

9.0 - Improving Mobility

In response to the value the community places on protecting the rural atmosphere and the natural environment, and the region's goal of improving mobility, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan identifies existing and potential modes of transportation within the Plan Area.

This section of the Plan supports Regional Growth Strategy Goal 5 – Improved Mobility by establishing a Transportation and Mobility Plan for Electoral Area 'G'. The Plan advocates sustainable communities by reduced reliance on the automobile through improved mobility options.

A major focus of this section is the road network plan for Electoral Area 'G', which is coordinated with the MOT's road network plan and the road network plans for the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach.

The pattern of existing development, in the Plan Area, has evolved with a high dependence on the automobile. This is greatly due to past dependence of residents on services in other centres, in part due to distances associated with lower density rural areas and past development patterns, which did not support the practical integration of services in a manner which would reduce automobile dependence.

The rural and rural residential policies of this Plan support the protection of rural areas and residential neighbourhoods, therefore the prospect of reducing vehicular traffic, generated to and from existing neighbourhoods, are a major challenge. The Plan addresses this challenge primarily through its nodal framework and support for alternative modes of transportation. The Plan envisions centralized locations for shops, services and community focus and gathering places in neighbourhood centres and mixed use areas, which are linked to neighbourhoods through a network of walkways and bikeways, reducing the dependence of Plan Area residents on the automobile.

The Plan also identifies more efficient approaches to mobility including public transit, which would focus service provision primarily within neighbourhood centres and mixed use areas, but may also consider bus routes through rural and rural residential neighbourhoods, in order to minimize automobile dependency in more remote areas which are less accessible. The Plan also recognizes other rail, bus, and marine-related opportunities for mobility.

9.1 Road Network Strategy

The hierarchy of roads in the Plan Area provide road connections between rural areas, residential neighbourhoods, and neighbourhood centres and provide access to major highways. The Plan identifies existing and future roads. All existing and future roads and highways are shown on Map No. 8 (Mobility Options and Road Network Plan).

Objectives:

1. Provide for vehicular and pedestrian linkages which assist in creating sustainable communities.
2. Minimize visual and noise impact of roads and traffic.

3. Ensure road standards present an acceptable balance of safety, efficiency, environmental suitability, and aesthetic value compatible with the Plan Area.
4. Protect the visual integrity of Highway 19.

Policies:

1. The establishment of road standards for new development in urban areas which are compatible with the road standards in the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville, and which support sustainable development practices are supported. These standards may include, but are not limited to road surface-width guidelines, width and placement of sidewalks and boulevards, and road construction standards.
2. The establishment of flexible neighbourhood and rural road standards compatible with neighbourhoods and the environment which provide for the safe movement of both vehicular and non-vehicular modes of transportation is supported.
3. The road network plan for guiding the location of existing and future network road and highway services in Electoral Area 'G' is shown on Map No. 8.
4. In considering Zoning Amendment Applications, the Regional District of Nanaimo shall work with the applicant and the Ministry of Transportation to work towards achieving the desirable road network and mobility option improvements as shown on Map No. 8 of this Plan.
5. The protection of the visual integrity of the Inland Island Highway is supported, with particular emphasis on controlling the future use and appearance of lands south of Parksville not included in the ALR and outside the UCB.
6. The Regional District of Nanaimo supports a secondary access to San Pareil subject to the approval of the provincial ALC and the MOT. This access is supported in order to provide a safe secondary access in case of emergency and not to facilitate additional development.
7. Rezoning applications along the Inland Island Highway for industrial, commercial or multi- residential development that propose direct access to the highway from adjacent private lands are not supported.
8. The designation and construction of interconnected lanes and walkways to connect neighbourhoods is supported.
9. Private roads are not supported within the Plan Area except where public access and linkage to adjacent communities is provided.
10. Gated communities are not supported.
11. This Plan supports the proposed Church Road to Stanhope Road connector as a potential truck route. It should be noted that approval from the ALC shall be required prior to construction.

Advocacy Policies:

12. The Approving Officer is requested to protect environmentally sensitive lands and lands designated ALR, in reviewing subdivision applications and during planning, design and construction of network roads.
13. The Approving Officer is requested to consider walking and cycling linkages in all applications for subdivision.
14. The RDN shall consider the need to provide signage for beach access road rights-of-way.
15. The Regional District of Nanaimo supports the Ministry of Transportation in minimizing direct access to major roads identified on Map No. 8.

9.2 Public Transit and Other Mobility Services

The framework, provided by the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan, provides an opportunity to focus transit service provisions on the French Creek Mixed Use Area and Wembley Neighbourhood Centre. These areas would serve as major stops to regional transit, as well as other private bus services. BC Transit and the Regional District of Nanaimo jointly provide regional transit services and may consider additional transit initiatives for efficiently serving the Plan Area, including handicapped transit services, public and private transit links to neighbourhoods which are further away from these areas, and new forms of mobility resulting from technological innovation, in order to reduce the environmental impact and residents' dependence on the automobile.

This Plan identifies mobility option features including bicycle routes and trails, and suggests key bus stop locations and other mobility service features and opportunities and is shown on Map No. 8 (Mobility Options and Road Network Plan).

Other non-automobile mobility services and opportunities in Electoral Area 'G' and the surrounding area include the following:

- The Island Corridor Foundation (ICF), owners of the E&N Corridor, has established a mandate to see the reinstatement of passenger train service on Vancouver Island. The vision for the ICF is to link the communities on the Island, beginning initially within the Capital Regional District, by way of a successful commuter rail operation.
- The rail service passes through Electoral Area 'G', but does not stop in Electoral Area 'G'. The Plan recognizes that Electoral Area 'G' residents rely upon rail train stations in the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville.
- The French Creek Harbour contributions to marine transportation include the ferry dock and service to Lasqueti Island and limited recreational moorage.

- The Qualicum Airport, although located within the Town of Qualicum Beach, provides aviation-related mobility opportunities with a focus on small recreational and commercial aircraft.

The Regional District of Nanaimo supports a cooperative approach with management authorities for public transit, rail, marine and aviation-related mobility services, to ensure that these services are compatible with and do not compromise the rural, rural residential, and urban integrity and satisfy the mobility needs of Electoral Area 'G' residents.

Objectives:

1. Facilitate efficient public transit services in Electoral Area 'G'.
2. Support opportunities for other mobility services including, but not limited to, rail, marine, ride sharing, and aviation-related services.
3. Support a cooperative approach with management authorities for public and private mobility services.
4. Ensure that mobility services are compatible with and do not compromise the rural and rural residential integrity and satisfy the mobility needs of Electoral Area 'G' residents.

Policies:

1. The use of the French Creek Mixed Use Area and Wembley Neighbourhood Centre, as principal stops in Electoral Area 'G' for Regional Transit is supported. The joint use of these stops with private Island bus lines is encouraged.
2. BC Transit and the RDN shall jointly consider expanded transit services to efficiently serve the needs of the Plan Area. Transit services for the handicapped (i.e. HandyDART service) and improved transit services to remote neighbourhoods (i.e. dial-a-bus and private taxi services) are supported.
3. The Regional District of Nanaimo should consider innovative strategies to improve servicing efficiency and passenger service as well as to promote increased ridership. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to, the use of fuel efficient busses, the use of small busses or vans with capacity to accommodate anticipated rider volumes, and the use of transit to provide service from Area 'G' to organized sports or special events held in the Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville, and City of Nanaimo.
4. The efforts of the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) to establish a commuter and enhanced passenger rail service on the Island are supported. The ICF is encouraged to continue rail transportation and improve commuter services to existing stations at the Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville, City of Courtenay, and City of Nanaimo.
5. The provision of marine transportation opportunities at French Creek Boat Harbour shall be supported including continued operation of the Lasqueti Island Ferry, and the possible future expansion of the Boat Harbour to provide additional moorage for recreational boating.

6. The Regional District of Nanaimo supports improved transportation services to and from the Qualicum Beach Airport including public and private shuttle services.
7. The E&N Railway corridor lands are designated Transportation Corridor and subdivision of these lands is not supported.
8. Multi-modal forms of transportation are encouraged within the Transportation Corridor including rail, cycling, walking, and automobile.
9. In considering approvals for development proposals, the Regional District of Nanaimo may require an assessment of transit routes and stops and pedestrian access to public transit services.
10. The requirement for bus stop improvements and shelters, as a community amenity to be provided by land developers, is supported where appropriate.
11. The Regional District of Nanaimo may consider proposals for land dedication at the time of subdivision or rezoning to permit land to accommodate a community ride share program.

9.4 Walkways, Bikeways, and Trails

The Plan identifies a strategy for bicycle routes on road rights-of-way as well as a strategy for trails and a walkway network linking neighbourhoods with parks and recreational opportunities, as well as waterfront areas, community focal features, and neighbourhood centres.

Objectives:

1. Provide safe pedestrian, wheelchair, and bicycle trails and linkages throughout the community.
2. Link neighbourhoods to community focal features, schools, churches, shops and services, public transit, parks, greenways and the waterfront.
3. Ensure linkage to bikeways and trail systems in the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach.
4. Provide suitable and safe trail crossings of French Creek, Englishman River, and Little Qualicum River.

Policies:

1. The bicycle and trail routes as illustrated on Map Nos. 4 and 8 of this Plan are supported in Electoral Area 'G'. The Ministry of Transportation is encouraged to provide a safe place for cycling and pedestrian passage along bicycle and trail routes that are adjacent to public roadways.
2. The priority for bicycle and trail routes will be to link neighbourhoods with parks, schools, waterfront areas, community focal features, neighbourhood centres, and mixed use areas.

3. Proposed walking routes/trails on Map No. 8 (Mobility Options and Road Network Plan) are deemed vital to Electoral Area 'G'. Any development proposals which propose to omit the provision or construction of walking routes/trails where identified pursuant to Map No. 8 are not supported.
4. The development of a walkway adjacent to and connecting with the French Creek Bridge is supported.
5. The development of an underpass/walkway under the French Creek Bridge to facilitate cyclists and pedestrians crossing under the highway is supported.
6. The Regional District of Nanaimo will work in conjunction with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach to ensure that bicycle routes and trails are linked with the trails and bikeways in adjoining urban areas and are constructed to compatible standards.
7. A mixed use linear corridor connection within the Transportation Corridor (E&N Railway) is supported.
8. The establishment of bicycle stands for securing bicycles in parks and neighbourhood centres is supported.
9. A pedestrian boardwalk/walkway to provide sufficient public access along the shoreline and estuary is required as part of a historical development approval condition adjacent to French Creek Harbour. Notwithstanding this policy, the boardwalk/walkway must be developed in an environmentally responsible way and must not have a negative impact on French Creek and the associated riparian vegetation.

9.5 Island Highway Agreement

The Regional District of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, and the Ministry of Transportation entered in to the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement on November 12, 1998. The purpose of the agreement is to cooperatively manage access and land use along the Highway 19 Corridor (Vancouver Island Highway Corridor). The main goal of the agreement is to protect the aesthetic quality of the corridor and to preserve its efficiency and safety for present and future generations.

This section of the Plan recognizes and supports the goals and objectives of the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement.

Objectives:

1. Support the goals and objectives of the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement

Policies:

1. The Vancouver Island Highway Agreement defines the area affected by the Agreement. For convenience purposes, the portion of the area affected by the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement within Electoral Area 'G' is shown on Map No. 8 (Mobility Options and Road Network Plan).

2. Development Permit Areas for the form and character of commercial and industrial sites shall be established on lands subject to the Agreement. Compliance with the development permit area guidelines in the zoning bylaw and objectives¹⁵ in Section 10 of this Plan is required. Should lands be rezoned to multi-residential, commercial, or industrial as supported by this Plan, the subject lands shall be included in the form and character Development Permit Area.
3. The Regional District of Nanaimo supports the goals and objectives of the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement and may take steps towards implementation of the agreement by considering the following:
 - a. requesting the authority from the Ministry of Community Services to regulate the cutting of trees along the highway corridor;
 - b. increasing the minimum setback requirements for buildings and structures to preserve the aesthetic quality of the corridor; and/or,
 - c. requesting that the Provincial Subdivision Approving Officer require a buffer of native vegetation adjacent to the corridor is maintained as a condition of subdivision approval.
4. In considering applications to rezone land adjacent to or visible from the Inland Island Highway or to relax the minimum setback requirement adjacent to the Inland Island Highway, the RDN may require the retention or establishment of a vegetative buffer consisting of native plant specie suitable for the subject property. The Regional District of Nanaimo, where applicable, may require the buffer to be secured through zoning or covenant.
5. Where on-site constraints do not permit the maintenance or establishment of a vegetated buffer and a proposed development would be visible from the Vancouver Island Highway Corridor, the Regional District of Nanaimo shall encourage, and or require where appropriate, a high quality design and architectural standard.
6. Development applications that propose developments or activities contrary to the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement are not supported.

Advocacy Policies:

7. Property owners and land developers with property adjacent to the Inland Island Highway are strongly encouraged to maintain and/or establish a minimum 30 metre vegetated buffer adjacent to the Vancouver Island Highway Corridor.

¹⁵ Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018
