as described above, the Regional District of Nanaimo, in addition to requiring green space shall require community amenities as outlined in Section 11 of this Plan.
 10. Servicing infrastructure shall be designed to be consistent with the projected build out of the 'Wembley Neighbourhood Centre' and shall be capable of being integrated with and compatible with the standards of the City of Parksville and/or the Town of Qualicum Beach.
 11. Clustering residential development in the 'Wembley Neighbourhood Centre' to increase space allotted to community park land, open space and pedestrian linkages shall be supported.
 12. The creation of design guidelines for the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre is supported in cooperation with Plan Area residents and the City of Parksville.
 13. Where a property within the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre is rezoned to permit multi-residential or commercial use, it shall be included in Wembley Neighbourhood Centre Form and Character Development Permit Area as defined by Section 10 of this Plan.
 14. Applications to amend the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw for development within the 'Wembley Neighbourhood Centre' shall be reviewed concurrently with a development permit application.

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15. Rezoning applications within the 'Wembley Neighbourhood Centre' shall be referred to the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach for comments and may require a review of municipal implications, if applicable.
 16. Rezoning to accommodate professional services, home based business uses beyond what the current zoning bylaw permits, and neighbourhood commercial (i.e. convenience store) may be considered where the proposed development meets the following criteria:
 - a. The proposed use is compatible with the surrounding use(s);
 - b. The proposed development is landscaped to provide visual separation and improve the aesthetic appearance of the subject property;
 - c. Parking must be located on site to the rear or side of the proposed development;
 - d. The property must be serviced with community water and community sewer;
 - e. The commercial floor area in each building shall not exceed 200 m²;
 - f. Parcel coverage in excess of 40% shall not be supported; and,
 - g. Neighbourhood commercial shall be restricted to one storey not exceeding 8.0 metres in height, however; a second storey may be supported to accommodate a residential use and in such cases, the height may be increased to 10.0 metres.
 17. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall refer all rezoning applications to the appropriate community water service provider for comments and discussion.

Advocacy Policies:

18. The Ministry of Transportation, when considering subdivision applications is encouraged to require the desirable roadway improvements as identified on Map No. 8 (Mobility Options and Road Network Plan) of this Plan.

Community water service provider(s) in cooperation with the Regional District of Nanaimo are encouraged to develop a water resource management Plan in order to project the current and future water supply and demand.

4.2 French Creek Mixed Use Area

This Plan envisions that the French Creek Harbour will continue to be the focal point of the community of French Creek. The lands surrounding the French Creek Harbour contain a variety of historic complimentary land uses including single residential, commercial, multi-residential, and institutional, which when combined provide an opportunity for a limited amount of local services within a reasonable walking distance to serve the needs of the Community.

One of the major challenges faced with the historical land use patterns in French Creek is physical and topographical separation. Highway 19 transects the area as well as French and Morningstar Creeks, which makes it very difficult to provide safe and efficient non-automobile access. Another constraint is that although there is a mix of complimentary land uses in the area, there historically has been no provision for a mix of uses within a single parcel, which can

provide excellent opportunities to provide easily accessible local services within walking distance.

In support of Regional Growth Strategy Goal 2 – Nodal Structure, this Plan supports a mixed use area located between French Creek and Lee Road as shown on Map No. 2 – Land Use Designations of this Plan. The mixed use area supported by this Plan builds upon the existing commercial zoning by recognizing the existing development and supporting a mix of commercial and residential uses in close proximity to French Creek Harbour.

It should be noted, that the French Creek Mixed Use Area is located at the confluence of French and Morningstar Creeks as well as the French Creek estuary. Therefore, it is critically important that development be designed and conducted in a manner which respects the environment and minimizes the environmental impact.

Objectives:

1. Recognize the French Creek Mixed Use area as a future commercial/residential development area and provide opportunities for a mixed commercial - residential use development.
2. Ensure that development occurs in a way that respects the natural environment.
3. Require the design and installation of efficient community water and community sewer servicing systems.
4. Encourage development that is compatible with adjoining neighbourhoods.
5. Require safe pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the development and to surrounding established neighbourhoods.

Policies:

1. A rezoning may be supported to permit a mixed use commercial – residential development within the lands designated '*French Creek Mixed Use Area*' as shown on Map No. 2 – Land Use Designations of this Plan subject to the following conditions:
 - a. An off-street pedestrian and cyclist linkage connecting Lee Road to Columbia Drive must be provided.
 - b. A registered professional biologist must conduct an assessment of the properties involved and identify all sensitive features and all potential impacts and provide recommendations on how these features will be protected based on the development being proposed.
 - c. Permanent protection of land adjacent to both French and Morningstar Creeks shall be required, the width and characteristics of which must be in accordance with the recommendations of a Qualified Environmental Professional to the satisfaction of the Regional District of Nanaimo.
 - d. A registered professional geotechnical engineer must conduct an assessment of the property to determine if the property is safe for the intended use, to design a rain

water management system that ensures that the estuary is protected, and to provide recommendation for construction.

- e. The proposal must satisfy the requirements of Section 2- Protecting the Natural Environment of this plan to the satisfaction of the Regional District of Nanaimo.
2. Development proposals must maximize green space and a minimum of 20% green space shall be required, although development that proposes more than 20% green space is encouraged.
3. Development shall generally be limited to no more than 4 storeys in height, although more storeys may be supported to accommodate additional residential density transferred from the West side of French Creek to the French Creek Mixed Use Area in accordance with Policy No. 7 below.
4. Residential development must include a mix of housing types and sizes, which must include a multi - residential component.
5. All development proposals must include a mixed residential – commercial component.
6. The rezoning supported by this Plan is subject to the availability of an approved community water and community sewer service connection.
7. The community supports the transfer of residential density from the West side of French Creek to the East side of French Creek in order to obtain additional permanent protection of the French Creek Estuary and associated estuarine lands located on the west side of French Creek. The additional permanent protection may be achieved in a variety of ways, but should generally include a reduction of the footprint of the development. The remaining development on the west side of French Creek should generally be located towards the west side of the subject property.
8. Development must be in accordance with all environmental protection policies contained in Sections 2.0-2.8 of this Plan.
9. The maximum residential density and building height shall be determined through public consultation.