



Section 2: Land Use Designations

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

It should also be noted that the Regional District of Nanaimo, at the writing of this Plan, has not developed any Board-endorsed policies regarding affordable housing, rental housing or special needs housing. For the purposes of this OCP, this Plan supports the provision of affordable housing and does not discriminate against rental housing or special needs housing in any land use designation or any zone to be specified in the future zoning bylaw.

Zoning and Non-Conforming Status for Existing Uses

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

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



Village Centres

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

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

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

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

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

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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

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



Rural Separation Boundaries

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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



Industrial Lands

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

Objectives

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

Future Impact Policies

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



Tourist Commercial Areas

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

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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



Rural Residential Lands

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

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

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

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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



Rural Lands

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

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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



Resource Lands

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

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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



Park Lands

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

Objectives

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

General Policies

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