

Electoral Area 'G'

# Official Community Plan



**BYLAW No. 1540, 2008**  
**Regional District of Nanaimo**  
April 22, 2008

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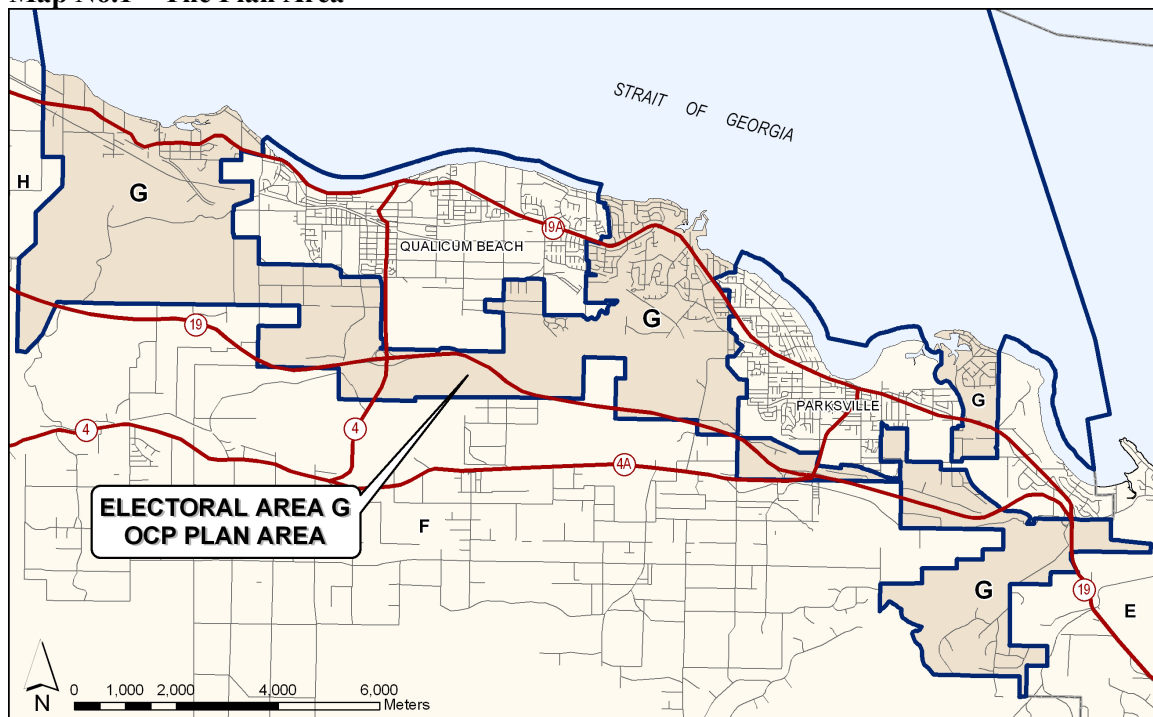
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## 1.0 - Introduction

### 1.1 The Plan Area

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan Area is bound on the north by the Strait of Georgia and surrounds the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach and includes the communities of Dashwood, French Creek, and San Pareil. The size of the Plan Area is approximately 5,073 hectares.

**Map No.1 – The Plan Area**



Electoral Area 'G' has experienced significant growth since the early 1990's. The population of Electoral Area 'G' grew from 4,665 persons in 1991 to 7,023 persons in 2006.<sup>1</sup> This was an overall growth rate of approximately 50 percent during that time period. Since 2001, a significant portion of Electoral Area 'G' was incorporated into the Town of Qualicum Beach, yet the population for Area 'G' still grew significantly. This reflects the higher growth rates in the coastal areas of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) over the past few years. This growth trend is expected to continue at a high rate, and it is anticipated that as many as 12,000 people could reside in Area 'G' by 2026.<sup>2</sup>

This Plan Area is designated a 'development approval information area' pursuant to the RDN's Development Approval Information Bylaw No. 1165, 1999. This bylaw outlines information requirements for Zoning Amendments Applications and Temporary Use Permits.

<sup>1</sup> RDN Electoral Area Statistics, Statistics Canada.

<sup>2</sup> RDN Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends Report, May 2001, adjusted to exclude newly incorporated areas and reflect estimated build out.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan

The *Local Government Act* defines an Official Community Plan (OCP) as a general statement of the broad objectives and policies respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land uses and servicing requirements in the geographic area covered by the Plan. It is reflective of local interests as well as regional, provincial and, in some cases, federal interests.

The purpose of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan is to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and policies for managing existing and future uses of land and water surfaces within the Plan Area. The objectives and policies contained in this OCP are a reflection of community values and the regulations of the local, provincial and federal agencies with interests in the Plan Area.

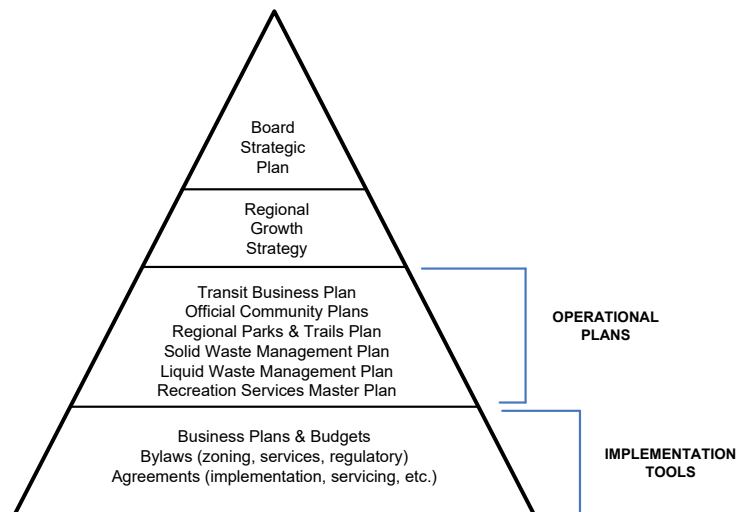
The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan has been developed with participation, consultation, and evaluation by the community through many hours of community involvement in the public workshops and other public events. In addition, this OCP has benefited from the community's work completed on the previous Shaw Hill, Deep Bay, Englishman River, and French Creek Official Community Plans and the Regional District of Nanaimo's Regional Growth Strategy.

The intent of this OCP is to provide direction on the evolution of land use and development in Electoral Area 'G' over the next five to ten years.

This OCP recommends that amendment applications to amend this Official Community Plan prompted by new development proposals not be considered until a review of the Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy is complete. A general review of this Official Community Plan is not contemplated for at least another five years or until it no longer serves community and regional needs.

However, it is recognized that changes to the Official Community Plan may be required to address new legislation, new planning issues, and new information. The community will have opportunities to participate in making any potential changes to the Official Community Plan.

The diagram to the right illustrates the hierarchy of Regional District of Nanaimo plans and strategies. The 2006-2009 Board Strategic Plan provides direction to the Regional Growth Strategy which in turn provides direction to a full spectrum of operational plans including Official Community Plans. All RDN land use bylaws must comply with the intent and direction provided by the policies in the OCP.



## 1.3 Community Involvement

The Regional District of Nanaimo recognizes that the residents of Electoral Area 'G' wish to be informed of and contribute input towards resolving planning issues which affect their community.

Public awareness and understanding of neighbourhood and community issues and the contents of this Plan, as well as various methods of its implementation are important to the success of the Plan. A broadening of public understanding and participation in decision making will lead to lasting benefits for the community and the RDN as a whole. Residents of the Plan Area, through their support of the Community Plan and participation in the planning and public hearing process are the final arbiters of community values.

Residents of Electoral Area 'G' have had a direct influence on this Plan through a broad-based public consultation process. In order to ensure that the Official Community Plan reflects community and neighbourhood interests a series of community workshops were held where participants discussed and provided input towards a variety of land use planning issues. Upon completion of a draft OCP, it was presented to the community through a series of public meetings and open houses where the community had an opportunity to discuss the draft OCP and recommend changes.

Prior to the adoption of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan as a bylaw by the Regional Board, the OCP is formally referred to various senior agencies. Additionally, the Ministry of Community Services must grant approval to the OCP prior to its adoption.

Community involvement in the preparation of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan does not end with the completion and adoption of this OCP. Ongoing community involvement will be required in the implementation of the OCP – the real test of an OCP's success. As such, the residents of Electoral Area 'G' will play a key role in determining the success of the OCP through their support and initiatives to implement the policies contained in the Plan. Resident participation in the implementation of the Electoral Area 'G' OCP will be early and ongoing, as the RDN works with residents, and other interested groups, towards implementing the policies contained in the OCP.

#### **1.4 Community Values**

Throughout the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan review process, open dialogue and discussions revealed that Electoral Area 'G' residents share a number of common community values. The following outlines the community values of Electoral Area 'G' residents based on the response received throughout the Official Community Plan review process:

- i) ***The community values the preservation of the natural environment;***
  - this means identifying and protecting the natural environment including surface and groundwater resources, natural features, flora and fauna and their ecological systems, and natural resources by ensuring that development respects the natural environment and contributes to the way we conduct our private and public business to be more environmentally responsible.
  
- ii) ***The community values the current amount of green space and outdoor recreational opportunities within Electoral Area 'G';***
  - this means recognizing existing green space and outdoor recreational opportunities and identifying new opportunities for green space preservation and acquisition through comprehensive parks and green space management policies in this Official Community Plan.

- iii) ***The community values the rural way of life and the protection of rural integrity;***
  - this means protecting rural areas from rural and urban sprawl and the protection and efficient use of agricultural, forestry and aggregate resource lands in the Plan Area.
- iv) ***The community values the recognition and protection of the distinct neighbourhoods within Electoral Area 'G';***
  - this means protecting the distinct characteristics of existing neighbourhoods to ensure that changes in land use which may adversely affect the quality of life for existing neighbourhoods will be avoided.
- v) ***The community values the management of growth and change through comprehensive land use policy and zoning regulations;***
  - this means creating a more complete community by focusing new growth into specific and acceptable locations within the community and guiding the form and character of development, thereby promoting sustainable growth and avoiding rural and urban sprawl.
- vi) ***The community values implementation of the communities vision through action;***
  - this means the establishment of realistic and attainable community policies and action plans to achieve its objectives.
- vii) ***The community values involvement in the planning process;***
  - this means encouraging and enhancing public understanding, education, interest, and participation in the ongoing review of the community's goals, objectives, policies and action plans.

## **1.5 Electoral Area 'G' Regional Context Statement**

### ***Regional Context***

While the Official Community Plan and the Regional Growth Strategy are separate documents, their content is inter-related. The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for the RDN (Bylaw No. 1309, 2002) describes a vision of a desirable future region and a strategy for attaining that vision.

Official Community Plans are the means of implementing the RGS. Through the integration of the RGS goals into Official Community Plans and the translation of the RGS policies into Official Community Plan policies, residents can work together towards attaining the future desired for the region.

The eight goals of the RGS are to:

1. contain urban sprawl;
2. create complete, liveable communities;
3. protect rural integrity;

4. protect environmentally significant features and ecosystem functions and other biologically sensitive ecosystems;
5. improve mobility options;
6. create a vibrant and sustainable economy;
7. improve servicing and resource use efficiency; and
8. encourage cooperation among jurisdictions.

***Regional Context Statement:***

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan works to achieve consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy through the incorporation of regional goals and policies into the Official Community Plan's objectives and policies. It is recognized that any additions, deletions or amendments to the policies in this OCP may result in inconsistencies with the Regional Growth Strategy. Inconsistencies requiring amendment of the RGS must have the consensus of all member municipalities and electoral areas.

All policies in the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan are consistent with or complementary to the goals and policies of the RGS, except where this Plan recommends that the RGS be amended. The Official Community Plan's response to the RGS is outlined below.

***Goal 1: Strong Urban Containment:***

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan designates Urban Containment Boundaries (UCB) which defines the limits of urban areas and limits to the expansion of servicing outside of these designated urban areas. The community supports the development of more sustainable and economically efficient servicing enabled by these UCBs. This OCP proposes an expansion of the Urban Containment Boundary contiguous with the boundary of the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre. It is anticipated that an enlarged boundary will assist in attracting a greater mix of residential housing forms and densities as well as neighbourhood commercial uses to serve the community. This boundary adjustment will require a Regional Growth Strategy Amendment.

In response to the community's request, this OCP supports a study looking at the feasibility of establishing a new Urban Containment Boundary in Dashwood. It is thought that an Urban Containment Boundary in Dashwood may be appropriate as the area is currently serviced with community water from the Little Qualicum Waterworks District. Although there is no community sewer system at this time, Dashwood, for the most part, is located within the Regional District of Nanaimo engineered sewer servicing area.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan restricts new residential development on lands located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary to a maximum of one dwelling per hectare although it is recognized that there are existing dwelling units located on parcels smaller than 1 hectare. Other than what is supported by this Plan, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan prohibits the creation or expansion of new commercial and industrial land use designations outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan only supports amendments to be submitted annually during the late fall that are considered according to the process and criteria of the Urban Containment and Fringe Area Management Implementation Agreement or its replacement.



**Goal 2: Nodal Structure:**

The urban area in Electoral Area 'G' is generally concentrated north of the railway tracks surrounding French Creek and located between the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville. Within the urban areas, this OCP identifies one neighbourhood centre and one mixed use area which are intended to be the focal points for growth in the Plan Area. This Plan supports the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre, which supports a range of housing types and limited neighbourhood commercial that is within walking distance from, and is complementary to, the existing commercial services located in the City of Parksville. This Plan also supports the French Creek Mixed Use Area, which supports a range of residential and commercial uses and builds upon the existing commercial zoned lands around the French Creek Harbour.

It is intended that the neighbourhood centre and the mixed use area develop through collaboration with the local communities and adjacent municipalities to determine the size, scale and design features, with an appropriate scale and range of retail, residential, employment opportunities, public amenities and travel alternatives.

**Goal 3: Rural Integrity:**

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the preservation of large rural holdings and maintaining the rural land base in Electoral Area 'G' to protect rural integrity and also to encourage forestry, agriculture, and other resource uses. In addition, the Plan is consistent with and fully supports the mandate and policies of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (PALC).

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan designates land considered to be rural into five designations:

- 1) Rural Residential 1;
- 2) Rural Residential 2;
- 3) Rural Residential 3;
- 4) Rural, and
- 5) Rural Resource.

The minimum parcel size supported in each of these land use designations is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Policies are included for each land use designation to protect and enhance the rural characteristics of these lands and to ensure that uses which occur on these lands do not negatively affect resource uses. Citizens in Electoral Area 'G' place a high value on protecting the quality of life in the area and keeping growth focused away from rural lands.

**Goal 4: Environmental Protection:**

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan includes mapping of environmentally sensitive areas and features, natural hazard areas, and designates Development Permit Areas to protect these important features. The Plan also contains policies for the protection of groundwater resources, rain water management, coastal zone management, greenways, and natural areas. In addition, the Plan encourages sustainable development practices in order to improve the efficiency of the built environment, conserve resources, and minimize the ecological footprint of development.

***Goal 5: Improved Mobility:***

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the RGS policies to encourage non-automobile modes of transportation along safe pathways and trails. In addition, the OCP recommends a new connector route linking Church Road to Stanhope Road as a more desirable truck route. The continuing need for automobile transportation is recognized in the OCP through the Road Network Plan. Citizens in the area maintain a high level of interest in development in their community and wish to be included in issues that affect Electoral Area 'G'.

***Goal 6: Vibrant and Sustainable Economy:<sup>3</sup>***

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the provision and improvement of infrastructure within the UCB to accommodate the development supported by this Plan. The intent is to attract desirable economic development geared towards serving the needs of Electoral Area 'G' residents primarily within the French Creek Mixed Use Area and the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre. This Plan generally does not support the development of regionally significant industrial or commercial uses within Electoral Area 'G' thereby encouraging economic development opportunities in the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach.

This Plan supports tourism related economic development by permitting tourist commercial uses, both within the UCB and on sites with historical commercial zoning located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

Although aggregate extraction goes beyond the jurisdiction of the RDN, the Official Community Plan generally supports aggregate resource development on lands designated by the Regional Growth Strategy as Resource Lands and Open Spaces. Although this Plan does not limit the scale of aggregate removal on land designated by the RGS as rural residential, suburban residential, or urban area, this Plan supports zoning amendments<sup>4</sup> to permit primary resource processing, asphalt batch plant, yard waste chipping, or composting on parcels 4 hectares or larger in order to reduce the impacts of these uses on surrounding lands.

***Goal 7: Efficient Services:***

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the provision of community water and sewer services to all parcels located within the UCB to support future growth. The extension of community services outside of the Urban Containment Boundary is only supported to service existing development on lands with demonstrated environmental and public health hazards and not to allow additional development beyond what is permitted without community services.

***Goal 8: Cooperation Among Jurisdictions:***

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan fully supports the interjurisdictional cooperation of electoral areas, member municipalities, First Nations, and provincial and federal agencies in advancing the shared goals of the RGS. The policies and goals of this OCP are intended to be consistent with the collective efforts of these parties in creating a liveable, vibrant region.

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<sup>3</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>4</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

## **1.6 Plan Organization**

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan is divided into a number of sections oriented around the eight goals of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for the RDN. Each section of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan pertains to one of the eight RGS goals including: strong urban containment, nodal structure, rural integrity, environmental protection, improved mobility, vibrant and sustainable economy, efficient services, and cooperation among jurisdictions.

Each section of the Official Community Plan (with the exception of the section of the Plan pertaining to Development Permit Areas) is further divided into subsections and is comprised of specific objectives and policies.

Objectives are an expression of the community's values and long-term aspirations. They are the community's statement of what is important and its vision of the future.

Policies represent the community's position and response to community values and regional goals and policies. Policies establish the framework that guides decision making by the RDN. Each of these policies relate directly to stated objectives. Some policies may be highly specialized and address specific issues, situations or conditions while others may have a more generalized applicability.

## **2.0 - Protecting the Natural Environment**

The Regional District of Nanaimo is experiencing increased pressure from population growth, urban sprawl and economic development initiatives. This has led to increased demand on our environmental resources and the need to implement policies and regulations that shift development towards sustainability. The Regional District of Nanaimo's concept of sustainability is that "humans are part of the ecosystem, and that there is a need to integrate the economic and social lives of humans into the environment in ways that maintain and enhance the environment rather than degrade or destroy it". The following subsections and their associated objectives and policies work towards this concept of sustainability and Goal 4 of the Regional Growth Strategy to protect the natural environment.

### **2.1 Environmentally Sensitive Ecosystems**

In keeping with the community's values and the Region's goal of protecting the natural environment, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan identifies and supports the protection and enhancement of important environmentally sensitive ecosystems within the Plan Area. Environmentally sensitive areas are areas of land and/or water that are sensitive to human presence, development, and interference. They are also features, areas, or habitats that are worthy of a higher level of protection as a result of vulnerability, or particular value in maintaining essential ecosystem function as well as a high abundance and/or wide range of local biodiversity, including red and blue listed and migratory species.

An inventory of sensitive ecosystems on east Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands was undertaken by the Canadian Wildlife Service in partnership with other agencies. The result of this inventory was the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory of east Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands 2004. Some of these ecosystems have been incorporated into the maps and policies found within this OCP. As well there are likely other environmentally sensitive ecosystems and features unknown to the community and the Regional District of Nanaimo. It is the intent of this Plan to recognize new information on environmentally sensitive features as it becomes available and to adapt to changes in the location and extent of environmentally sensitive ecosystems, habitats, and features.

Electoral Area 'G' contains a diversity of environmentally sensitive ecosystems including, but not limited to older forest, estuaries and estuarine habitat, riparian vegetation, sparsely vegetated, wetland, second growth forest, and seasonally flooded agricultural field as well as natural features such as eagle nests, osprey nests, and heron rookeries, and vulnerable groundwater resources that require careful management to protect the biodiversity of these ecosystems.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Identify, protect, conserve, restore, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas within the natural environment.
2. Ensure that site specific evaluations of properties with environmentally sensitive features are reviewed through the development application process and encourage evaluations to occur prior to land alteration.
3. Encourage and support community stewardship of the natural environment through community and individual initiatives and public education.

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4. Support the coordination and harmonization of efforts among the public, stakeholders, and all levels of government in the protection of the natural environment.
  5. Strongly encourage innovative approaches for environmental protection and mitigation.

**Policies:**

1. Land or water which is sensitive to human presence is deemed to be an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). These areas are identified on Map No. 2 of this Plan. It should be noted Environmentally Sensitive Areas are not limited to the boundaries indicated. This Plan may be amended from time to time to recognize newly identified ESAs and to make changes to ESA boundaries to reflect changing on-site conditions or more comprehensive environmental assessments and amendments to the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Atlas.
2. Designate Development Permit Areas in Section 10 (Development Permit Areas) of this Plan to protect the following sensitive ecosystem types: riparian vegetation, wetland, sparsely vegetated and older forest as defined in the ESA Atlas (linkages between these ESAs are also important and are addressed in Section 2.4 – Greenways).
3. Ensure that Zoning Amendment Applications within or adjacent to Environmentally Sensitive Areas are not approved where the proposed development will adversely affect an environmentally sensitive area as determined by an environmental professional.
4. In evaluating development proposals, the RDN will require development approval information including, but not limited to, report(s) prepared by Certified Environmental Professionals (R.P.Bio, R.P.F, etc.) identifying and locating all environmentally sensitive ecosystems and features, assessing the environmental impact of a proposed development and providing recommendations to mitigate all potential impacts.
5. Require return to Crown Land, or apply protective covenants or conservation agreements for riparian corridors along the bed of watercourses, creeks, lakes and wetlands wherever development on land adjacent to these features is proposed.
6. Support and encourage communication and education on environmentally sensitive features within the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and community groups.
7. Despite the minimum parcel sizes supported by this Plan, the creation of new parcels less than the minimum parcel size supported by this Plan and located within a smaller footprint of the parent parcel may be supported to protect and/or enhance an environmentally sensitive feature without an amendment to this Plan provided the overall number of parcels is consistent with the current zoning and the environmentally sensitive feature is permanently protected. It recognized that an amendment to the policies related to Goal 3 – Rural Integrity of the Regional Growth Strategy is required in order to permit parcel clustering.
8. Density transfer from a parcel located outside of the UCB to a parcel inside the Urban Containment Boundary may be supported without an amendment to this Plan subject to compliance with the Regional Growth Strategy in order to protect and enhance an environmentally sensitive feature.

9. Development should generally conform to *"Develop With Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Development in British Columbia"* as amended and/or replaced from time to time.
10. Zoning amendments and development proposals shall be reviewed in relation to existing and potential archaeological sites and where sites are apparent or identified on provincial archaeological mapping, such applications shall be referred to the Heritage Conservation Branch of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development.
11. Development applications for lands in or adjacent to environmentally sensitive features generally as identified on Map No. 2 of this Plan, shall not result in a net loss of the sensitive feature on the subject property. Although developments that propose negative impacts to environmentally sensitive features are generally not supported, it is recognized that there may be circumstances where some impacts are unavoidable or justifiable due to severe land use constraints. In these cases, an applicant should be required to provide compensation for the loss by establishing or enhancing an equivalent type of habitat elsewhere on the subject property at a ratio to be established by, and in accordance with, the recommendations of a Qualified Environmental Professional.
12. Notwithstanding Policy 11 above, developments that result in negative impacts to environmentally sensitive features shall not be supported unless the impacts are mitigated in accordance with the recommendations of a Qualified Environmental Professional.
13. To the greatest extent possible environmentally sensitive features should remain in their natural state and should not be developed or disturbed.

***Advocacy Policies:***

1. With respect to a proposed subdivision within, adjacent to, or containing an ESA, request that the Subdivision Approving Officer not support the proposed subdivision unless the environmentally sensitive feature is adequately protected through covenants, park land dedication where appropriate, or conservation agreement. It is preferred that the creation of new parcels not be supported in the case where it is likely that encroachment into the sensitive area would occur over time.
2. Encourage the British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Environment Canada to monitor environmentally sensitive features and take an active role in providing the Regional District of Nanaimo with updated information on the status, location, and management of any environmentally sensitive features on an ongoing basis.
3. Encourage senior provincial and federal agencies to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo, non-government organizations, and other community interest groups to identify, preserve, protect, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Land owners, senior government agencies, non-profit societies, and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to participate in the registration and holding of covenants and assist with funding for environmental conservation.
5. Encourage land owners to develop their land in an environmentally sensitive way.

## **2.2 Freshwater Management**

The Plan Area contains an extensive and complex interconnected water system including watercourses, wetlands, and aquifers that help define Electoral Area 'G'. Each of these natural resources is not only vital as a fish and wildlife habitat but serves directly and indirectly as the principal source of freshwater within the Plan Area and therefore, is worthy of protection through careful land use planning.

It is recognized that there may be many significant sources of freshwater that have not yet been identified, and consequently, identification of these sources is an ongoing process.

The two major rivers located within the Plan Area are the Little Qualicum River and the Englishman River. The Little Qualicum River and one of its two major downstream tributaries, Whisky Creek, drain the Northwest portion of the Plan Area. The Englishman River flows through the Southeast corner of the Plan Area. There are also a number of significant creeks in the Plan Area including French Creek and Morningstar Creek.

The Ministry of Environment, in cooperation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, adopted new legislation titled the "Riparian Areas Regulation" (RAR), which came into force on March 31, 2006. This new legislation was enacted in July of 2004 under Section 12 of the British Columbia Fish Protection Act. This legislation aims to protect the features, functions, and conditions that support fish life processes in riparian areas.

### **Objectives:**

1. To identify, preserve, protect, and enhance all freshwater ecosystems within Electoral Area 'G'.
2. To encourage and promote environmentally responsible development.
3. To support continued and on-going improvements in the quantity and quality of accurate reliable data on the location and characteristics of freshwater ecosystems.
4. To maintain, enhance, and protect the biodiversity, ecological functionality, aesthetic appeal and recreational value of all watercourses in Electoral Area 'G'.
5. To support a level of protection that meets the requirements of the RAR while also protecting the features, functions, and conditions that support the life processes of amphibious and terrestrial riparian-dependant species.

### **Policies:**

1. Designate Development Permit Areas in Section 10 (Development Permit Areas) of this Plan to protect watercourses and their associated riparian ecosystems.
2. Ensure that all development applications, including the subdivision of land containing or adjacent to a watercourse, do not adversely affect that watercourse and its associated riparian ecosystems.
3. Do not support development applications that pose negative environmental impacts, unless those impacts are mitigated on the subject parcel or an adjacent parcel containing

- similar habitat such that the end result represents an overall improvement to the function of the ecosystem being impacted.
4. In evaluating development applications, the Regional District shall require development approval information including, but not limited to, report(s) prepared by an Environmental Professional (R.P.Bio, R.P.F, etc.) identifying and locating all environmentally sensitive ecosystems and features; assessing the environmental impact of a proposed development and providing recommendations to mitigate all potential impacts.
  5. Require Return to Crown, or apply protective covenants or conservation agreements for riparian corridors along the bed of watercourses, creeks, lakes and wetlands wherever development on adjacent land is proposed.
  6. Support and encourage communication and education on environmentally sensitive features within the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and community groups.
  7. Support the restoration and 'day lighting' of previously disturbed watercourses and discourage culverting and permanent diversion of watercourses.
  8. Rezoning to permit parcel averaging within the parent parcel(s) may be supported without an amendment to this Plan, subject to compliance with the Regional Growth Strategy, in order to protect and enhance an environmentally sensitive feature in accordance with the following:
    - a. A maximum of 50 % of the parcels proposed to be created may be reduced below the minimum parcel size currently supported in the Official Community Plan;
    - b. Approvals from the authorities having jurisdiction have been met with respect to the provision of water and sewage disposal;
    - c. There must be an environmentally sensitive feature located on the subject property, which has been identified and inventoried by a Qualified Environmental Professional and who has determined the feature to be a suitable candidate for preservation based upon its local and/or regional significance;
    - d. Permanent protection of the environmentally sensitive feature must be provided in accordance with the recommendations of a Qualified Environmental Professional; and,
    - e. No further subdivision of any of the parcels proposed to be created will be supported.
  9. Density Transfer from a parcel located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary to a parcel inside of the Urban Containment Boundary may be supported without an amendment to this Plan, subject to compliance with the Regional Growth Strategy in order to protect and enhance an environmentally sensitive feature.



10. Development should generally conform with *"Develop With Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Development in British Columbia"* as amended and/or replaced from time to time.
11. Creative development proposals which enhance a watercourse and/or provide protection to a watercourse shall be supported including clustering of development, density averaging, covenant protection, park land dedication over and above the minimum 5% requirement, providing green space, and other methods.
12. The Regional District of Nanaimo may consider options for the protection of Dudley and Hamilton Marshes.

***Advocacy Policies:***

13. With respect to a proposed subdivision within or adjacent to a watercourse, request that the Subdivision Approving Officer not support a proposed subdivision unless the watercourse is adequately protected through covenants, green space dedication where appropriate, or conservation agreement. It is preferred that the creation of new parcels not be supported in the case where providing adequate protection of the watercourse would likely result in encroachment into any covenant area over time.
14. Encourage the British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Environment Canada to monitor watercourses and provide the Regional District of Nanaimo with updated information on their status, location, and management.
15. Encourage senior provincial and federal agencies to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo, non-government organizations, and other community interest groups to identify, preserve, protect, and enhance watercourses.

**2.3 Coastal Zone Management**

This Plan provides guidelines for the management of coastal areas to complement provincial management of Crown foreshore resources and federal management of marine waters. The Official Community Plan encourages water surface uses where they are coordinated with upland uses; and where they are compatible with other water surface uses and the shoreline environment. The coastal zone is one of the prime features of the natural environment of the Plan Area and includes recreational beaches, sheltered embayed areas and sensitive estuaries at the mouth of the Little Qualicum and Englishman Rivers as well as French and Morningstar Creeks. The coastal zone also includes shoreline which may be susceptible to erosion or flooding in some areas.

The Plan Area contains one of only 22 provincially approved wildlife management areas. The Parksville–Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area (PQBWMA) encompasses 1024 hectares of coastal foreshore, estuary, and river habitat between Craig Bay and the Little Qualicum River including land adjacent to the Englishman River. The PQBWMA includes most of the coastal shoreline in the Plan Area and a portion of the Englishman River. It contains a diversity of ecosystems and animal communities that are sensitive to development and human disturbance, including a significant flock of Pacific Black Brant Geese that stop to rest and feed within this area each spring.

In 1994, a development permit was granted to allow development on land adjacent to the West side of the estuary on French Creek. There is, however, a strong community desire to find a way to preserve and restore these estuarine lands to fish channels and to preserve one of the only large

tracts of forested foreshore land remaining in the Plan Area between the Englishman River Estuary and the Little Qualicum River Estuary. The land, if preserved for ecological values, could then become a portion of the PQBWMA.

The French Creek Harbour is a major commercial marine harbour in the Plan Area and is excluded from the PQBWMA. The Commercial Harbour is managed by the French Creek Harbour Authority which regulates the commercial and recreational use of the harbour in coordination with Crown foreshore and marine waters legislation. The Harbour offers moorage primarily for commercial fishing vessels, but also offers limited recreational moorage and commercial storage of small boats. The harbour also includes a ferry terminal to Lasqueti Island and other commercial marine related operations.

The Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) is responsible for the administration and allocation of leases respecting the aquatic Crown Foreshore portion of the shore zone, pursuant to the Land Act. The Regional District has the jurisdiction to regulate the use of land and water surfaces through zoning regulations.

**Objectives:**

1. Recognize the foreshore and waterfront areas as a finite resource and an integral part of the community's character and as a major destination for leisure and recreational pursuits.
2. Encourage development which will not alienate the foreshore from public access or impact on the natural environment.
3. Advocate cooperation and coordination between agencies responsible for the use and management of marine, foreshore and upland resources in order to assure more comprehensive management of the coastal zone.
4. Foster the public ownership and stewardship of the waterfront.
5. Maintain, enhance, and protect the biodiversity, ecological functionality, aesthetic appeal and recreational value of the waterfront.

**Policies:**

1. Designate Development Permit Areas in Section 10 (Development Permit Areas) of this Plan to protect the coastal waterfront including its associated riparian ecosystems.
2. Discourage the continued development or intensification of neighbourhoods along the coastal strip in order to limit alienation of foreshore areas, impacts on environmentally sensitive features, and the aesthetic impacts of development.
3. The owners of waterfront property and users of the shoreline and ocean are required to avoid disturbance, pollution, or damage to the foreshore and intertidal areas.
4. Support community involvement in the cooperation and coordination between agencies responsible for the use and management of marine, foreshore and upland resources in order to balance community objectives with comprehensive management of the coastal zone.

5. Where feasible, protect beach access road right-of-ways for public beach access and preservation of the shore zone ecosystems. The Regional District may request tenure for road right-of-ways for community park use.
6. The portion of the Plan Area within the PQBWMA, as established by the Environmental Stewardship Division of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks is shown on Map No. 2. Approaches for co-management will be used, consistent with Section 12 (Cooperation Among Jurisdictions) of this Plan, to coordinate beach access and coastal zone activity with Wildlife Management Area objectives.
7. The use of shoreline stabilization measures on Crown Foreshore, in a manner that obstructs pedestrian access to and along public beaches or foreshore areas, shall not be supported. All works below the high water mark require Fisheries and Oceans Canada approval and a Crown foreshore tenure from the ILMB. Where approval for Crown foreshore use is considered, the RDN may support proposals for shoreline stabilization measures below the high water mark, provided they are designed to encourage public access along the beach area and do not have negative environmental impacts.
8. All proposals pertaining to lands adjacent to the PQBWMA that involve encroachment or trespass in to the Crown foreshore including the use of machinery below the natural boundary, must be referred to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Ministry of Environment for comments and/or approval.
9. The use of marine retaining walls and other "hard" surfaces such as seawalls, concrete groynes, gabions, and rip rap shall only be supported where a qualified professional has determined that "soft" approaches to shoreline stabilization such as vegetation enhancement, upland drainage control, biotechnical measures, beach enhancement, anchor trees, and gravel placement are not appropriate given site specific conditions. In addition, the construction of shoreline stabilization measures including marine retaining walls should be in compliance with the Regional District of Nanaimo Marine Retaining Wall Policy, as amended from time to time.
10. Proposals for improved public access and environmental protection along the waterfront shall be supported.
11. The construction of structures for the purpose of providing private beach access shall only be supported where it does not impede public access and where it can be demonstrated that the proposed structure would not have a negative environmental impact and would be safe from a geotechnical and structural engineering perspective.
12. The surface of water within the Plan Area shall not be zoned for residential or industrial purposes.
13. Waterfront development proposals which do not provide suitable public waterfront access or which could cause damage to the environment, on land adjacent to the coastal foreshore, shall be opposed by the RDN.

***Advocacy Policies:***

14. The Ministry of Transportation shall be encouraged to foster the improvement of beach access road right-of-ways for public recreational use and beach access.

15. With respect to the dedication of road at the time of subdivision for a parcel that is adjacent to the ocean or a watercourse, the Subdivision Approving Officer is encouraged to require full access to all water bodies. If more than one access to a water body is a requirement under Section 7(f) of The Land Title Act, the Regional District of Nanaimo may support the consolidation of accesses to support recreational uses where such consolidation will not make access to the beach for the maintenance of properties or public infrastructure awkward, difficult, or impossible.
16. The Ministry of Transportation is strongly encouraged to deny encroachment permits to occupy road ends adjacent to the ocean or a watercourse where the permit would affect public access.

## **2.4 Greenways**

Community Greenways are linear green corridors that provide a network of linear linkages between natural areas. These green space networks are critical to maintain functioning ecological processes, including the movement of organisms between ecosystems, and may also provide an opportunity for passive recreational uses. Public green spaces such as parks and trails, private green spaces such as agricultural land or golf courses, and shoreline areas of creeks and water bodies represent some of the greenway features in the Electoral Area 'G' Plan Area.

Plan Area residents have indicated support for the protection of native flora and fauna and public and private approaches for the protection and enhancement of such greenway features in order to enhance the liveability of the area and protect the environment. This section of the Plan identifies the community's long-term objectives and establishes an action plan for protection of greenway features in the Plan Area.

### **Objectives:**

1. Create a 'Greenways' network to protect functioning ecological processes in corridors linking public and private green spaces and landscapes which may be environmentally sensitive or which may enhance the natural characteristics of the area.
2. Conserve and protect wildlife and waterfowl habitat sensitive to human disturbance through community greenways.
3. Support the identification and protection of native flora and fauna in greenways.
4. Promote the integration of the philosophy of community greenways into all future planning and development initiatives of the RDN, provincial and federal agencies, and private landowners.

### **Policies:**

1. The creation of a Greenways Plan and integrated Regional Greenways Network in cooperation with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach is supported.
2. The designation of the following priority areas is supported for greenways protection within the Plan Area:

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- a. Coastal shoreline areas and the estuaries of the Little Qualicum and Englishman Rivers as well as French and Morningstar Creeks.
  - b. Greenway corridors along the Little Qualicum and Englishman Rivers, French, Whisky, and Morningstar Creeks;
  - c. The E&N Rail right-of-way and greenway linkages thereto.
  - d. Parcels that, if fully or partially protected, provide linkages between identified ESA's.
3. The identification and designation of areas for the protection of native flora and fauna, and nature appreciation within the potential greenways shall be supported. In particular, private or community initiatives, including protection through land trust societies, restrictive covenants, ecological reserves or community park land acquisition.
  4. The development of passive recreational trail connections in greenways shall be supported where they are compatible with protection of the environment and greenway principles.
  5. The principles established in the publication "*Community Greenways: Linking Communities to Country, and People to Nature*" and the Greenways strategy of this Plan shall be assessed and applied where proposals for zoning amendment, subdivision or development permits are received.
  6. Creative development proposals which enhance greenway protection shall be supported, including clustering of development to protect additional green space, density averaging, covenant protection, park land designation and other methods.
  7. Land dedication for the purpose of greenway preservation may be considered as a community amenity and/or park land for passive recreational uses through a Zoning Amendment Application or Proposed Subdivision.

***Advocacy Policies:***

8. The habitat protection initiatives of the Ministry of Environment, BC Fisheries, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada shall be supported along rivers, streams and wetland areas and shall complement the Regional District's park land and greenway protection initiatives.
9. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall work with the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville on the creation of a Greenways Plan and integrated Regional Greenways Network.

**2.5 Natural Hazard Mitigation<sup>5</sup>**

Natural hazard areas are sources of potentially dangerous chance events. Examples of natural hazard areas include lands which may be susceptible to damage from floods, mass movement of soil, landslides and earthquakes. Natural hazard areas are identified on (Map No. 2 Environmentally Sensitive Features and Natural Hazard Areas, Map No. 9 Development Permit

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<sup>5</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.06, adopted October 8, 2024

Area: Environmentally Sensitive Features and Hazard Lands Development Permit Areas and Map No. 11 Development Permit Area for Coastal Flood Hazard).

Potential landslides along the coastline are a major concern within the Plan Area. Some areas along the shore zone include steep wave-cut bluffs (with slopes between 30% and 60%) composed of unconsolidated sand. The threat of landslides is of particular concern in areas where homes have been constructed near the edges of these unstable slopes.

Areas of the coastline are also vulnerable to other coastal hazards including storm surge, coastal and estuary flooding, erosion and over time sea level rise. Climate change will increase the intensity and frequency of natural hazard events if unmitigated.

Seismic activity is a distinct possibility within the Plan Area. Vancouver Island is classified as a Zone 4 area according to the 1990 National Building Code Seismic Zoning Map. This indicates that the area is at high risk for seismic activity.

To help protect property, people and ecological function in development decisions, this Plan advocates the use of development permits to complement other regulatory devices, such as setbacks from unstable slopes and flood controls. Development permits offer the flexibility to customize development standards to reflect specific on-site conditions. Associated guidelines are designed to minimize the risk of potential hazards on persons and property.

**Objectives:**

1. Minimize the risk of personal injury or loss of property which may result from natural hazards.
2. Enforce mitigation measures which are compatible with the needs of local residents, are sensitive to the environment, and are consistent with current standards established by a qualified professional.
3. Identify, conserve and protect natural hazard areas and adjacent lands from damage due to development, subdivision or alteration of land.

**Policies:**

1. Known land susceptible to flooding, mass movement, unstable slopes, high rates of erosion, steep slopes or land that would pose a threat to property or lives if developed is deemed a natural hazard area (NHA). These areas are identified on Map No. 2 Environmentally Sensitive Features and Natural Hazard Areas, Map No. 9 Environmentally Sensitive Features and Hazard Lands Development Permit Areas and Map No. 11 Development Permit Area for Coastal Flood Hazard
2. Natural Hazard Areas are not limited to the boundaries indicated on Map No. 2, Map No. 9 and Map No. 11 and adjustments may be made to reflect changing on-site conditions or environmental assessments.
3. This Plan supports a review of natural hazard areas within the Plan Area to more accurately delineate their location and characteristics.

4. Designate Development Permit Areas in Section 10 of this Plan to protect lives and property from natural hazards to ensure that development is reviewed through the development permit process prior to the development or alteration of land.
5. A development application, subdivision or alteration of land in a natural hazard area shall not be supported unless the applicant or appropriate authority provides evidence that measures can and will be taken to render the development capable of withstanding the effects of the hazard, and to protect adjacent properties from possible impacts.
6. Development proposals in floodplains must comply with the Regional District of Nanaimo Flood Hazard Mitigation Bylaw No. 1872, 2023, including requiring future buildings and structures to be sited a minimum of 30 metres from the natural boundary of Englishman River, Little Qualicum River, and French Creek and 15 metres from all other watercourses, and satisfying flood control elevation requirements.

***Advocacy Policies:***

7. The Ministry of Environment is encouraged to provide additional floodplain mapping data on other watercourses in the Plan Area.

**2.6 Groundwater Resources**

Groundwater resources are particularly important to Plan Area residents as they rely on this resource for domestic water and for agricultural use. The location and characteristics of groundwater aquifers is very complex and is not fully understood within the Plan Area. Therefore, careful land use management is required to ensure the long-term viability of the Plan Area's domestic water supply. All surface water courses and known groundwater aquifers in the Plan Area are recognized as environmentally sensitive resources.

Water resource management primarily falls within the jurisdiction of the Water Management Branch of the Ministry of Environment. The policies of this Official Community Plan are intended to complement the provincial responsibilities for water management by guiding land use and servicing decisions in order to reduce any long-term negative impacts on the quantity and quality of water resources in the Electoral Area 'G' Plan Area.

**Objectives:**

1. Support and encourage further research, inventories, and monitoring of groundwater resources within the Plan Area
2. Ensure that development applications and proposed subdivisions do not have a negative affect on the quantity or quality of groundwater both today and into the future
3. Encourage a comprehensive and innovative approach to water conservation

**Policies:**

1. The general locations of known aquifers are identified on Map No. 2 (Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Aquifers). The identified aquifers are not limited to the boundaries indicated. Adjustments may be made to reflect new information as it becomes available.

2. Designate Development Permit Areas in Section 10 of this Plan to protect groundwater resources from potential negative affects of proposed development, where a development permit would be required prior to the development or alteration of land.
3. Zoning amendments that propose to increase the density or intensity of the use of land above an identified aquifer on Map No. 2 shall only be supported where an aquifer impact assessment conducted by a Hydro geologist or other qualified person can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Regional District of Nanaimo that the proposed development will be serviced with an adequate supply of potable water that meets or exceeds Canadian Dinking Water Guidelines and will not negatively affect the subject aquifer(s) or jeopardize the quality or quantity of water available for use by existing Plan Area residents.
4. The establishment of land uses which would have a negative impact on the quality, or quantity of ground or surface water shall not be supported.
5. The Regional District of Nanaimo should, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, community water service providers, and Plan Area residents, pursue a detailed aquifer assessment of the Plan Area to obtain more accurate and detailed groundwater information in order to better understand and manage groundwater resources.
6. Consider the formation and implementation of a comprehensive water conservation program in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, community water service providers, and Plan Area residents.
7. Support the creation and implementation of an aquifer/groundwater monitoring program in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, community water service providers, and Plan Area residents
8. This Plan supports a feasibility study looking at the possibility of the formation of a joint drinking water management and purveyor function between the Regional District of Nanaimo, The City of Parksville, the Town of Qualicum Beach, the Little Qualicum Waterworks District, the Arrowsmith Water Service, and private water service providers to manage and purvey drinking water within the Plan Area, the Town of Qualicum Beach, and City of Parksville in order to standardize the level of service and manage drinking water at a watershed/sub-regional scale.
9. Encourage the use of xeriscaping, low flow plumbing fixtures, micro-irrigation and other innovative water conservation technologies in all existing and proposed development.
10. All development applications must minimize impervious surfaces and should consider both natural and man-made systems to maximize groundwater recharge while ensuring that groundwater resources are protected from potential deleterious substances.

***Advocacy Policies:***

11. Encourage the Subdivision Approving Officer, when considering a proposed subdivision to require an aquifer impact assessment to ensure that the proposed development will be serviced with an adequate supply of potable water that meets or exceeds Canadian Drinking Water Standards and will not negatively affect the subject aquifer(s) or



- jeopardize the quality or quantity of water available for use by existing Plan Area residents.
12. Senior agencies are encouraged to recognize that there are proven water conservation technologies that can significantly reduce water consumption and amend their legislation to remove barriers to water conservation.
  13. The Ministry of Environment is strongly encouraged to monitor existing water extraction licenses and to revoke licenses that are no longer in use.
  14. When considering applications for new water licenses and water license renewals, the Ministry of Environment should consider the long-term impact to existing groundwater users.
  15. The Ministry of Environment is encouraged to adopt a groundwater extraction licensing and monitoring program to encourage water conservation and to provide aquifer data to help better understand and manage groundwater resources.
  16. The Provincial Government is requested to introduce legislation to govern the management of groundwater resources to ensure that:
    - a. the rate of groundwater withdrawal does not exceed the rate at which the sources are recharged, and
    - b. the human use of ground or surface waters does not have negative impacts on fish and wildlife habitat or on the recreation potential of a creek, river or significant wetland.

## **2.7 Rain Water Management**

Plan Area residents are concerned that additional development will result in more impervious surfaces. The creation of impervious surfaces interrupts the natural hydro geological cycle by decreasing the percentage of rain water and other surface water that is able to naturally infiltrate back in to the earth.

The resulting excess surface water, the water that would have otherwise been able to infiltrate back in to the earth, no longer becomes available to recharge the aquifers and moderate stream flow and stream temperature. In addition, the excess water has the potential to erode native soils and pick up contaminants as it flows along the ground before depositing them in watercourses that form part of the natural drainage pattern. Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the amount of impervious surfaces in our built environment and environmental health.

Since many Plan Area residents rely on groundwater for their domestic water supply and the Plan Area contains many fish bearing streams that are sensitive to disturbance that are also valued for their role in the ecosystem and for recreational opportunities, it is important to ensure that rain water is managed in a way that respects the environment.

### **Objectives:**

1. Recognize rain water as a natural resource that must be managed to protect the environment including the quality and quantity of ground and surface water.

2. Support the use of engineering techniques and environmental designs that mimic the function of the natural environment.
3. Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces to the greatest extent possible.
4. Encourage innovative approaches to rain water management.
5. Support the use of permeable construction materials and man-made features that facilitate infiltration.

**Policies:**

1. Development or subdivision of land must be designed to:
  - a. Replicate the function of a naturally vegetated watershed;
  - b. Maintain the hydrological regime of surface and groundwater and pre-development flow rates;
  - c. Minimize interference with groundwater recharge; and,
  - d. Not introduce or remove materials where it would cause erosion of or the filling in of natural watercourses and/or wetlands.
2. Erosion control must be provided during construction and demolition.
3. The Regional District of Nanaimo will consider regulating impervious surfaces within the Plan Area through tools such as zoning regulations, landscaping requirements, etc.
4. The creation and implementation of a comprehensive area wide rain water management plan is strongly supported.
5. The Regional District will consider approving land development proposals only if there is assurance that rain water drainage from development does not increase the peak flow run off into adjacent areas.
6. Rain water management provisions shall be incorporated in to all Development Permit Areas included in Section 10 of this Plan.
7. Properties must not be developed in a manner which allows drainage water collected on a property to flow onto any adjacent private or public lands including public roads. On-site drainage shall be controlled by retention of open ground for infiltration, on-site retention basins, naturally vegetated areas, rock pits or dry wells to the satisfaction of the building inspector, who may require the owner to have the on-site storm drainage facilities designed by a qualified professional engineer at the owner's cost. Where onsite drainage is not possible due to poor drainage conditions as determined by a professional engineer, other environmentally sound options may be considered and may be subject to approval by the Ministry of Transportation.
8. Zoning Amendment Applications that will result in increased density or intensification of land use will be required to demonstrate that impervious surfaces have been minimized.

9. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall not support development applications that propose to release rain water run off containing sediments or other contaminants.

***Advocacy Policies:***

10. The Regional District shall request that the Approving Officer require subdivisions to be designed to maintain the hydraulic regime of streams while providing sufficient drainage in a manner which does not interfere with groundwater recharge or prevent the intrusion of erosion material into natural watercourses, lakes and wetlands.

**2.8 Sustainable Development Practices and Climate Change**

Well designed developments can contribute towards Electoral Area 'G residents' goal of maintaining a healthy natural environment. Factors such as historical land use patterns, inefficient building and site lay out design, and more recently trends in climate change have raised environmental awareness and the need to improve the efficiency of and reduce the ecological footprint of the built environment.

There are accepted building technologies, materials, and practices available that significantly improve the efficiency of the built environment while reducing its ecological footprint and at the same time reducing the long-term costs of operation and maintenance. The following objectives and policies work towards reaching the community's goal of maintaining a healthy natural environment through the use of more efficient building materials, techniques, and practices.

**Objectives:**

1. Encourage the use of energy efficient building materials, techniques, and practices that reduce the amount of energy consumption
2. Encourage nodal developments that reduce the dependence on automobiles for the primary mode of transportation
3. Advocate the use of green technologies that encourage the efficient use of water and reduce the ecological footprint of developments in Electoral Area 'G'
4. Encourage developments that contribute towards maintaining a healthy natural environment and improving sustainability
5. Educate the public on sustainable development practices and the use of green building technologies

***Policies:***

1. Provided that funding is available, the Regional District of Nanaimo may consider a rebate program for replacing inefficient high capacity toilets with currently acceptable low flow models.
2. The use of proven innovative and technologically viable technologies that make efficient use of water resources shall be supported, subject to provincial approval where applicable.

3. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall consider incentives to encourage sustainable developments.
4. The use of green technologies, energy efficient building materials, techniques, and practices to reduce over all energy consumption and reduce the ecological footprint of buildings and their associated uses shall be encouraged.
5. Rezoning applications that propose developments that achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification are strongly encouraged and such developments may be considered as part of a community amenity package, where deemed appropriate by the Regional District of Nanaimo.
6. This Plan supports the adoption of a green building policy for all new buildings.
7. Higher density development shall be concentrated in the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre, the French Creek Mixed Use Area, and within the Urban Containment Boundary in accordance with Section 3.1 of this Plan.
8. Comprehensive development proposals that consider the full life cycle of input materials and process by-products as well as seek to minimize energy and raw materials use, minimize waste, and that build sustainable economic, ecological and social relationships (eco-industrial networking) are supported (may require a Regional Growth Strategy amendment).
9. Where irrigation is required to maintain proposed landscaping, it should be designed and installed by an Irrigation Industry Association of British Columbia certified irrigation designer.

***Advocacy Policy:***

10. The Vancouver Island Health Authority is encouraged to support the use of green technologies for on-site rain water, gray water, and sewage recycling.

## **2.9 Energy Use and Climate Change<sup>6</sup>**

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:

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<sup>66</sup> Bylaw 1540.01, adopted May 25, 2010

- 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 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.

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## 3.0 - Containing Urban Sprawl

The policies of this section work towards Goal 1 of the Regional Growth Strategy by defining the community's intentions and priorities with respect to urban containment through the confirmation of a well-defined urban containment boundary.

### 3.1 Urban Containment Boundary

In recognition of the community's value of managing growth and change in land use and activity or development in Electoral Area 'G', and the region's goal of containing urban sprawl, the Electoral Area 'G' OCP contains an Urban Containment Boundary in French Creek which distinguishes the predominant rural land base of Electoral Area 'G' from the urban areas within French Creek. The majority of new residential, commercial, tourist-related, and public uses will be accommodated within the urban areas.

The Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and associated policies in this Plan will be used to identify those areas within the community where the majority of new growth is expected, and where additional growth will not be provided for. With the exception of the proposed expansion to the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre, the policies in this Plan are consistent with the Urban Containment Boundary in the Regional Growth Strategy. A framework is established for protecting the integrity of rural areas and existing neighbourhoods, and for 'nodal' development to guide the form and character of future growth in urban areas within Electoral Area 'G'. The boundary is used to identify the limits of urban-type services, which will have an affect on the character of growth, by establishing definitive borders between the urban and the more predominant rural land base in Electoral Area 'G'.

The UCB is a key element within the Plan which advances the Plan's goals of protecting the rural character of the Plan Area, protecting the natural environment, and managing growth and change in land use in Electoral Area 'G'.

#### Objectives:

1. Provide clear separation between rural and urban lands.
2. Restrict future growth outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.
3. Protect and enhance rural and neighbourhood residential lifestyles.
4. Provide appropriate transition and clear separation between rural and urban lands.
5. Ensure that future growth does not result in urban sprawl.

#### Policies:

1. The Urban Containment Boundary is identified on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations) of this Plan and is consistent with the Urban Containment Boundary in the Regional Growth strategy, as adopted by the Regional Board.
2. Notwithstanding Policy No. 1 above, this Plan proposes to expand the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre in accordance with Section 4.1 of this Plan. The proposed expansion is not consistent with the current Urban Containment Boundary and will therefore require an amendment to the Urban Containment Boundary.



3. Applications to amend this Official Community Plan to adjust the Urban Containment Boundary will be accepted once a year in late fall and shall be reviewed in accordance with the Urban Containment and Fringe Area Management Implementation Agreement or replacement agreement between the Regional District of Nanaimo and its municipalities.
4. Not all land within the Urban Containment Boundary is intended to be developed. Community amenities such as increased park land and the protection of greenways, open space and trail corridors shall be supported to maintain the character of existing established neighbourhoods.
5. Community services including water, sewer, and rain water management systems shall not be extended outside of the Urban Containment Boundary, for the purpose of facilitating additional development.
6. The retention of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve shall be supported.
7. Adequate buffering to create a gradual transition between urban areas and farming areas shall be required prior to rezoning or subdivision of any land in the urban area adjacent to the urban boundary.
8. New development proposals in urban areas, other than the development of existing residentially zoned areas, shall be consistent with the 'nodal' framework of this Plan. Intensive multi-use developments shall only be supported within the French Creek Mixed Use Area.
9. Underground services including hydro, telephone, and other utilities are strongly preferred for all new developments within the urban area in French Creek.
10. Notwithstanding Policy 9 above and urban servicing objectives of this Plan, the Regional District may allow within urban areas, open drainage swales, ditches, detention ponds, and permeable surface drainage systems where it would be necessary to protect and/or maintain the natural environment and satisfy other sustainability objectives.
11. This Plan supports a study looking at the feasibility of establishing a new neighbourhood centre in Dashwood that supports a mix of land uses. The study must include, but should not be limited to, providing recommendations on the need for a village centre in Dashwood, boundary locations, servicing strategy, land uses, and minimum parcel sizes.
12. Despite the maximum densities supported by this Plan on lands within the Urban Containment Boundary, additional density within the urban containment boundary may be considered where density is transferred from a parcel outside of the urban containment boundary to a parcel located inside the urban containment boundary in accordance with Policy 8 of Section 2.1 Environmentally Sensitive Features and Policy 9 of Section 2.2 Freshwater Management of this Plan. The suitability of the density transfer shall be determined through the rezoning purpose.

### **3.2 Neighbourhood Residential**

In contrast to the rural areas of the Plan Area, most of the urban area in French Creek is comprised of existing residential neighbourhoods which are designated Neighbourhood Residential in this OCP. These neighbourhoods have their own identity and semi-urban

characteristics including rural features, although they are within established urban boundaries. Electoral Area 'G' residents support the protection of existing neighbourhood characteristics and rural features by avoiding higher forms of urban development within these neighbourhoods. The Plan will ensure that infill development is designed to enhance the character of existing neighbourhood residential areas with compatible ground-oriented forms of development.

**Objectives:**

1. Protect and enhance the characteristics of existing residential neighbourhoods.
2. Restrict subdivision to infilling at designated Neighbourhood Residential densities.
3. Avoid higher forms of urban development which are not compatible with the character and identity of existing residential neighbourhoods.

**Policies:**

1. The integrity of Neighbourhood Residential areas will be protected by restricting future residential development to ground-oriented dwelling units in order to maintain and enhance existing neighbourhood characteristics and identity. This policy is not intended to prohibit a diversity of housing types and sizes.
2. Residential development shall be permitted at maximum densities of 15 dwelling units per hectare, where it is serviced by community sewer and community water systems, on land having a Neighbourhood Residential designation as shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations).
3. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall consider rezoning the parcels affected by Development Permit No. 77 that have been subdivided for single residential use as of the date of the adoption of this Plan from Residential 5 to a single residential zone to recognize the existing single residential use.
4. Amendment applications to provide multi-residential zoning to allow clustering of ground-oriented uses at neighbourhood residential densities may be considered for the purpose of increasing space allotted to community park land, open space and pedestrian linkages, provided the application satisfies the following:
  - a. The proposed rezoning will not result in an increase in the maximum gross density of the 'Neighbourhood Residential' designation (15 units per hectare);
  - b. A minimum of 20% of the land area is to be provided for parks and publicly accessible open space purposes, where acceptable to the Regional District;
  - c. The land area provided for community parks and publicly accessible open space, pursuant to this section, shall not reduce the gross number of units permitted (15 units per hectare) calculated on the gross area of the land;
  - d. Permanent protection is provided to all watercourses, riparian areas, environmentally sensitive features, or archaeological sites where applicable and it is preferred that the protection of these areas be in addition to the 20% parks and publicly open spaces required in (b) above;

- e. The form and character of development is compatible with neighbourhood residential land uses and the application is assessed with respect to development permit area guidelines in the zoning bylaw; and,<sup>7</sup>
  - f. The proposed development must be serviced with community water and sewer.
5. In order to support affordable/attainable housing in the Plan Area, secondary suites shall be supported on lots where serviced by community water and community sewer within the Neighbourhood Residential land use designation of this Plan provided they meet the following criteria:
- a. The secondary suite must be completely contained within the principal dwelling unit;
  - b. No more than one secondary suite shall be permitted per parcel;
  - c. Secondary suites are not permitted in a mobile home;
  - d. A minimum of two (2) additional off-street parking stalls shall be provided;
  - e. The Regional District of Nanaimo does not support the subdivision of secondary suites pursuant to the *Strata Property Act*;
  - f. Secondary suites shall not be permitted where a home based business, day care, or group home has been established; and,
  - g. The size of a secondary suite shall not exceed 40% of the habitable floor space of the principal dwelling to a maximum of 60m<sup>2</sup>.
6. Despite Policy No. 5 above, amendments to the criteria for suites may be made without an amendment to this Plan in order to address community concerns and issues during the implementation of Policy No. 5 above.
7. Policy No. 5 above shall not be considered for implementation until the Board has conducted an Electoral Area wide review of secondary suites.
8. Prior to considering a rezoning to permit secondary suites within the Neighbourhood Residential designation of this Plan, the Regional District of Nanaimo shall request confirmation from the community water service provider that there is sufficient water capacity which meets the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines to accommodate secondary suites. If sufficient capacity is not available or should proof of sufficient capacity not be proved by the water service provider, the Regional District of Nanaimo shall not implement Policy No. 5 above to permit secondary suites.

### **3.3 Multi Residential**

The Plan recognizes the existing status of multi residential zoned property in urban areas. The Plan will, however, restrict proposals for new multi residential zoning, greater than 15 units per

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<sup>7</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

hectare, to Neighbourhood Centres pursuant to Section 4 (Creating Complete Nodal Communities) of this Plan.

**Objectives:**

1. Limit multi residential uses to existing Multi residential designated lands and neighbourhood centres.
2. Maintain compatibility of existing neighbourhoods and multi residential developments.
3. Ensure the inclusion of open space greenways in new multi residential developments.

**Policies:**

1. This Plan recognizes the existing ground-oriented town home developments with multi residential densities greater than 15 units per hectare located outside of the neighbourhood centres, including Morningstar Developments, and Pebble Beach. These areas are designated multi residential as shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations).
2. Notwithstanding Policy 1 above, this Plan recognizes that there are existing parcels of land located outside of a Neighbourhood Centres zoned for Multi Residential use. This Plan supports the development of the multi residential lands as shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations) to the densities supported by the zoning in affect at the date of adoption of this Plan.
3. Amendment applications to provide new Multi-residential zoning with densities greater than 15 units per hectare outside of the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre or French Creek Mixed Use Area shall not be supported.
4. Zoning boundaries may be adjusted to more accurately delineate existing status multi-residential and golf course boundaries.
5. The reduction of area provided for open space amenities or golf courses, which are an integral part of existing status multi-residential golf course developments, shall not be supported.

## **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 m<sup>2</sup>;
    - 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.

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## 5.0 Protecting Rural Integrity

Electoral Area 'G' residents define rural as "a perpetuation of a style and quality of life for local residents on lands originally inhabited by First Nations Peoples and later established by pioneers for homesteading and agriculture, with a mixture of protected forests and a forest interface that allows for a continuum of wildlife habitat and access to environmentally sensitive trail systems."

In recognition of the community's value of the rural atmosphere of Electoral Area 'G', and the region's goal of protecting rural integrity, the Electoral Area 'G' OCP identifies the different types of neighbourhoods and land uses in the Plan Area that are considered to be rural in character, and provides policies to protect and enhance the unique attributes of these rural lands and ensure that changes which may occur on these rural lands contribute to, rather than detract from, the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Electoral Area 'G'.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan Area offers diverse rural and semi-rural lifestyles including rural residential areas outside of the Urban Containment Boundary as defined in the Regional Growth Strategy. The following sections set out the objectives and policies for protecting rural integrity in Electoral Area 'G'.

### 5.1 Rural and Rural Residential Land Use Designations

This Plan designates Rural and Rural Residential land use designations based on the minimum parcel sizes supported by the Regional Growth Strategy. Rural Residential designated lands in this Plan are intended to provide for larger-lot residential uses which may include traditional rural pursuits while also serving as a buffer between resource land and the more urbanized lands.

The Rural and Rural Residential area of Electoral Area 'G' contains a variety of lands with natural resource value including agriculture, aggregates and forestry. These lands have historically played a significant role in shaping the Plan Area's character, as well as providing important economic benefits. Their long term viability and productivity is increasingly threatened by urban encroachment and the spread of incompatible land uses necessitating special attention and protective measures.

The policies of this section define the community's intentions and priorities with respect to the long term management and use of rural residential lands. This section of the Plan recognizes the unique qualities of each distinct rural residential community and supports minimum parcel sizes based on policies in the Regional Growth Strategy. In doing so the Plan divides lands into the following four categories: 'Rural Residential 1', 'Rural Residential 2', 'Rural Residential 3', and 'Rural' as described below.

#### Objectives:

1. Protect and maintain the recreational, agricultural, forestry and aggregate land base and associated activities.
2. Minimize the impact of agriculture, forestry and aggregate-related activities on the natural environment and other forms of development and land uses.
3. Encourage farm activities on productive agricultural lands and on any lands capable of supporting viable agricultural activities.

4. Provide for continued rural residential opportunities without contributing to further rural sprawl.

**General Policies:**

The following policies apply to all lands within the, Rural Residential 1, Rural Residential 2, Rural Residential 3, and Rural land use designations.

**Policies:**

1. Lands designated Rural, Rural Residential 1, and Rural Residential 2 are shown on Map No. 3.
2. Although it is recognized that there are existing parcels within the Rural, Rural Residential 1, 2, or 3 designation that have been serviced with community water prior to the adoption of this Official Community Plan, the provision of or expansion to community water to service lands designated Rural, Rural Residential 1, Rural Residential 2, or Rural Residential 3 shall only be supported for health or environmental reasons and only where such services do not result in additional subdivision or development beyond what is permitted by the current zoning based on the minimum parcel size/site area requirements with no community servicing.
3. Zoning amendment proposals that have the potential to impact the quantity or quality of water resources shall be accompanied by a hydrological impact assessment report prepared by a professional engineer with experience in hydrologic analyses. The amendment proposal must also ensure that there are no impacts on fish habitat and the receiving waters, including channel stability and flow maintenance.
4. Permitted uses shall be compatible rural uses, rural residential uses and uses accessory to rural, and rural residential uses.
5. This Plan does not support lands within the Plan Area being pre-zoned for Animal Care. Lands within this Plan Area with existing Rural 2 and Rural 3 zoning may be considered for rezoning to remove 'Animal Care' as a permitted use, which may include changing the zoning designation to be consistent with the existing surrounding zoning designations.
6. Notwithstanding Policy 5 above, a rezoning to permit Animal Care may be supported within the Plan Area subject to its suitability being determined through the rezoning process.

***Advocacy Policies:***

7. The Ministry of Environment is encouraged to license and monitor groundwater extraction and monitor licensed surface water withdrawals.

**Rural and Rural Residential designations**

The Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy does not support the creation of parcels smaller than the size supported by the Official Community Plan in effect at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy on June 10, 2003. Notwithstanding this requirement, if a parcel was serviced with community water since June 10, 2003, the minimum parcel size

supported by the zoning bylaw which was in affect on June 10, 2003 with community water service and no community sewer service may be supported.

The designations are intended to be consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and recognize the unique rural qualities of existing rural neighbourhoods in Electoral Area 'G'.

### **Rural Residential 1**

The Rural Residential 1 designation primarily includes lands in smaller-lot rural residential subdivisions that are generally not located in the Agricultural Land Reserve and that have been in existence prior to the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy and in some cases prior to Regional District of Nanaimo zoning.

#### ***Policy:***

8. The minimum parcel size for lands within the Rural Residential 1 land use designation shall be 1.0 ha.
9. Rezoning to permit parcels smaller than 1 hectare in the Rural Residential 1 land use designation shall not be supported.
10. New residential development shall be permitted at a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per parcel.
11. Notwithstanding Policy 10 above, a 1 hectare minimum parcel size shall not be implemented in Dashwood until the Urban Containment Boundary feasibility study supported by Section 3.1 of this Plan is complete. In addition, the minimum parcel sizes in Dashwood may be adjusted to reflect the recommendations identified by the study. It should be noted that a Regional Growth Strategy amendment may be required.

### **Rural Residential 2**

The Rural Residential 2 designation includes lands that are generally not located in the agricultural land reserve. Rural Residential 2 lands may have value for small-scale agricultural and forestry activities.

#### ***Policy:***

12. The minimum parcel size for lands within the Rural Residential 2 land use designation shall be 2.0 ha although this Plan recognizes that there are existing parcels smaller than 2.0.
13. Rezoning to permit the creation of new parcels smaller than 2 hectares in the Rural Residential 2 land use designation shall not be supported.
14. New residential development shall be permitted at a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per 2 hectares to a maximum of 2 per parcel.

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### Rural Residential 3

The Rural Residential 3 designation includes lands that are generally not located in the Agricultural Land Reserve and that have been historically subdivided in to small lot rural residential located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary. The Rural residential 3 designation also includes larger lot rural residential lands that may have value for small scale agriculture and forestry activities.

15. The minimum parcel size within the Rural Residential 3 designation shall be 8 hectares although this Plan recognizes that there are existing parcels smaller than 8 hectares.
16. Rezoning to create parcels smaller than 8 hectares in the Rural Residential 3 designation shall not be supported.
17. New residential development shall be permitted at densities of 1 dwelling unit per 8 hectares to a maximum of 2 dwelling units per parcel.

### Rural

The Rural designation primarily includes lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve although it is recognized that not all lands within this designation are within the ALR. Lands within the rural designation have value for agriculture, forestry, and other resource activities.

#### *Policy:*

18. The minimum parcel size for lands within the rural land use designation shall be 8 hectares although this Plan recognizes that there are existing parcels smaller than 8 hectares in area.
19. Rezoning to permit the creation of new parcels smaller than 8.0 hectares in the rural land use designation shall not be supported with the exception that the creation of parcels smaller than 8.0 hectares may be supported to facilitate the identified expansion of the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre in accordance with Section 4.0 of this Plan.<sup>8</sup>
20. Where land is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve and is proposed for subdivision or non-farm use, including the placement of a second dwelling, approval must first be obtained from the Agricultural Land Commission, except where additional dwellings are necessary for farm purposes subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. All subdivision and non-farm uses within the ALR shall comply with the agricultural objectives and policies in Section 8.1 of this Plan.
21. New residential development shall be permitted at densities of 1 dwelling unit per 8 hectares to a maximum of two dwelling units per parcel.
22. Rezoning applications to rezone existing gravel pits to allow primary processing and related activities associated with gravel extraction may be supported in accordance with the Policies contained in Section 8.3 of this Plan.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.03, adopted November 23, 2021

<sup>9</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

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23. For any of the uses listed in Policy 26 above, the preferred option is to consider them for a Temporary Use Permit prior to considering them for a rezoning in accordance with Sections 8.3<sup>10</sup>.

## **5.2 Rural Resource Lands**

The Rural Resource land use designation applies to lands that are used and valued for agriculture, forestry, natural resource extraction, or environmental conservation opportunities. Some of the lands within this land use designation are within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Lands that were formerly in the Forest Land Reserve (major forestry holdings) and large parcel Crown land holdings (other than those designated as Park Lands) are also within this land use designation.

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 and agencies in planning and decision-making.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Maintain the renewable natural resource land base and protect it from activities that may diminish resource value and potential.
2. Encourage more comprehensive management of the resource land base.
3. Protect the environment.
4. Encourage and protect outdoor recreational opportunities.

### **Policies:**

1. Land within the Rural Resource land use designation is shown on Map No. 3.
2. Lands within the Rural Resource designation shall have a minimum parcel size of 50 hectares although it is recognized that there are existing parcels smaller than 50 hectares.
3. New residential development shall be permitted to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 50 hectares.
4. Permitted uses shall be compatible resource uses, rural uses, and uses accessory to rural resource uses.
5. Rezoning applications to rezone existing gravel pits to allow primary processing and related activities associated with gravel extraction may be supported in accordance with the Policies contained in Sections 8.3 of this Plan.<sup>11</sup>
6. For any of the uses listed in Policy 5 above, the preferred option is to consider them for a Temporary Use Permit prior to considering them for a rezoning in accordance with Sections 8.3<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

7. For lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve, the regulations and policies of the Agricultural Land Commission apply.
8. Where land is in the ALR and is proposed for subdivision, a second dwelling unit, or a non-farm use, approval must first be obtained from the ALC.
9. Developments proposed within or adjacent to environmentally sensitive features as shown on Map No. 2 shall be encouraged to ensure that the proposed development does not have a negative affect on the sensitive feature through federal, provincial, Regional District, or private initiatives and incentives.
10. Subject to an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy policies related to Goal 3 – Rural Integrity and notwithstanding policies 2 and 3 of this designation on parcels that have a 'V' subdivision district as defined by the zoning bylaw in affect at the date of adoption of this Plan, zoning amendments may be considered to permit the creation of parcels 1 hectare or greater to support the transfer of density and/or development within a smaller footprint provided the following criteria is met:
  - a. A public amenity is provided where deemed appropriate by and to the satisfaction of the Regional District of Nanaimo and may include, but are not limited to, the protection of an environmentally sensitive feature(s) or natural hazard area(s), park land, trail network, or greenway;
  - b. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy;
  - c. No net increase in density or the number of parcels shall be supported based on the zoning and subdivision district in affect at the date of adoption of this Plan;
  - d. A resource management plan shall be submitted that demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Regional District of Nanaimo that the natural resource potential will not be negatively affected by the proposed development and that demonstrates how the natural environment will be protected;
  - e. The maximum density shall not exceed 1 dwelling unit per parcel;
  - f. The parent parcel(s) shall not be further subdivided and is secured through covenant or zoning;
  - g. A wind firm buffer must be provided consisting of mature native vegetation to separate the proposed development from resource uses. The buffer edge shall be designed and supervised by a professional forester to provide additional habitat and wind protection;
  - h. Subdivision must be possible without the provision of a community water or community sewer system and each proposed lot must have on-site servicing and must not be connected to a community water or community sewer system; and,
  - i. A hydro geological impact assessment shall be required to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on groundwater resources.



11. Subject to an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy policies related to Goal 3 – Rural Integrity and notwithstanding the densities currently supported by the zoning that existed at the date of adoption of this Plan, a zoning amendment may be supported to transfer development density from one parcel to another parcel within the rural resource designation provided the following criteria are met:
- a. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy;
  - b. No net increase in density or the number of parcels shall be supported based on the zoning and subdivision district in affect at the date of adoption of this Plan;
  - c. The remainder of the subject property(s) remains undeveloped and/or preserved through covenant or zoning;
  - d. The proposal does not negatively affect the viability of resource extraction use, nor would the resource use negatively affect the proposed development;
  - e. The proposed development must occur in the area with the least environmental impact and soils must be suitable for on-site sewage disposal; and,
  - f. The proposed development should be located as close as possible to existing public road right-of-ways and other public utilities such as telephone and hydro.

***Advocacy Policies:***

12. It is recognized that the Ministry of Energy and Mines has jurisdiction over resource extraction including aggregate and hydrocarbon resources. However, it is requested that the Ministry of Energy and Mines consider the impacts of proposed mining activities on the surrounding community and refer all applications for new mining proposals to the Regional District of Nanaimo for comments.

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## 6.0 - Enhancing and Maintaining Park Land, Green Space, and Natural Areas

Park land, green space and natural areas are essential in creating complete liveable communities. Parks and open spaces can take on many forms and can serve a variety of functions such as sports fields, tot lots, wildlife viewing areas, hiking or walking trails, pedestrian linkages, and protected areas not intended for human disturbance. Parks and open spaces are an important component of the Plan Area as they help define the community, provide an opportunity for Plan Area residents to enjoy the natural beauty of the area, and encourage community recreation and social interaction.

Plan Area residents value the current amount of green space and outdoor recreational opportunities within Electoral Area 'G' and desire to maintain, enhance, and increase the current amount of green space. The following sections work towards maintaining, enhancing, and increasing park land, green space, and natural areas within the Plan Area in recognition of Plan Area residents' desires and the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy.

### 6.1 *Parks, Trails, and Outdoor Recreational Opportunities*

Approximately 20% of the Plan Area has currently been designated for a combination of parks, green space, trails, and conservation areas including 22 Regional District of Nanaimo community parks dispersed throughout the Plan Area that cover an area of about 55 hectares. There is also a Regional Park along the Englishman River and a Regional Conservation Area at the mouth of the Little Qualicum River that together are 210 hectares in area. In addition, there are significant The Nature Trust land holdings at the Englishman River estuary and along the East side of the Englishman River adjacent to the Rivers Edge subdivision. As well, there is a national wildlife area at the mouth of the Little Qualicum River estuary totalling 29.41 hectares in area.

It should be noted that Regional parks/trails and community parks/trails are administered under separate programs due to differences in mandates and funding sources. In general Community Parks and trails are intended to provide for the park and recreational needs of the local community and are not intended to attract or support use by the broader regional population. In addition, unlike regional parks and trails which are funded on a region-wide basis, community parks and trails are funded through taxes and development revenues (rezoning and subdivisions) collected specifically within each Electoral Area. Therefore, the Plan Area has its own community park and trail budget separate from the regional parks and trails budget and the community parks and trails budget for other Electoral Areas.

This section works towards the community's desire to maintain, enhance, and increase park land, trails, green space, and natural areas.

#### *Objectives:*

1. Maintain, enhance, and increase the amount of park land and green space in Electoral Area 'G' as part of a cohesive parks acquisition and development strategy to improve recreation opportunities and environmental protection in the Plan Area.

2. Work with public and private institutions to facilitate integration of schools, community halls and associated open space as an integral part of the community parks and open space system and where possible, have them available for public use.
3. Encourage private forests land owners to continue to make their lands available for public recreation.
4. Support the goals and priorities of the Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Parks and Trails Plan 2005-2015 as amended from time to time.
5. Support the protection of existing beach accesses.

**Policies:**

1. Lands designated Park lands, Green Space, and Natural Areas as well as existing and proposed park land and trail network are shown on Map No. 4.
2. Park land and trails shall be permitted and encouraged in all land use designations and no further subdivision of existing or future parks is supported.
3. Residents of Electoral Area 'G' have stated a need for additional park land to provide:
  - a. linear walking trails;
  - b. riparian area protection and access;
  - c. beach access;
  - d. protection of natural features;
  - e. outdoor recreational and leisure neighbourhood park opportunities;
  - f. sports fields; and,
  - g. access to water.
4. Although park land is supported for the protection of locally-significant environmentally sensitive features, protection of these features should be in addition to the minimum 5% park land dedication in the **Local Government Act**.
5. Park land proposals must provide a benefit for the community and those lands with no benefit to the community should not be accepted.
6. It is strongly preferred that land being considered for park land be maintained in its natural state and should not be cleared. Cleared and disturbed lands should only be accepted where the proposed park land is to be used for recreational uses which require cleared lands.
7. In areas where park land is desired, developers are encouraged to dedicate greater than 5% park land.
8. The Regional District shall encourage and support volunteer assistance in the development and management of community parks and trails.
9. The Regional District recognizes that public involvement early in the planning process, during acquisition and development of Community Park, and in recreation commissions,

- volunteer groups or service organizations, is essential for the success of the Parks System.
10. This Plan supports the establishment of a Development Cost Charge Bylaw for community parks purposes.
  11. The Regional District shall evaluate the suitability of park land proposals and may also consider parks and publicly accessible open space provision through means other than subdivision approval in accordance with Section 6.4 of this Plan.
  12. Although not located in Electoral Area 'G', this Plan supports the protection of Hamilton and Dudley Marshes in Electoral Area 'F' as these areas are key seasonal water storage areas for Electoral Area 'G'.
  13. This Plan supports the retention of at least 20% green space in the urban area of Electoral Area 'G'.
  14. Participation by residents of Electoral Area 'G' in park acquisition, planning and development is encouraged.
  15. The Regional District of Nanaimo should consider zoning parks, green space, and natural areas for their intended use.
  16. All trails proposed on lands located within the Agricultural Land Reserve shall require approval from the Agricultural Land Commission and should be developed and used in accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture's publication titled "*A Guide to Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas*".

***Advocacy Policies:***

17. The City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach are encouraged to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo to create integrated parks and trail systems network that spans jurisdictional boundaries.

**6.2 Preserving Green Space**

Green Space is an integral component of the Plan Area in that it helps to define communities, provides opportunities for outdoor recreation in a natural setting, and preserves critical ecological functions. Green space also contributes towards creating complete liveable communities by providing opportunities for nature viewing and social interaction, and maintaining a healthy environment. Green space can take on many forms ranging from sports fields to environmentally sensitive natural areas and can be managed for a multitude of purposes that range from intensive recreational use such as baseball diamonds to more passive recreational uses such as wildlife viewing and berry picking.

It is recognized that green space is both publicly and privately owned, but regardless of ownership green space benefits the community as a whole. The following objectives and policies work towards the community's desire to preserve the amount and quality of green space in Electoral Area 'G'.

**Objectives:**

1. To encourage the retention of green space throughout the Plan Area in both public and private lands
2. To develop and establish a greenways network for Electoral Area 'G'.
3. To ensure that the use of green space is compatible with the needs of the community and does not have a detrimental affect on the environment.

**Policies:**

1. Support the retention of 20% of the land area for green space within the urban area of Electoral Area 'G'.
2. If access to lands in consideration for park land, green space, or natural areas dedication may result in negative impacts to an environmentally sensitive area and/or feature, the Regional District of Nanaimo should consider options for restricting public access.
3. In reviewing Zoning Amendment Applications the Regional District of Nanaimo shall consider the retention and enhancement of green space.
4. The Regional District of Nanaimo will encourage the retention of provincial and federal Crown lands within the Plan Area as substantial contributors to the over all amount of green space enjoyed by Plan Area residents.
5. Participation by residents of Electoral Area 'G' in green space preservation and planning is encouraged.

**Advocacy Policies:**

6. The province is encouraged to maintain its Crown land holdings within the Plan Area in recognition that these lands are valued by the residents of Electoral Area 'G' for resource and recreational use.
7. Private managed forest companies are encouraged to consider conducting forestry operations in a socially-responsible way that protects the environment and minimizes the aesthetic impact on the community.

**6.3 Protected Areas**

The Plan Area contains a provincial wildlife management area adjacent to the coast line and a national wildlife area at the mouth of the Little Qualicum River. The Nature Trust also holds conservation land holdings adjacent to the Rivers Edge subdivision, at the mouth of the Englishman River, and at the mouth of the Little Qualicum River. These lands comprise a significant portion of the green space within Electoral Area 'G'. The environmental sensitivity of these lands along with their contribution towards the green space network warrants protection to ensure that these resources are preserved for future generations.

The above-mentioned lands differ for the most part from community parks in that they have been designated for conservation and wildlife management in recognition of their environmental sensitivity and ecological value and therefore should be left in a natural state with the primary

focus on protection of environmentally sensitive features and ecosystems and little human disturbance. In order to meet conservation and wildlife management objectives, careful consideration must be given to the management of these areas including recreational uses.

The following objectives and policies have been identified in recognition of Plan Area residents' desire to protect the environment and preserve and increase the amount of green space within the Plan Area.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure that development does not negatively impact conservation lands, the national wildlife area, or the provincial wildlife management area.
2. Recognize the importance of regionally significant parks and natural features.
3. Ensure that public access into these lands does not negatively affect environmentally sensitive features or ecosystems for which they were designated to protect
4. Support the acquisition of sensitive lands for conservation.
5. Encourage cooperation between senior agencies, the Regional District of Nanaimo and its partner municipalities, non-government organizations, and other stakeholders to work towards the identification and preservation of ecologically sensitive lands.

**Policy:**

1. Existing and desirable conservation lands and wildlife management areas are shown on Map No. 4 – Park land, Green Space, Natural Areas, Institutional, Schools, and Cultural Facilities.
2. The development of a protected areas strategy for the Plan Area is supported.
3. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall consider acquisition of conservation lands in accordance with Section 6.4 of this Plan.
4. Trails and other passive recreational uses may be permitted in conservation areas only where the proposed use does not adversely affect an environmentally sensitive feature and/or ecosystem.

**6.4 Acquisition of Park land, Green Space, and Natural Areas**

Park land, green space, and natural areas can be acquired through various means such as a requirement of rezoning, land dedication through subdivision, private donation, eco-gifting, or by purchase by the Regional District of Nanaimo or a private land holding entity such as a land trust or other conservation-based organization.

The following objectives and policies work towards the Plan Area resident's desire to maintain and enhance park land, green space, and natural areas within Electoral Area 'G'.

**Objectives:**

1. Support an innovative and multi-faceted approach to the acquisition of park land, green space, and natural areas.
2. Provide a framework for the consideration of proposals for the dedication of park land, green space, and natural areas.
3. Ensure that future park land, green space, and natural areas acquisition meets the objectives of Electoral Area 'G' residents.
4. Encourage the private sector and non-government organizations to participate in the designation of park lands, green space, and natural areas.

**Policies:**

1. Pursuant to the **Local Government Act**, at the time of subdivision, the Regional District shall determine whether the owner of land being subdivided shall:
  - a. Provide, without compensation, useable park land equivalent to 5% of the parcel size and in a location acceptable to the RDN; or
  - b. Pay to the Regional District an amount that equals 5% of the market value of all of the land being subdivided; or
  - c. Provide a combination of land and cash to the satisfaction of the Regional Board.
2. The Regional District of Nanaimo may consider accepting park land at the time of subdivision or rezoning on any lands within the Plan Area where there is an opportunity for park dedication to meet one or more of the following preferred park criteria:
  - a. The land improves access to water including the ocean and any other watercourse;
  - b. The land is identified for park land, trail, or conservation area by this Plan or any other Regional District of Nanaimo parks and trails plan;
  - c. The land connects parks and natural areas, contributing to an interconnected greenways network that links neighbourhoods to parks, schools and cultural resources;
  - d. The land includes areas for the protection of environmentally sensitive lands to be retained in a natural, undisturbed state or archaeological features to be protected, although, generally the protection of environmentally sensitive lands should be in addition to the minimum park land dedication requirements pursuant to the **Local Government Act**;
  - e. The land includes viewpoints and opportunities for nature appreciation and/or focal features such as a public square or community gathering space in village centres;

- f. Land that is a single contiguous parcel(s) is preferred where other park land acquisition criteria are not considered to offer a greater community benefit.
  - g. The subject property contains a locally or regionally significant feature or ecosystem that if preserved or managed would result in a net benefit to the community; and
  - h. Notwithstanding lands deemed appropriate for environmental protection by a qualified environmental professional, the land in question must be useable land that would be suitable for a multitude of recreational uses such as baseball diamonds, tennis courts, children's tot lots, and basketball courts; and,
  - i. Preference shall be given to the acquisition of those lands identified on Map No. 4 for future community and regional parks, trails and corridors, and natural areas. However, other lands may be considered in accordance with the criteria outlined in this policy.
3. The Englishman River, French Creek, and the Little Qualicum River and associated upland riparian areas have been specifically identified as 'Desired Park/Conservation Lands' on Map No. 4 (Park lands, Green spaces, Trails, Natural Areas, and Community Facilities) due to their environmental sensitivity, their importance to the Plan Area, and in order to preserve intact riparian corridors, which may also provide opportunities for low impact walking and/or multi-use trails.
4. This Plan recognizes that the residents of French Creek desire to consider options for the acquisition of additional park land adjacent to French Creek on the lands located on the corner of Highway 19A and Columbia Drive.
5. Other lands designated 'desired Park/Conservation Lands on Map No. 4 have been designated in order to preserve intact areas with mature forest and in order to ensure that the future park needs of Plan Area residents are met.
6. Proposed park land and conservation areas must meet the criteria outlined in 6.4(2) above.
7. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall when considering an amendment application, consider requiring dedication of land for the purpose of park land, green space, and/or natural areas as a condition of rezoning. Park land acceptance should be in accordance with Policy 2 above.
8. Innovative and multi-faceted approaches to the acquisition of park land, green space, and natural areas may be supported which may include, but are not limited to, eco-gifting, private public partnerships, private land donation, conservation covenants, and density transfer.

***Advocacy Policies:***

9. Non-government agencies and conservation-based organizations are encouraged to continue to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo and with the private sector to acquire and manage lands suitable for conservation.



10. Non-government agencies and conservation-based organizations are encouraged to hold and enforce conservation-based covenants on behalf of Plan Area residents and the Regional District of Nanaimo.

## **7.0 - Institutional Uses, And Improving Servicing Efficiency**

### **7.1 Schools**

Schools and school facilities play an important role in the Plan Area not only for education, but also for providing opportunities for community recreation, cultural activities, and educational programs during non-school hours. As well, decision making regarding the location of future schools is aided if it is known where new residential development will be located. New schools, especially for primary aged children, are best located close to where families with school age children will be living thus reducing the need for bussing.

The School District No. 69 Board is responsible for the administration of school facilities in the Plan Area. Currently, Oceanside Middle School is the only school in the Plan Area. Children in Electoral Area 'G' also go to schools located in Qualicum Beach and Parksville.

The current enrolment trends in School District No. 69 are unlikely to result in the need for additional school facilities in the School District until at least 2012. Electoral Area 'G' residents have indicated that they would support continued monitoring and consideration, by School District No. 69, of the changing demographic trends within the School District and the school facility needs of the Plan Area, as well as community involvement in future school facility planning.

The Plan supports a strategic approach to school site planning in order to ensure continued availability of school facilities which transcends electoral and jurisdictional boundaries. The Plan will also ensure a coordinated approach for school site and parks and open space acquisition to ensure coordination of these services.

#### ***Objectives:***

1. Work with School District No. 69 in planning for future school facility needs as well as planning for parks and open space in the Plan Area.
2. Promote continued communication between School District No. 69 and the Regional District to maximize efficiency of resources.

#### ***Policies:***

1. Future school sites shall be supported in urban areas with a focus on the nodal centre at Wembley Mall. Existing and proposed schools, as identified by the School District, are illustrated on Map No. 4 (Park land, Green space, Natural Areas, Schools, Institutional, and Cultural Facilities).
2. The continued availability of schools and school grounds to Electoral Area 'G' residents for recreation, cultural activities and educational programs during non-school hours is supported.
3. The Regional District shall consult with School District No. 69 as needed and shall request input on the following:

- a. the actual and anticipated needs for school facilities and support services;
  - b. the size, number, location, access and service areas of future school sites;
  - c. when school sites are anticipated to be required;
  - d. how existing and proposed school facilities in Electoral Area 'G' relate to existing and proposed community facilities in the Plan Area.
4. In considering an amendment application, the Regional District of Nanaimo in cooperation with School District No. 69 may as a condition of rezoning require school site dedication to meet the needs of the community and such dedication may be considered a community amenity in accordance with Section 11 of this Plan.
5. Where there is an agreement between the School District and the Regional District pursuant to Section 937 of the *Local Government Act*, all subdivision of land in the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan Area shall comply with the school site acquisition requirements, pursuant to the *Local Government Act* and the Regional District shall determine if the owner of the proposed land being subdivided shall be required to provide:
- a. land for school purposes in a location selected by and acceptable to the School District, where it is consistent with an agreement pursuant to the *Local Government Act*; and/or
  - b. cash-in-lieu payment pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, where the land is determined not to be suitable for school site purposes by School District No. 69; and/or
  - c. land for park purposes pursuant to Section 6.4 of this Plan.

***Advocacy Policies:***

6. The Ministry of Transportation, in considering applications for subdivision, is encouraged to consult with School District No. 69 to consider school bus routing and access in public road way dedication.

**7.2 Institutional Uses and Community, Social, and Cultural Services**

In addition to schools and parks, community, social and cultural services, in the Plan Area, are provided by a wide variety of public and private non-profit organizations. The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan provides a framework to assist in future planning of community cultural and social services, including cultural services provided through religious or service organizations.

***Objectives:***

1. Establish a framework to assist in future planning of community, social and cultural services.
2. Encourage coordination, efficiency and compatibility of community, social and cultural services.

**Policies:**

1. The locations of existing Institutional uses are illustrated on Map No. 4 (park land, green space, natural areas, schools, institutional, and cultural facilities).
2. Direct the location of institutional facilities for public assembly for educational, religious, cultural and service organizations to urban areas. In particular the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre.
3. The introduction of zoning bylaw amendments to provide opportunities for housing special needs' populations and establishing other community care facilities within this designation within the Urban Containment Boundary as defined by the Regional Growth Strategy is supported.
4. The concept of establishing medical or dental service clinics and establishing lands reserved within Area 'G' for future institutional uses such as trade or technical schools, a Jr. College, a seniors' residential care facility and in the longer term, a health care facility in cooperation with the Town of Qualicum Beach, the City of Parksville and service providers may be supported within the Urban Containment Boundary as defined by the Regional Growth Strategy.
5. The Regional District shall consult with the Vancouver Island Health Authority and shall request input on the following:
  - a. the actual and anticipated health care facilities and support services, and
  - b. the size, number, type, location, service areas, and timing of anticipated health facilities.
6. Establishing public or private community information and drop-in medical centres within the Urban Area of this Plan is supported.
7. The services of the volunteer fire fighting and emergency services provided by the Volunteer Fire Departments in the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville shall continue to be supported.
8. The strategic location of fire halls, ambulance and police stations or substations in close proximity to urban centres shall be supported. Improved coordination of services to serve the growing needs of Electoral Area 'G', the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville shall be supported.

**7.3 Community Water Servicing**

The Regional District of Nanaimo operates the San Pareil, French Creek (Sandpiper), Morningstar Creek, Surfside, and Englishman River Water Local Service Areas. There is also a private water utility, currently operated by EPCOR Water Services French Creek Operations, within the French Creek area. There is also a water improvement district known as the (Little Qualicum Waterworks District) that provides water servicing in the Dashwood Area. The French Creek and Morningstar Creek Water Local Service Areas are wholly within the Urban Containment Boundary, while the EPCOR is primarily within the Urban Containment Boundary. The other water service areas are existing systems located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

Community Water throughout the Plan Area is supplied through a series of groundwater wells located throughout the Plan Area as well as surface water extraction from French Creek and Little Qualicum River. Some parts of the *local* water service areas are affected by limited groundwater supply as well as water quality issues such as elevated levels of iron and manganese. These concerns are further exacerbated by the fact that there is a lack of reliable data on the location, quantity, and quality of groundwater resources in the Plan Area. This poses a challenge to both the RDN and the other water service providers in planning for future water supplies.

The limited groundwater supply is of special concern within the UBC, as the densities supported by this OCP can not occur until a sustainable groundwater supply is developed.

Groundwater supplies in the Regional District of Nanaimo French Creek Bulk Water Service Area will be supplemented in the future by water supply from the Englishman River via the Arrowsmith Water Service. However, it is not anticipated that this additional water capacity would become available until at least 2012.

Recent trends in climate change, variation in precipitation pattern, along with increased development pressure has led to a heightened awareness of groundwater issues and the need for reliable and sustainable community water services that serve both the existing and future needs of the community without jeopardizing the long-term viability of groundwater resources in the Plan Area. The following objectives and policies work towards Goal No. 7 of the Regional Growth Strategy (efficient services), which in this case, includes ensuring that development does not exceed the water servicing capacity.

**Objectives:**

1. Recognize existing water service areas outside of the UCB, but not support the expansion of existing service areas or creation of new water service areas outside of the UCB other than to address health and environmental concerns.
2. Ensure that development does not exceed the servicing capacity of the local water service provider(s) and/or negatively affect groundwater resources within the Plan Area
3. Ensure that the densities supported by this Plan within the UCB do not occur without the provision of a sustainable community water supply
4. Ensure that servicing approaches for neighbourhood centres and adjacent municipalities are compatible.
5. Integrate future expansions to the community water systems with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach systems, as part of the servicing strategy within the UBC.
6. Support the use of proven and innovative techniques and technologies that encourage and/or result in the efficient use of water resources.

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**Policies:**

1. The provision of community water services shall be supported to all urban areas within the UCB. The locations of existing community water service planning areas are shown on Map No. 5 (Community Water Service Planning Areas). Without community water servicing, the densities supported within the UCB are not supported.
2. It is recognized that there are existing community water services located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary. However, this Plan does not support the creation of new community water systems or the extension of existing systems outside of the UCB unless there is evidence provided by a qualified professional that the existing on-site services have failed and an ensuing health problem is evident, and where there is no alternative means of resolving the supply problem through on-site measures.
3. Notwithstanding Policy No. 2 above, approved extensions shall not result in additional development beyond what is permitted with no community services. To implement this Policy, the RDN will use restrictive covenants and establish local service areas requiring landowners in the service extension area to pay for the capital and operating costs of service provision.
4. Proposals for new groundwater supplies must meet all Regional District of Nanaimo engineering requirements and the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines. An aquifer assessment and an impact assessment of the subject property and neighbouring properties shall be required.
5. This Plan supports the development of a rating system for all new public drinking water well sources from a quantity perspective to ensure long-term viability and performance.
6. Zoning Amendment Applications for properties within the Urban Containment Boundary, that propose to increase the density or intensity of use shall not be supported unless an approved service connection from a community water provider is provided.
7. The location and design of community water infrastructure shall be fully integrated with the systems in the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach, and shall avoid the disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas.
8. Development cost charge bylaws for community water services shall be amended in accordance with the build out unit projections of this Plan, in the urban area.
9. The use of Latecomer Agreements, pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, shall be supported. Revenue generated under these Agreements shall be required from new development only.
10. Where publicly held institutional facilities are approved for development consistent with this Plan, Board approval of a connection to community water and sewer services is supported.
11. The development of a Regional Bulk Water System to complement existing groundwater sources for domestic use in French Creek is supported.
12. The suitability of RDN acquisition of the EPCOR community water system should be considered.

13. Further subdivision at densities greater than one dwelling unit per hectare shall only proceed with the provision of a community water supply to each lot.
14. New groundwater sources proposed to be included within a community water system shall, in addition to meeting provincial standards for quality and quantity, be reviewed to ensure that the subject well(s) has capacity to endure changes in groundwater levels as a result of climate change and changes in precipitation patterns.
15. Infrastructure in close proximity to fish habitat or sensitive areas shall not be supported without prior consultation with the Ministry of Environment and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, to mitigate any negative impact on fisheries and their habitat.
16. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall consult with the private water service provider and Little Qualicum Waterworks District (LQWD) as needed to discuss water servicing capacities, proposed expansions, and future upgrade requirements in order to ensure that densities supported by this Plan and other Regional District of Nanaimo regulations can be serviced and are compatible with and do not have a negative impact on groundwater resources within the Plan Area.
17. This Plan supports and encourages innovative techniques and technologies that promote the efficient use of water resources including, but not limited to, gray water recycling, use of low maintenance landscaping, low flow plumbing fixtures, incentive programs, reduction in the amount of lawn surface area and/or top soil bylaws, and water conservation based pricing.

***Advocacy Policies:***

18. All water service providers are encouraged to record, gather, and analyse groundwater data in order to gain better understanding of groundwater resources within the Plan Area to ensure the long-term viability of a sustainable water supply within its service area.
19. All water service providers are encouraged to work with the RDN to develop a water conservation strategy.
20. The Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville are encouraged to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo to promote water conservation including consistency between jurisdictions with respect to watering restrictions.

**7.4 Community Sewer and Drainage Servicing**

The long-term sewer servicing strategy for the Electoral Area 'G' Plan Area is to have all urban areas fully serviced by community sewer. This Plan recognizes that there are areas outside of the Urban Containment Boundary that are serviced with community sewer to address health and environmental concerns.

There are three Community Sewer Local Service Areas within the Plan Area: the Surfside Sewer Service Area, the French Creek Sewer Service Area, and the Barclay Crescent Sewer Service Area.

The French Creek Pollution Control Centre (FCPCC) treats sewage from residential, commercial and industrial users in Parksville, Electoral Area 'G', and Qualicum Beach. After being treated,

the final effluent is discharged into the Strait of Georgia through a long and deep outfall with multiple diffusers to ensure rapid and complete mixing with the receiving waters.

The FCPCC is currently nearing its designed capacity of 24,000 people. However, with on-going upgrading and other optimization measures the plant capacity can be increased by approximately 10 percent to a maximum of 26,400 people. Beyond 26,400 people may require major capital works including an expansion, which, at this time, is anticipated to occur in 2013.

There is currently one drainage local service area located in the River's Edge Subdivision. The Regional District of Nanaimo continues to have the authority to establish local drainage service areas to address local concerns related to rain water management.

**Objectives:**

1. Identify Community Sewer and Restricted Community Sewer Planning Areas.
2. Minimize the impact on the natural environment during service extension and construction.
3. Design compatible servicing approaches for neighbourhood centres and urban neighbourhoods.
4. Restrict community sewer service to urban areas, and only permit community sewer services areas outside of urban areas to service existing development to address health and environmental concerns.
5. Integrate future expansions to the community sewer and drainage systems with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach systems, as part of the servicing strategy within the Plan Area.
6. Ensure that adequate treatment capacity is available to service proposed development within the urban area of Electoral Area 'G'.
7. Reduce the need for rain water management infrastructure through the use of natural processes and development techniques that minimize rain water flows.

**Policy:**

1. The Community Sewer Service Planning Area is designated on Map No. 6 (Community Sewer Service Planning Areas).
2. The Community Sewer Service Planning Area is the area of land that may be provided with community sewer service for the purpose of facilitating increased development. This Planning Area is only supported on lands within the Urban Containment Boundary.
3. The Restricted Community Sewer Service Planning Area is the area of land that may be provided with community sewer service to service areas of existing development in order to mitigate or prevent environmental and health concerns. It should be noted that there may be areas other than those shown on Map No. 6 as Restricted Community Sewer Service Areas, that are experiencing or are likely to experience septic failure and these areas may be considered for inclusion into the Restricted Community Sewer Service Area without an amendment to this Plan subject to compliance with Policies 5 and 6 below.



4. The provision of community sewer services to those areas of land designated as within the Community Sewer Service Planning Area is supported subject to an engineering feasibility review.
5. Community sewer service shall not be provided to parcels within an existing or proposed Restricted Community Sewer Service Planning Area to facilitate additional development beyond that supported by the land use designation on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations) and corresponding Plan policies or what is permitted with no community sewer services in the current zoning bylaw. To advance this Policy, the RDN will use restrictive covenants to limit the uses to those supported by this Policy.
6. The inclusion of properties into the Restricted Community Sewer Service Planning Area may be considered by the RDN Board when there is evidence from a qualified professional that an existing sewage disposal system has failed, an ensuing health problem is evident and/or there is no alternative means of resolving the disposal problem through on-site measures, including pump and haul, to address environmental or health concerns.
7. The use of pump and haul services for the removal of wastewater shall only be supported where an existing system has failed and/or where there is no alternative means of resolving the treatment problem through on-site measures for existing developed lots.
8. Where publicly held institutional facilities are approved for development, a connection to the local community sewer service is supported.
9. Where possible, community sewer service infrastructure shall be located in a manner that avoids the disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas and poses no significant negative impact on the environment. In cases where this is not possible, infrastructure in close proximity to fisheries or sensitive areas shall not be supported without prior consultation with the Ministry of Environment and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to mitigate any negative impact on fisheries and their habitat.
10. The Regional District of Nanaimo shall continually monitor the current capacity levels of the FCPPC in order to ensure appropriate coordination and timing of the future expansion of the FCPPC and to support development in the French Creek Sewer Service Area, including the provision for the service expansion needs of the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach. Improvements to the French Creek Pollution Control Centre will be ongoing including the reduction of odours.
11. The location and design of sewer infrastructure shall be fully integrated with the systems in the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach.
12. Development Cost Charge Bylaws for Community Sewer Services shall be amended in accordance with the build out unit projections of this Plan, in the urban area.
13. The use of Latecomer Agreements, pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, shall be supported.
14. The Regional District shall generally require that further residential development only proceed by way of a community sewer system where:

- a. a development proposal will exceed a density of five dwelling units per hectare; and,
  - b. the site is serviced by a community water system.
15. The use of private package sewer treatment plants on existing lots located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary that discharge high quality effluent are encouraged for environmental protection purposes, but shall not be considered as community sewer services for the purpose of determining permitted density or minimum parcel size. All private package treatment plants must be engineered, properly installed, inspected, and maintained.
16. On-site retention and re-use of rain water is strongly encouraged.
17. The Regional District of Nanaimo may consider establishing drainage in local service areas where local soil conditions do not support on-site rain water management.
18. The development of rain water management standards for the Plan Area shall be supported.
19. Rain water generated from all development within the Plan Area should be managed in accordance with Section 2.7 of this Plan. The installation of storm water infrastructure to convey rain water off site is generally not considered to meet the objectives of this Plan and should only be used where on-site rain water management methods are not feasible given local soil conditions.

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## 8.0 - Creating a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy

The purpose of this section is to identify the economic strengths in the community and to present the community's objectives and policies for acceptable economic activity in Electoral Area 'G'. The semi-rural nature of the Plan Area has, in the past, functioned to limit any cohesive economic strategy for the Plan Area. Residents of Electoral Area 'G' have indicated that future economic activity should be restricted to appropriate locations in order to protect the integrity of rural areas and residential neighbourhoods. As a result, new activity in urban areas will be restricted to resort commercial and local commercial shops and services in existing commercial designated lands or directed to Wembley Neighbourhood Centre.

In rural areas, the Plan will support efficient resource use and rural land protection to maximize the productivity of agricultural lands, promote sustainable production on forest lands, and establish a strategy for aggregate resources which is environmentally responsible and complemented with the development strategies of the Plan.

The French Creek Boat Harbour contributes to the economy through marine-related commercial activity managed by the French Creek Harbour Authority.

The Official Community Plan will provide a cooperative approach to ensure that the objectives for establishing a vibrant and sustainable economy can be achieved while protecting the environment and community character of Electoral Area 'G'.

### 8.1 Agriculture

Agriculture is an important economic activity in Electoral Area 'G'. The Plan Area is predominantly rural land much of which is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Land within the ALR is subject to the provisions of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is the principal agency responsible for regulating the use and subdivision of land within the ALR.

There is considerable farming activity in Electoral Area 'G' including dairy farms and pig farming, as well as numerous hobby farms. Farming activity is important to the economy of the Plan Area and the Region and should be protected and supported. The Plan will protect existing rural resources from encroachment of urban uses through its containment strategy and rural protection policies.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Support and encourage agricultural activities in the Plan Area for present and future food production.
2. Recognize the needs and activities of agricultural operations when considering non-agricultural uses on adjacent lands.
3. Encourage sustainable and environmentally-sound farming practices which protect surface water, domestic drinking water, irrigation water, and soil quality.
4. Ensure that appropriate levels of groundwater and surface water are available for agricultural needs.

5. Minimize conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.
6. Support and promote the economic viability of the agricultural sector.

**Policies:**

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Plan, all lands within the ALCR are subject to the provisions of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the regulations and orders of the ALC. The Act and regulations generally prohibit or restrict non-farm use and subdivision of ALR lands, unless otherwise permitted or exempt.
2. A full range of agricultural and complementary uses in the ALR is supported and value-added activities are encouraged that can improve farm viability. It is recognized that approval from the ALC may be required.
3. Broad-based agricultural activities including livestock and horticultural uses of a farm, and the processing, production, distribution and sale of agricultural products grown and reared on that farm, shall also be encouraged and supported on agricultural lands. In order to ensure that such activities, including those of an intensive nature, do not give rise to conflicts with adjoining uses or the environment, the RND requires that they be conducted in accordance with recognized codes of practice, standards and environmental guidelines.
4. Farmland<sup>13</sup> shall be protected from incompatible uses by designating Farmland<sup>14</sup> Protection Development Permit Areas (on Map No. 10 of this Plan) to ensure that an adequate buffer is provided on lands adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve where there is new development adjoining property in the ALR.
5. The design and layout of subdivision on lands adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve should consider the current edition of the Ministry of Agriculture's publication titled "*Guide to Edge Planning – Promoting Compatibility Along Urban-Agricultural Edges*".
6. The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission's mandate of protecting farm land by the retention of larger land holdings for present and future agricultural food production is supported. Lands within the ALR are generally included within the 'Rural Resource' and 'Rural' land use designations as identified on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations).
7. A proposed subdivision adjoining farming areas shall provide buffering areas as required by the Approving Officer or, where designated as a Development Permit Area, shall comply with any buffering requirements and guidelines to protect farming areas pursuant to Section 10 of this Plan.
8. The location and construction of new roads, utilities or communications rights-of-way should be sited to avoid the ALR wherever possible. Where ALR land is required, these rights-of-way should be sited in a manner that will cause minimal impact on the agricultural operations. Alignments should be established in consultation with affected local landowners and approval is required from the BC Agricultural Land Commission.

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<sup>13</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

9. The Regional District of Nanaimo should consider the formation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee.

***Advocacy Policies:***

10. The ALC is encouraged to deny Subdivision, within the ALR, to a parcel size less than 8 hectares or non-farm uses where it would reduce the potential agricultural productivity of the land or where it would be contrary to the urban boundary and containment strategy of this Plan.

**8.2 Forestry**

Forestry is major land use in Electoral Area 'G'. In addition to its economic value, residents and visitors recognize private resource lands as one source of the outstanding and unique amenities of the area. Future utilization of these lands must recognize both the public and private ownership of this resource in respect to its aesthetic and environmental value, and as an economic generator for the local economy. Accordingly, consideration may be given to opportunities that generate broader community benefits in association with these assets.

In recognition of their value to the community, residents have expressed a desire to protect forest lands and related activities. Also supported are sustainable and environmentally sound harvesting and forest regeneration practices and the restriction of intensive processing activities in proximity to established or future residential development.

Forest lands are predominantly managed through private forestry interests on private managed forest lands or through tenure on provincial crown lands. Policies that relate to matters beyond the jurisdiction of the Regional District are intended to help guide senior governments in their decision-making processes.

***Objectives:***

1. Support and maintain the long-term viability of the natural resource land base and protect it from activities and land uses that may diminish its resource value or potential.
2. Protect and support forest land resources for harvesting and reproduction on productive forestry land.
3. Support the public's use of forest lands for recreational enjoyment and education.
4. Minimize the impact of resource operations and activities on the natural environment and on neighbouring land uses and development.

***Policies:***

1. The retention of large land holdings for sustainable forestry production is supported.
2. Private managed forest lands, except those located within the Agricultural Land Reserve at the date of the adoption of this Plan are designated rural resource as shown on Map No. 3.
3. The location of Private Managed Forest Lands is shown on Map No. 7 (Features That Support the Economy).

3. Subdivision of land within the rural resource land use designation to a parcel size smaller than 50 hectares is not supported. Subdivision of land within the rural resource land use designation is not supported where it would reduce the future productivity and sustainability of forest land or where it would be contrary to the urban containment strategy or rural integrity policy of this Plan.
4. Despite Policy 3 above, the RDN may consider applications to permit development within a smaller footprint and/or a density in accordance with Section 5.2 of this Plan. It is noted that a Regional Growth Strategy amendment is required.
5. For Zoning Amendment Applications to allow non-forestry use of land within the rural resource designation, the RDN shall consider the impact on forest activities and the sustainability of the forest resource.
6. Developments proposed adjacent to private managed forest lands or Crown lands with forestry potential should be designed in a manner that minimizes conflicts between the proposed development and the forest management activities. Buffering to prevent wind damage to merchantable timber should be provided on the land proposed for development. Development shall include the provision of environmentally acceptable methods of handling surface water flows from upslope forested lands.

***Advocacy Policies:***

7. Forestry operators are encouraged to consider the impact of forestry operations on the natural environment and neighbouring land uses.

**8.3 *Aggregates and Other Extractable Resources***

The predominant mineral resource within the Plan Area is gravel, with concentrations south of Parksville, along the Inland Island Highway. There may also be potential for coal bed gas and other energy development potential.

The regulation of aggregate extraction falls primarily within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources. The Ministry is responsible for operational issues, such as public/worker safety, environmental protection, closure, and reclamation of aggregate operations. The Regional District, through zoning, is only able to regulate areas where processing of aggregate resources is permitted. All mining and mineral exploration activities are subject to the *Mines Act* and *Mineral Tenure Act*.

***Objectives:***

1. Protect lands with aggregate or mineral resources from development, which would render them inaccessible.
2. Minimize conflicts between extraction activities and adjacent land uses.
3. Support site rehabilitation and reclamation of mined landscapes.
4. Support the identification and mitigation of environmental impacts from existing and proposed resource extraction activities.

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**Policies:**

1. Lands with known aggregate or mineral resource potential are generally included in the Rural Resource designation of this Plan as shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations). Zoning to allow processing activities, which are directly related to mineral or aggregate extraction, may be considered by the RDN without an amendment to this Plan.
2. The management of aggregate resources to minimize the environmental impacts, particularly the impact on groundwater resources, is supported.
3. Alternative development and reclamation strategies shall be supported where they are consistent with the policies in this Plan and the Regional Growth Strategy.
4. Gravel extraction is not supported without the appropriate conservation and reclamation Plans.
5. The Ministry of Energy and Mines and Petroleum Resources' requirements for a performance bond is supported to ensure proper reclamation of altered landscapes.
6. The Regional District of Nanaimo may consider applications to rezone existing gravel pits without an amendment to this Plan to allow primary processing and related activities associated with gravel extraction within the '*Rural*' or '*Rural Resource*' land use designation as shown of Map No. 3 – Land Use Designations of this Plan provided that:
  - a. a conceptual Plan for the proposed use including a long term vision for the property is provided;
  - b. a reclamation Plan acceptable to the Regional District of Nanaimo and any adjacent municipality is submitted by the applicant which identifies how land will be reverted back to rural activities through reclamation, to ensure that the lands will continue to be available for rural land uses;
  - c. the proposal satisfies all groundwater resources policies established by Section 2.6 of this Plan;
  - d. An environmental management Plan is submitted by the applicant outlining environmental protection and monitoring procedures;
  - e. the proposal addresses concerns related to visual integrity and buffering of the Inland Island Highway if applicable;
  - f. consideration is given to future inclusion of the subject property and surrounding land into the City of Parksville or Qualicum Beach and the compatibility of future development with adjoining areas within each municipality;
  - g. where the land is in the ALR, support from the BC Agricultural Land Commission is required prior to consideration;
  - h. where the land is adjoining the Inland Island Highway, approvals from the MOT will be required prior to consideration; and,

- i. The Regional District of Nanaimo may require the posting of a bond or other acceptable security (if deemed appropriate) so as to ensure compliance with the conditions of the permit.
7. Zoning amendments that have unmitigated impacts to the natural environment including groundwater resources shall not be supported.

***Advocacy Policies:***

8. The Ministry of Energy Mines, and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR) in considering applications for resource extraction activities is encouraged to:
  - a. consider the environmental impacts, including the impacts on the quality and quantity of groundwater of the proposed activity and ensure that all impacts are appropriately mitigated;
  - b. require bonding and/or security to ensure that site reclamation is complete to the satisfaction of the MEMPR and the RDN; and,
  - c. consider the impacts of the extraction activity including, but not limited to noise, traffic, dust, odour, vibration, and other quality of life values.

**8.4 Industrial Land Use Designation**

The Plan Area has a limited amount of industrial development. Given the existing industrial lands within the City of Parksville and within Electoral Area 'F', the intent of this Plan is to recognize the existing industrial uses and only support minor expansion of industrial uses within the Plan Area. The Plan also promotes the re-designation of existing industrial sites to less intrusive light industrial uses which would be more compatible with adjoining rural residential land uses.

***Objectives:***

1. Support appropriate industrial development in existing industrial sites.
2. Ensure that the form, character, and scale of industrial development follow community preference.
3. Avoid conflicts between industrial and residential uses.
4. Provide opportunity for a limited amount of industrial development in the Plan Area.

***Policies:***

1. This Plan recognizes the existing industrial operations in the Plan Area. Future industrial development will be restricted to the industrial land use designation as shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations).
2. The further designation or expansion of land for industrial purposes is not supported.
3. Notwithstanding Policy 2 above, this Plan supports a review of the Electoral Area boundary between Electoral Area 'G' and Electoral Area 'F' to determine the feasibility of



adjusting the boundaries of Electoral Area 'F' to include lands located on the south side of Highway 19 that may have industrial potential that are currently within Electoral Area 'G' which are contiguous with the existing industrial lands within Electoral Area 'F'.

4. A minimum parcel size of 2 hectares shall be supported for sites designated industrial by this Plan.
5. All existing industrial zoned lands may retain their existing zoning. However, the Regional District will consider alternative proposals if it removes or reduces a conflict between industrial uses and adjacent residential uses and is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy policies and the urban containment policies in this Plan.
6. All industrial development shall be conducted in accordance with the Environmental Protection measures identified in Section 2.0 and subsections of this Plan.
7. Development Permit Areas shall be established to guide the form and character of industrial development in existing industrial sites. Compliance with the development permit area guidelines in the zoning bylaw and objectives<sup>15</sup> of Section 10 of this Plan shall be required including buffering requirements from adjoining uses.
8. Guidelines for the form and character of development or redevelopment compatible with the City of Parksville and the visual integrity of the Inland Island Highway is supported.
9. The expansion, development or redevelopment of existing industrial sites shall consider the adequacy of the road pattern for traffic generated the environmental impacts of the proposed development, and the buffering and screening of sites.

### **8.5 Commercial Land Use Designation**

Commercial uses in the Plan Area include local commercial and resort commercial uses both within and outside of the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB). Commercial designated sites are identified on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations) and Map No. 7 (Features that Support the Economy).

#### ***Objectives:***

1. Balance economic growth with the protection of the environment and the maintenance of rural and coastal residential neighbourhood values in Electoral Area 'G'.
2. Support the development of new local commercial shops and services at existing commercially designated properties and within the neighbourhood centres.
3. Ensure that the character, form and scale of commercial development complement community preference and is compatible with surrounding uses.

#### ***Policies:***

1. The commercial land use designation is shown on Map No. 3 (Land Use Designations).

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<sup>15</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

2. Sites designated commercial by this Plan in urban areas outside of neighbourhood centres, may be considered for rezoning to provide for potential redevelopment with alternative forms of land use including recreational, institutional, and small-scale neighbourhood commercial or mixed residential commercial, with the maximum number of residential units not exceeding 15 units per hectare, and will not take the form of highway strip commercial development.
3. Sites designated commercial by this Plan located outside of the UCB shall be restricted to resort commercial uses. The rezoning of any commercially designated site located outside of the UCB to permit other forms of commercial use is not supported.
4. A minimum parcel size of 2 hectares shall be supported for sites designated commercial by this Plan located outside of the UCB.
5. Lands designated commercial by this Plan located inside the UCB shall have a flexible minimum parcel size which is dependent on the availability of community water and community sewer servicing and must be suitable for the use(s) being proposed taking into consideration areas for development, parking, and landscaping.
6. Expansion of the Commercial land use designation outside of the UCB is not supported.
7. The expansion, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial sites shall consider the adequacy of the road pattern for traffic generated, and the buffering and screening of sites.
8. All commercial development shall be conducted in accordance with the environmental protection measures identified in Section 2.0 of this Plan.
9. This Plan supports and recognizes the existing commercial and marine related activities associated with the French Creek Harbour. It is also recognized that the French Creek Harbour is under the jurisdiction of the French Creek Harbour Authority and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
10. Development Permit Areas for the form and character of commercial sites shall be established. Compliance with the development permit area guidelines in the zoning bylaw and objectives<sup>16</sup> in Section 10 of this Plan is required. Should lands be rezoned to commercial where supported by this Plan, the subject lands shall be included in the form and character Development Permit Area.
11. The Regional District's business licensing powers may be requested to assist in the management of commercial uses in Electoral Area 'G'.
12. The use of land or buildings in Electoral Area 'G' for a casino, video gambling, slot machines or a gambling establishment is not supported.
13. Strata conversion of resort commercial uses to residential uses is not supported.
14. 'Highway strip' or 'big box' retail commercial development is not supported in Electoral Area 'G'.

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<sup>16</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

15. For the land legally described as: Lot A, District Lot 42, Nanoose Land District, Plan 30121 the use of the land should be restricted to seasonal campground only.

## **8.6 Home Based Business**

The trend towards owning and operating a home based business has been steadily increasing as people find it easier, and often more profitable, to run their own business. The Regional District of Nanaimo does not currently have a business licensing function and relies on a Home Based Business Registry to process and track home based businesses within the Plan Area. Home based businesses are an important contributing factor towards supporting and maintaining a vibrant and sustainable economy and when conducted in a responsible manner they help to build a sustainable community.

### ***Objective:***

1. Support home based business uses which have minimal impact on the neighbourhood and the rural character of the Plan Area.

### ***Policies:***

1. Home based business uses shall continue to be supported within the Plan Area.
2. Periodic reviews of the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw may be conducted to ensure that the regulations are compatible with the changing needs and trends of home based businesses, as well as the neighbourhoods in which these businesses are located.
3. The RDN should consider requesting business licensing powers to reinforce conformity with Regional District home based business regulations.
4. Home based business regulations of the RDN should be enforced where there is a contravention related to noise, odour, size, or appearance.

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## 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<sup>17</sup>**

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 and the French Creek Active Transportation Plan are supported in Electoral Area 'G'. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure 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 and bicycle routes/trails on Map No. 8 (Mobility Options and Road Network Plan) and the French Creek Active Transportation Plan are deemed vital to

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<sup>17</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.04, adopted December 6, 2022



- 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 under the French Creek Bridge or other connection to facilitate cyclists and pedestrians crossing across 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 for development adjacent to the French Creek Harbour and estuary. 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.
  10. The Regional District of Nanaimo will pursue opportunities with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to upgrade the existing French Creek bridge pedestrian crossing to a safe and comfortable active transportation crossing.
  11. Development occurring adjacent to French Creek, Englishman River, or Little Qualicum River will be subject to consideration for provisions of additional active transportation connections across these waterways.

***Advocacy Policies:***

1. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is requested to improve roadside conditions for cyclists and pedestrians during roadside maintenance and improvements, particularly on a walkway and bicycle route or part of a route connecting with the French Creek Active Transportation Network.
2. The Provincial Approving Officer is requested to require improved roadside conditions for cyclists and pedestrian at the time of subdivision, particularly on a walkway and bicycle route or part of a route connecting with the French Creek Active Transportation Network.

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### **9.4a French Creek Active Transportation Network<sup>17</sup>**

As the British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide describes, “active transportation most commonly refers to people walking or cycling, but can also include people rolling, using winter-based modes, or using water-based modes.” Active transportation can promote a more sustainable transportation network by providing safe and comfortable facilities for residents and visitors to use. In turn, the designation and construction of such facilities has implications for economic stability, community health, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with local transportation. The purpose of this section is to provide those travelling within French Creek in Electoral Area ‘G’ with enhanced provisions for future active transportation facilities throughout the community. To this effect, recommendations for appropriate objectives, policies, and implementation actions of the French Creek Active Transportation Plan are provided below and in Section 11.

#### ***Objectives:***

1. Provide active transportation facilities that are safe for all ages and abilities between French Creek neighbourhoods and community features.
2. Ensure linkage to active transportation networks in the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach.
3. Build the active transportation network with infrastructure to improve the user experience.

#### ***Policies:***

1. The Regional District of Nanaimo will pursue opportunities with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to provide safe and comfortable active transportation facilities adjacent to public roadways along proposed active transportation routes as illustrated on Map No. 8 of this Plan, the French Creek Active Transportation Plan, and other community trail connections identified by RDN Parks.
2. Active transportation routes will be prioritized to link neighbourhoods with parks, schools, waterfront areas, community focal features, neighbourhood centres, and mixed use areas as per Map No. 8 of this Plan, the French Creek Active Transportation Plan or other community trail network.
3. Development proposals are to include provisions for active transportation facilities along their frontage and community trail connections. Those omitting the provision for, or construction of, active transportation infrastructure are not supported. The acceptance of the proposal will be at the discretion of the RDN and is based on the ability to maintain the infrastructure.
4. The Regional District of Nanaimo will pursue opportunities with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to provide safe crossings for active modes along

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proposed active transportation routes as illustrated on Map No. 8 of this Plan and the French Creek Active Transportation Plan.

5. Facilities for active transportation should consider the goals, objectives, and design guidance of the French Creek Active Transportation Plan, as well as the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Active Transportation Design Guide.
6. Prioritize the installation of active transportation infrastructure along the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Links.
7. The Regional District of Nanaimo will encourage the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach to continue active transportation facilities along the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Links in those communities.
8. Wayfinding is to be provided throughout Electoral Area G French Creek in alignment with the French Creek Active Transportation Plan.
9. The establishment of active transportation infrastructure adjacent to proposed routes indicated on Map No. 8 of this Plan and the French Creek Active Transportation Plan, including but not limited to bicycle stands, secured bicycle parking, electric bicycle chargers, and public seating is supported.

### **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 objectives<sup>18</sup> in Section 10 of this Plan is

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<sup>18</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

- 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.

## 10.0 - Development Permit Areas

This section of the Official Community Plan identifies those areas of Electoral Area 'G' where the Regional Board may require a development permit, prior to the commencement of subdivision, development, redevelopment, construction, or land alteration on a property, pursuant to the *Local Government Act*. The designation of areas of land and water as Development Permit Areas in Electoral Area 'G' is consistent with the strategic goals and actions of the Regional District of Nanaimo Board Strategic Plan, the goals and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy, and the community values of Plan Area residents.

Pursuant to Section 919.1 of the *Local Government Act*, Development Permit Areas shall be designated in this Official Community Plan for one or more of the following purposes:

1. protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity;
2. protection of development from hazardous conditions;
3. protection of farming;
4. revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted;
5. establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential development; and,
6. establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-residential development.

For those areas designated as Development Permit Areas in the OCP, the Community Plan describes the special conditions or objectives that justify the designation, and the zoning bylaw<sup>19</sup> specifies the guidelines respecting the manner by which the special conditions or objectives will be addressed.

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<sup>19</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

## 10.1 Freshwater and Fish Habitat <sup>20</sup>

### Designation:

The Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 9, 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:

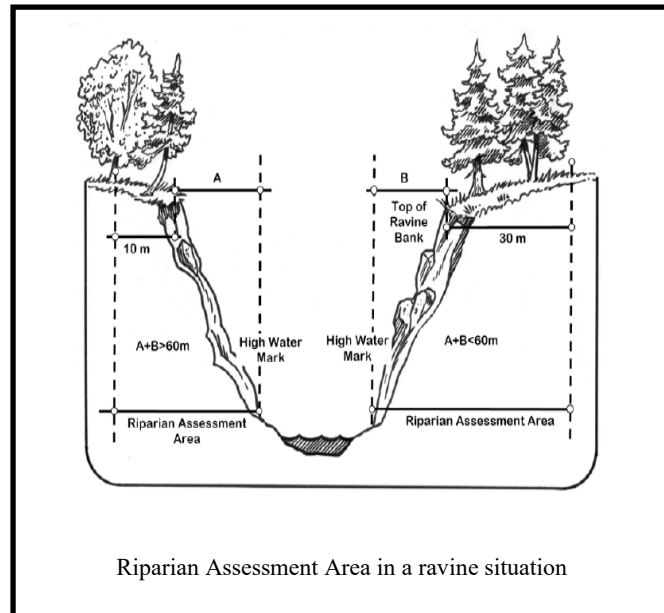
1. All mapped and unmapped riparian assessment areas as defined in the RAR as follows:
  - a) for a stream, a 30 metre strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark;
  - b) for a ravine less than 60 metres wide, a strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark 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).



<sup>20</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

**‘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.

**Authority:**

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*.

**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.

## **10.2 Sensitive Ecosystems<sup>21</sup>**

### **Designation:**

The Sensitive Ecosystems Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 9 and applies to all parcels containing 'sparsely vegetated', and 'older forest' sensitive ecosystems mapped in the Provincial SEI: East Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands 1993 – 1997 and updated in 2004.

### **Purpose:**

The Sensitive Ecosystems Development Permit Area is designated a development permit area for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity pursuant to Section 488(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act*.

### **Justification:**

Increasing development pressure and environmental awareness, as well as the Regional Growth Strategy's goal of environmental protection has led to the need for the protection of the Plan Area's most sensitive environmentally significant features to ensure their continued survival and enjoyment for generations to come.

The objective of the development permit area is to minimize the impacts of developments on environmentally sensitive features, ecosystems or habitat.

## **10.3 Marine Coast<sup>22</sup>**

### **Designation:**

The Marine Coast Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 9 and applies within a 15 metre horizontal distance upland from the present natural boundary and within 15 metres horizontal distance seaward of the present natural boundary. In estuarine areas, it applies upstream, both on land and water, to the extent of tidal influence. For clarity, in estuarine areas the Freshwater and Fish Habitat Development Permit Area also applies.

### **Purpose:**

The Marine Coast 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*.

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<sup>21</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>22</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018



**Justification:**

The coastal zone is one of the prime features of the natural environment of the Plan Area and includes recreational beaches, sheltered embayed areas and sensitive estuaries at the mouth of the Little Qualicum and Englishman Rivers as well as French and Morningstar Creeks. The coastal zone also includes shoreline, which may be susceptible to erosion or flooding in some areas.

The Plan Area contains one of only 28 provincially approved wildlife management areas. The Parksville–Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area (PQBWMA) encompasses 1,024 hectares of coastal foreshore, estuary, and river habitat between Craig Bay and the Little Qualicum River including land adjacent to the Englishman River. The PQBWMA includes most of the coastal shoreline in the Plan Area and a portion of the Englishman River. It contains a diversity of ecosystems and animal communities that are sensitive to development and human disturbance, including a significant migration of brant geese that stop to rest and feed within this area each spring.

The objectives of this development permit area are:

1. To work towards the ‘protection of the environment’ goal of the Regional Growth Strategy, in particular by following the policy to ‘minimize impacts of development in coastal zones by ensuring use of low impact development’.
2. To plan and regulate new development in a manner that preserves, protects and restores the long-term physical integrity and ecological values of shorelines and associated foreshore and upland areas.
3. To balance development opportunities with the ecological conservation and restoration of the shoreline environment.
4. To maintain the public’s safe use and access to these important recreation areas in a way that does not compromise the ecological integrity of the shoreline.

**10.4 Eagle and Heron Nesting Trees<sup>23</sup>****Designation:**

The Eagle and Heron Nesting Trees Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 9. The development permit area is defined as follows:

- a) For **Bald Eagle Nesting Trees** – the development permit area applies to all mapped and unmapped trees containing bald eagle nests and is a 60 metre radius measured from the base of the nesting tree.
- b) For Great Blue Heron Nesting Trees – the development permit area applies to all mapped and unmapped trees containing great blue heron nests, and shall be:
  - i. a 60 metre radius from the base of the nesting tree on lots 1.0 hectare or smaller; and
  - ii. a 100 metre radius from the base of the nesting tree on lots larger than 1.0 hectare.

Where the colony consists of more than one tree, the radius is measured from a line drawn around the outer perimeter of the base of all nest trees.

The locations of the eagle and heron nesting trees identified on Map No. 9 of this plan are intended to provide an approximate location only. Ground-truthing may be required by Regional

<sup>23</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

District staff, a Registered Professional Biologist, or British Columbia Land Surveyor, to accurately determine the location of the tree or trees.

**Authority:**

The Eagle and Heron Nesting Trees Development Permit Area is designated a development permit area for protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity, pursuant to Section 488(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act*.

**Justification:**

Nesting birds such as the Great Blue Heron and Bald Eagle are sensitive to impact from development and disturbance by human activity and require special treatment in order to protect their ecological value, now and for the future.

Pacific Great Blue Herons are a Species of Special Concern in Canada and are Blue-listed in British Columbia. There are only about 500 nests on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Bald Eagles are territorial and generally require 1000 meters between nesting sites. Both species nest near lakes, rivers and shorelines throughout BC where they are close to their food source. The loss of available nesting habitat near their food source, as well as disturbance from human presence, reduces the birds' ability to thrive and successfully raise their young. While Section 34 of the *Wildlife Act* provides for the protection of Bald Eagles and Pacific Great Blue Herons and several other at risk bird species, this development permit area protects the nesting habitat essential to ensuring breeding populations are maintained.

The objectives of this development permit area are:

1. To implement Regional Growth Strategy Policy 2.14 to protect environmentally sensitive areas from the impacts of development.
2. To protect eagle and heron nesting sites from the impacts of development.

## **10.5 Aquifers<sup>24</sup>**

**Authority:**

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

**Designation:**

The Aquifers Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 9 and applies to parcels within the growth containment boundary or industrial lands where non-residential development is supported.

**Justification:**

Aquifers are sensitive to impact from development and disturbance by human activity and require special treatment in order to protect their ecological value, and community value as a drinking water source now and for the future.

Aquifers and surface water are connected and interact with each other as typically, surface waters recharge aquifers in months with precipitation and snow melt. The groundwater system contributes to baseflow in rivers and streams, maintaining habitat for fish, wildlife and plants and

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<sup>24</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

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is the sole domestic water supply for many residents. Maintaining both water quality and quantity requires careful management for the long-term sustainability of ecosystems and drinking water values.

The Plan Area intersects eight different mapped aquifers and contains the lower reaches of three major water regions (Little Qualicum River, French Creek, Englishman River). This results in varying aquifer and watershed conditions, characteristics and contexts. Vulnerability of mapped aquifers to surface contamination is generally high. For the most part, the mapped aquifers that underlie the Plan Area are moderately producing sand and gravel that are subject to moderate demand. These aquifer areas are drinking water sources for domestic well owners and customers of water services areas including EPCOR French Creek, Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville and four RDN Water Service Areas: Surfside, French Creek, San Pareil, and Englishman River Community.

Care must be taken in construction methods, excavation, surface drainage, storage, handling and manufacture and use of products on parcels of land within this Development Permit Area to avoid contamination of the underlying aquifer and to protect and promote its sustainable use as a drinking water source.

The objective of this development permit area is to implement Regional Growth Strategy Policy 2.14 to protect groundwater aquifers and environmentally sensitive areas from contamination and reduced supply caused by land use and development activities.

## **10.6 River Flood and Slope Hazard<sup>25 26</sup>**

### ***Designation:***

The River Flood and Slope Hazard Development Permit Area is applicable to flood prone lands and those lands within the Plan Area with a natural grade greater than 30 percent as identified on Map No. 9. With respect to steep slopes west of the Little Qualicum River, this Development Permit Area applies to lands within 15 metres from the top of the bank where the natural grade of the slope is greater than 30 percent.

### ***Authority:***

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

### ***Justification:***

Hazardous lands include steep slopes adjacent to watercourses and along the coastal shoreline and flood prone lands. The subdivision, development of land, or removal of vegetation in these areas may destabilize the area, cause environmental damage, and pose potential for loss of life and property. In response to these risks and conditions, the objective of this Development Permit Area is to protect life, property and the environment from hazardous conditions.

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<sup>25</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>26</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.06, adopted October 8, 2024

## **10.7 Farmland Protection<sup>27</sup>**

### ***Designation:***

The Farmland Protection Development Permit Area is shown on Map No. 10 and applies to all properties adjacent to the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) boundary.

### ***Authority:***

The Farmland Protection Development Permit Area is designated a development permit area for the protection of farming, pursuant to Section 488(1)(c) of the *Local Government Act*.

### ***Justification:***

The BC Agricultural Land Commission has acknowledged that the development of lands adjoining farmlands may compromise the agricultural use of the ALR lands. Agricultural lands therefore require protection for long-term agricultural use.

In addition, as a result of inappropriately designed developments, land use conflicts may develop between the land uses. The incorporation of a 15 metre wide buffer between developed lands and agricultural lands is expected to promote greater compatibility between the uses while protecting the agricultural uses from urban impacts.

The objective of this Development Permit Area is to protect the agricultural land resource of the Plan Area for present and future production of food and other agricultural products.

## **10.8 Inland Island Highway Corridor<sup>28</sup>**

### ***Purpose:***

To establish objectives and provide guidelines in the zoning bylaw<sup>29</sup> for the visual form and character of industrial, commercial, intensive residential, and multi-residential lands which may be visible from the Inland Island Highway (Highway 19) and the interchanges with Highways 4 and 4A.

### ***Area:***

This Development Permit Area is applicable to all land within 250 metres from the centre line of the Inland Island Highway and within 500 metres from the centre point of an intersection or interchange of the Inland Island Highway. See Map No. 10 (Development Permit Areas: Form & Character, Inland Highway Corridor, and Farmland Protection).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>28</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>30</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

***Justification:***

The Inland Island Highway Development Permit Area provides guidelines for the form and character of industrial and commercial uses and related activities in order to reduce undesirable visual impact on the Inland Island Highway and the gateway lands surrounding major interchange connections.

### **10.9 Multi Residential, Intensive Residential, Industrial, and Commercial Form and Character**

***Purpose:***<sup>31</sup>

To establish objectives <sup>32</sup>for the form and character of multi residential, intensive residential, industrial, and commercial development; and.

To protect the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

In the context of this Development Permit Area, form and character refers to the external façade and architecture of the built environment, landscaping, internal traffic flow including pedestrian and cyclist, site illumination and signage, and site layout.

***Area:***<sup>33</sup>

This Development Permit Area is applicable to all lands shown on Map No. 10 (Development Permit Areas: Form & Character, Island Highway Corridor, and Farmland Protection) identified by this Plan.

***Justification:***

Increasing development pressure has led to the need to ensure that new developments and redevelopment on lands designated for multi residential, intensive residential, industrial, and commercial are conducted in a manner that is: compatible with the servicing standards in the Plan Area, the City of Parksville, and the Town of Qualicum Beach and to ensure that developments are aesthetically pleasing and compatible with the surrounding land uses, and minimize the impact on the environment.

### **10.10 Coastal Flood Hazard Development Permit Area**<sup>34</sup>

***Designation of Applicable Area***

Those parts of Electoral Area G of the Regional District of Nanaimo designated as the Coastal Flood Hazard Development Permit Area on Map No. 11 of the Official Community Plan, applying to areas that are at risk of flood hazards.

<sup>31</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>32</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>33</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

<sup>34</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.06, adopted October 8, 2024

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***Authority Granted Under the Local Government Act***

These areas are designated as a development permit area to establish guidelines to protect development from hazardous conditions pursuant to sections 488(1)(a) & (b) of the *Local Government Act*.

***Justification***

Coastal communities are vulnerable to acute hazards like storm surge and coastal flooding to the widespread impacts of coastal erosion and sea level rise. These hazards can pose a risk to infrastructure, property and public safety, and can disrupt local economies and cause ecological damage unless mitigated. Coastal hazards and sea level rise are critical considerations for regions with a lengthy coastline.

The Regional District of Nanaimo is preparing for the impacts of climate change through the *Sea Level Rise and Climate Adaptation Program*. In 2022, the Coastal Floodplain Mapping Project was completed resulting in a better understanding of coastal flood hazards under present-day and future conditions. The flood analysis included the cumulative effects of high-tide, storm surge, wind and wave effect. The project also resulted in the production of regional-scale Regulatory Coastal Floodplain Maps used for designating the coastal floodplain area. The purpose of this development permit area is to ensure new development responds to coastal flood hazards by reducing the risk to people and property, and existing buildings are not altered or modified in ways that increase flood risk.

***Objectives***

The objectives of this development permit area are to:

1. minimize the risk to people and property from flood hazards;
2. encourage safety in construction, location and the manner of new construction in flood prone areas;
3. ensure new development does not increase flood hazards and mitigates flood risks for surrounding properties;
4. minimize the potential for damage to public infrastructure, facilities and utilities;
5. ensure lands are safe for the intended use;
6. preserve the natural environment and ecological functions of floodplains; and
7. increase awareness of designated floodplain areas and the implications of such a designation.

## 11.0 - Official Community Plan Implementation Strategy

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan has been prepared and adopted in accordance with the *Local Government Act*. Once adopted, it is intended that all bylaws enacted, permits issued and works undertaken will be consistent with the Official Community Plan.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan will be implemented over a number of years through a combination of initiatives, ranging from the amendment or creation of bylaws, improved communication with senior levels of government, and the direct involvement of residents and stakeholders.

Responsibility for initiating and undertaking these initiatives does not lie solely with the RDN Board. Citizens, neighbourhoods, other local governments and senior governments must also initiate and undertake initiatives to implement the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan. In many cases, collaboration and cooperation among all of the responsible parties will be required.

It is noted that the RDN Board must weigh the wishes of communities with the priorities of the Region in deciding which implementation initiatives to commit resources to, and when to undertake the various implementation initiatives supported in the OCP.

The implementation strategy policies specify the anticipated timing of each implementation action. Immediate implementation actions are those actions that will be complete with the adoption of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan as a Bylaw. Short-term implementation actions are those actions that have an anticipated 5-year (or less) timeframe for completion. Continuous implementation actions are longer term or ongoing actions.

Objectives:

1. identify key actions to implement the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan;
2. identify responsible parties for key actions;
3. identify timing of key actions.

Policies:

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to Environmental Protection within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 2.0: PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Inventory and monitor the status of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)	✓	✓	✓	Continuous
Require/request return to crown, covenants, and conservation agreements to protect riparian corridors, creeks, lakes, and wetlands	✓	✓		Continuous
Work with the provincial Subdivision Approving Officer to protect ESA	✓	✓		Continuous
Work with the Ministry of Environment to develop a set of comprehensive shoreline indicators to monitor the cumulative affects of developments adjacent to the ocean	✓	✓		Long Term
Review the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw to determine acceptable foreshore uses and to restrict structures along the foreshore	✓	✓		Short Term
Continue to build upon existing greenways to create a greenway network		✓	✓	Continuous
Work with the province to provide additional floodplain mapping.	✓	✓		Long Term
In cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, conduct a detailed groundwater study including an aquifer assessment and monitoring strategy	✓	✓		Short Term
Request the VIHA to consider implementing guidelines for the use of gray water recycling and other water conserving strategies	✓	✓		Short Term
Encourage the MOE to monitor groundwater extraction	✓	✓		Continuous
Adopt a comprehensive rain water management plan		✓		Long Term
Consider implementing a toilet and or other plumbing fixture upgrade rebate program		✓		Short Term
Adopt a green building policy		✓		Short Term
Develop a community water well rating system for all new drinking water wells to ensure long-term viability & performance		✓		Short Term
Conduct (ESA) educational program in the community	✓	✓	✓	Continuous
Inventory Natural Hazard Areas (NHA).	✓	✓		Long Term
Enforce water conservation measures		✓	✓	Continuous



The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to Containing Urban Sprawl within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 3.0 :CONTAINING URBAN SPRAWL</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Amend the existing zoning boundary to more accurately define the existing multi-residential development and golf course		✓		Immediate
Amend the Regional Growth Strategy to accommodate the proposed expansion to the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre		✓		Immediate
Create design guidelines for Wembley Neighbourhood Centre		✓	✓	Long Term

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to Creating Complete Nodal Communities within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 4.0: CREATING COMPLETE NODAL COMMUNITIES</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Amend RDN Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987 to exclude Electoral Area 'G' from the landscaping requirements as specified by Bylaw No. 500		✓		Immediate
Adopt a subdivision standards and servicing bylaw.	✓	✓		Long Term
Rezone the lands subject to Development Permit No. 77 which have been subdivided into single residential lots to recognize the existing single residential status and the variances granted by Development Permit No. 77		✓		Immediate
Rezone all lands within the 'Neighbourhood Residential' land use designation to permit secondary suites subject to the requirements of Section 3.2 of this Plan		✓		Immediate
Amend Bylaw No 500 to prohibit 'highway strip'		✓		Immediate

developments and 'big box' retail uses in EA 'G'				
Establish a design panel for Wembley Neighbourhood Centre to develop a comprehensive set of design guidelines		✓	✓	Long Term
Development standards and requirements for amenities for commercial, industrial or multi-residential projects		✓		Long Term
Conduct a study in Dashwood to determine the feasibility of establishing a new village centre		✓		Short Term

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to Protecting Rural Integrity within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 5.0: PROTECTING RURAL INTEGRITY</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Rezone all lands within the 'Rural Residential 1' land use designation to increase the minimum parcel size to 1.0 ha., excluding lands in Dashwood		✓		Immediate
Rezone all lands within the 'Rural Residential 2' land use designation to increase the minimum parcel size to 2.0 ha.		✓		Immediate
Rezone all lands within the 'Rural' land use designation to increase the minimum parcel size to 8.0 ha.		✓		Immediate
Rezone all lands within the 'Rural Resource' land use designation to increase the minimum parcel size to 50.0 ha.		✓		Immediate
Amend Bylaw No. 500 to increase the minimum site area requirement per dwelling unit to be consistent with the minimum parcel size. For example, if the minimum parcel size is 2.0 ha. the minimum site area requirement per dwelling unit would be amended to be 2.0 ha.		✓		Immediate
With the Exception of Lot A, D.L. 9, Newcastle Land District, Plan 40682 rezone all lands adjacent to McFeely Dr. that are currently zoned Commercial 5 to Residential 1 to recognize the current residential use of the properties.		✓		Immediate
Consider the adoption of a community parks Development Cost Charge Bylaw.		✓		Long Term
Inventory and monitor the amount of green space in Electoral Area 'G'.		✓		Continuous

Rezone lands designated as 'Commercial' by this Plan that are located outside of the UCB to limit commercial uses to resort commercial and those commercial uses which are typically associated with resort commercial		✓		Immediate
Amend Bylaw No. 500 by increasing the minimum setback requirements from the Island Highway corridor as defined by the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement		✓		Immediate
Request a tree cutting authority from the Ministry of Community Services to regulate the cutting of trees adjacent to the Highway corridor as defined in the Vancouver Island Highway Agreement	✓	✓		Short Term
In consultation with the City of Parksville, establish fringe area agreements for Block 1438, Block 1352 and Block 742, Nanoose Land District to guide the long term land use for this area		✓		Long Term
Rezone Lots 4, 5, and 6, Block 20, D.L. 68, Nanoose Land District Plan 1694 to prohibit 'Animal Care' and 'Campground'		✓		Immediate

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to institutional uses and improving servicing efficiency within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 7.0: INSTITUTIONAL USES AND IMPROVING SERVICING EFFICIENCY</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Consult with School District No. 69 regarding the future anticipated schooling needs	✓	✓		Continuous
Consult with the Regional Health Board regarding the need for health care facilities	✓	✓		Continuous
Amend the Community Water and Community Sewer Development Cost Charge Bylaws to be in accordance with the build out calculations supported by this Plan		✓		Short Term
Work with the Town of Qualicum Beach and City of Parksville to determine a suitable volume of water to allocate to Electoral Area 'G' from the Arrowsmith Water Service		✓		Short Term - Continuous
Consult with private water utilities and improvement districts to discuss water servicing capacities, proposed upgrades, & future expansions		✓		Continuous

Work with the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville to implement complementary & consistent watering restrictions		✓		Short Term
Design servicing infrastructure requirements necessary to service Wembley Centre compatible with the infrastructure in the City of Parksville and adjoining neighbourhoods and the environment.		✓		Long Term
Revise the Community Sewer Services Development Cost Charges including provisions for odour reduction and facility improvement costs.		✓		Short Term
Review the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw to ensure compatibility between the Community Sewer Services Development Area and perceived development opportunities.		✓		Short Term

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to Creating a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 8.0: CREATING A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Amend the definition of Agriculture for Electoral Area 'G' to permit a more diverse range of agricultural uses including, but not limited to value-added and eco-tourism	✓	✓		Short Term
Request business licensing powers.	✓	✓		Long Term
Review Bylaw No. 500 Home Based Business Regulations to ensure that they are meeting the community's objectives		✓		Long Term
Establish fringe area agreements for industrial and resource lands South of the City of Parksville in order to establish guidelines for the form and character of development or redevelopment compatible with the City of Parksville and visual integrity of the Inland Island Highway		✓		Continuous
Conduct a review of the Electoral Area boundaries between Electoral Area 'G' and Electoral Area 'F' to determine the feasibility of adjusting the boundaries of Electoral Area 'F' to include lands currently within Electoral Area 'G' located on the South side of Highway 19 and severed from the remainder of Electoral Area 'G' that may have industrial potential and are adjacent to industrial		✓		Short Term

land in Electoral Area 'F'				
Consider the formation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee		✓		Long-Term

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to improving mobility within the Plan Area:<sup>35</sup>

<b>SECTION 9.0: IMPROVING MOBILITY</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Seek new modes of transportation and ways of increasing the use of new modes of transportation.	✓	✓	✓	Continuous
Review secondary and local road standards.	✓	✓	✓	Continuous
Cooperate with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach to ensure bicycle routes and trails are linked with the trails and bicycle routes in adjoining urban areas and are compatible in standard	✓	✓		Long Term
The Regional District of Nanaimo will explore funding mechanisms for the construction and maintenance of the proposed active transportation network provided in the French Creek Active Transportation Plan and other trail connections.	✓	✓		Ongoing
The Regional District of Nanaimo will pursue opportunities with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to reduce the posted speed limits on Island Highway W to 50 km/hr where it passes adjacent to schools.	✓	✓		Immediate
The Regional District of Nanaimo will pursue opportunities with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to reduce posted speed limits on local roads to 30 km/hr where they pass adjacent to schools.	✓	✓		Immediate
The Regional District of Nanaimo will pursue infrastructure improvements with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure that align with the goals, objectives, and design guidance of the French Creek Active Transportation Plan, as well as the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Active Transportation Design Guide.	✓	✓		Short Term
<i>Continued next page</i>				

<sup>35</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.04, adopted December 6, 2022

The Regional District of Nanaimo will adopt or amend regulatory bylaws to include provisions for rights of way dedications and establish road and trail standards for active transportation facilities throughout Electoral Area 'G' French Creek where development occurs adjacent to the proposed active transportation network illustrated in the French Creek Active Transportation Plan or other community trail connection to the network.		✓	✓	Long Term
The Regional District of Nanaimo will amend Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987 to reflect revised development permit area guidelines for residential, industrial, and commercial form and character in Electoral Area 'G' French Creek. In particular, revised guidelines are to reflect the responsibility of development to provide future active transportation facilities indicated within the French Creek Active Transportation Plan or other community trail connection to the network.		✓	✓	Short Term
The Regional District of Nanaimo will explore funding mechanisms for constructing the proposed active transportation network illustrated in the French Creek Active Transportation Plan and other community trail connections, including grant funding and local service area charges.		✓	✓	Ongoing
Opportunities to upgrade the existing pedestrian components of the French Creek Bridge will be pursued with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.	✓	✓		Short Term

The following shall be recognized as the key actions required, the parties responsible for key actions, and the timing of each key action, with respect to encouraging cooperation among jurisdictions within the Plan Area:

<b>SECTION 12.0: COOPERATION AMONG JURISDICTIONS</b>				
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>			<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Senior Governments</b>	<b>RDN &amp; Municipalities</b>	<b>Individual Neighbourhoods</b>	
Refer land use issues with interjurisdictional implications to the appropriate jurisdictions		✓		Continuous
Request referrals on land use issues from other jurisdictions	✓	✓	✓	Continuous

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## 11.1 Development Amenities

To facilitate the acquisition and development of amenities of value to the residents of Electoral Area 'G'; this section of the Plan provides a framework for negotiating amenities in consideration of changes to the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw for increased development potential within the Urban Containment Boundary. The basic premise of development amenities is that the increased value, often conveyed with the approval of a new zoning designation, should be shared between the community and the developer. Negotiating public amenities as a part of an application to develop land can be a "win-win" arrangement, in which both the community benefits from acquiring these amenities while the developer benefits from the increased value associated with having those amenities on or nearby the site.

### **Objective:**

Acquire and develop public amenities of value to Plan Area residents in conjunction with development.

### **Policies:**

1. In recognition of the impact that development may have on Plan Area residents and the increased value usually conferred on land in the course of rezoning, and in recognition of the need for new development to contribute to the amenities and services from which they will also benefit, development proposals that propose rezoning, will generally be requested to include some public amenity as a part of the completed project.
2. In determining the appropriate amenities, the provisions of this section, as well as any applicable design guidelines will provide guidance.
3. Amenities to be considered include, but are not limited to (not in order of priority):
  - a. extra road dedication for major roads and road construction;
  - b. sidewalk and trail improvements;
  - c. park land (in the case of subdivision, in excess of 5% required under the *Local Government Act*);
  - d. other natural areas, greenbelt, or open spaces;
  - e. land for public utilities such as fire halls and water storage sites;
  - f. covenants to protect environmentally sensitive features;
  - g. recreational space or facilities;
  - h. multi-use recycling, re-use, education centres;
  - i. community activity centre or other facilities (i.e. daycare, culture, library facilities) or land for such facilities;
  - j. transit pull-outs, bus stop shelters;

- k. affordable housing;
  - l. cash-in-lieu of any of the amenities listed in this section;
  - m. achieving LEED gold or platinum certification or other equivalent (as part of a community amenity package in association with other amenities listed in this Section);
  - n. providing on-site cogeneration and/or district heating;
  - o. use of efficient renewable energy sources such as solar, micro-hydro, geothermal;
  - p. demonstration projects on development sites that propose to use alternative technologies that can reduce water demand, protect water resources, or reduce development or maintenance costs such as:
    - i. graywater and/or rain water collection and treatment;
    - ii. graywater reuse and/or rain water use for garden watering or within the residence for toilet flushing;
    - iii. laundry (including related dual plumbing);
    - iv. rain water use for domestic/drinking water;
    - v. pervious surfaces for driveways, walkways, etc.;
    - vi. other methods for promoting rain water infiltration (rain leader disconnects, rain gardens, swales, etc.) –i.e., the model “low footprint” design; or,
    - vii. xeriscaping or low-impact landscaping.
4. Site specific features will suggest that amenities are indicated for consideration in a project. Criteria for determining priority among possible amenities may include:
- a. site characteristics (natural features that are environmentally, historically, or archaeologically sensitive and needing protection, viewscales, outdoor recreational opportunities);
  - b. needs of the surrounding neighbourhood;
  - c. size of the proposed development; or
  - d. the projected population on site.
5. The RDN should establish development standards and requirements for amenities for commercial, industrial or multi-residential projects in Electoral Area 'G' equivalent to or better than those required by the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach.



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## 12.0 Cooperation Among Jurisdictions

In response to the community's value of resident involvement in the planning processes and the region's goal of encouraging cooperation among jurisdictions, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan identifies potential issues with interjurisdictional ramifications within and outside the Plan Area and establishes a policy framework designed to facilitate the resolution of these issues, as well as other issues which have not yet been identified, through cooperation and consultation.

### *Objectives:*

1. Identify and recognize land use issues within the Plan Area with potential interjurisdictional applications.
2. Identify and recognize land use issues outside the Plan Area with potential implications on the Plan Area.
3. Foster communications between jurisdictions with respect to land use issues.

### *Policies:*

1. Encourage other jurisdictions to provide referrals of applications and issues relating to land use planning and management to the Regional District. The RDN will endeavour to provide a prompt reply to such referrals.
2. Refer to other agencies, all land use planning applications or issues which may affect another jurisdiction. All affected agencies or municipal councils, which receive referrals from the Regional District of Nanaimo, shall be encouraged to give due consideration and timely responses to referrals provided by the Regional District.
3. Facilitate interagency meetings with the Regional District, City of Parksville Town of Qualicum Beach, School District 69 and the provincial and federal government agencies, whenever appropriate, to resolve any interjurisdictional issues and to facilitate cooperative approaches to implementing this Plan.
4. Amendments may be made, from time to time, to the Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw and the Official Community Plan applicable to the Plan Area to better implement the Regional Growth Strategy.
5. The Plan will recognize Urban Fringe Municipal Boundary Extension Candidate Areas as defined pursuant to the Regional Growth Management Plan Implementation Agreement entitled "Urban Containment and Urban Fringe Area Management Agreement", and any subsequent implementation agreements amongst the Regional District of Nanaimo, the City of Nanaimo, the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach.
6. Urban Fringe Area Candidate Areas for municipal boundary extensions must be identified and supported in writing by the municipality as a potential boundary extension area needed to accommodate municipal urban growth and may include portions of the Plan Area within the Urban Area which are contiguous to (adjoin) a

municipality, or surrounded by a municipality, or can only be reached by municipal roads.

7. The Regional District of Nanaimo may enter into fringe area agreements with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach to provide coordination of regional and municipal objectives for long-term management or protection of fringe areas.
8. The Plan recognizes that the City of Parksville has significant interest in land use planning, the development and the servicing of the Wembley Mall Neighbourhood Centre, as the mall is within the City and there is existing and potential nodal development surrounding the mall both in Electoral Area 'G' and within municipal boundaries.
9. The Regional District of Nanaimo will recognize that the City of Parksville has interest in protecting fringe lands to prevent urban sprawl and to protect the forest landscape in Block 1438, Block 735 and Block 742, Nanoose Land District. Other than what is supported by this Plan, the RDN will not initiate new expansions to the commercial, industrial, or multi-residential land use designation adjacent to the Inland Island Highway, and will ensure that existing commercial and industrial permitted uses comply with the Inland Island Highway Development Permit Area Guidelines in the zoning bylaw<sup>36</sup>.
10. The development of compatible standards within all jurisdictions of the RDN with respect to the provision of roads, sewer systems, storm water drainage, water systems, and environmental regulations and protection, shall be supported.

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<sup>36</sup> Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

## 13.0 Definitions

The following general definitions are provided to assist in interpretation of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan.

**"ALR"** refers to the Agricultural Land Reserve as defined by British Columbia Agricultural Land Commission Act.

**"Community Sewer System"** means a system of sewers and sewerage works including sewage treatment facilities owned, operated and maintained by or on behalf of the Regional District of Nanaimo or a municipality.

**"Community Water System"** means a system of waterworks owned, operated and maintained by or on behalf of the Regional District, a municipality or an improvement district or which is operated by a person required to hold a certificate of public convenience and necessity under the Water Utility Act.

**"Existing"** means at the time of the adoption of this Official Community Plan Bylaw, unless the context indicates otherwise.

**"Fish Habitat"** means spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply and migration areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes and may include upland riparian areas as defined by a Qualified Environmental Professional.

**"May"** means a course of action that could be followed provided specified criteria are met.

**"Objectives"** are specific aims to be reached in the achievement of the desired community form and type.

**"Parcel Coverage"** means the sum total horizontal area as measured from the outermost perimeter of all buildings or part thereof on the parcel expressed as a percentage of the total parcel area.

**"Plan Area"** means the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan of the Regional District of Nanaimo as described in Section 1 of this Bylaw

**"Policies"** are statements that provide high level direction and guidance that work towards attaining courses of action to be undertaken in achieving the objectives of the Plan.

**"Province"** means the Province of British Columbia.

**"Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)"** means an applied scientist or technologist acting alone or together with another qualified environmental professional, if:

- a. the individual is registered and in good standing in British Columbia with an appropriate professional organization constituted under an Act, acting under that association's code of ethics and subject to disciplinary action by that association;

- b. the individual's area of expertise is recognized in the assessment methods as one that is acceptable for the purpose of providing all or part of an assessment report in respect of that development proposal; and,
- c. the individual is acting within that individual's area of expertise.

**"Regional Board or Board"** means the Board of the Regional District of Nanaimo.

**"Shall"** means an imperative course of action which is within the scope of the Regional District's powers to provide, enact, regulate or enforce.

**"Should"** means a desirable course of action to be taken by the Regional District or another body or persons.

**"Top of 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.