

## SECTION 4 – COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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Peter Mason and Dagmar Seydel at the Magnolia Court Summer Market

Photo credit: Corinne Roby

The community resources described in this section include parks and open space, centres of education and community life, infrastructure, and transportation services.

Where these lands or services are not under the direct jurisdiction of the Regional District, planning relies on coordination with other organizations, levels of government, and First Nations.

## 4.1 Parks and Open Space

### INTRODUCTION

Lands set aside for recreation and active transportation in the Plan Area include the Regional District’s regional and community parks and trails, provincial parks, and federal fisheries lands on the Big Qualicum River and at Horne Lake. These are shown on Map No. 3 Community Resources. This section focuses primarily on parks for public use, and Section 2.1 of this Plan addresses sensitive ecosystem protection.

There are extensive trail networks on Crown lands and Private Managed Forest Land in the Plan Area; however, their long-term protection is not guaranteed. The Regional District does not have the resources to consider managing informal trail systems on Crown lands, but support them through mapping, and by working with community groups with interest in trail building and marketing. Private Managed Forest Lands are not considered publicly accessible; historic use of logging roads and trails for recreation in these areas is common, but since the tenure is private there is no guarantee of ongoing protection of the trails or public access.

There is a sports field at the Lions Community Hall property. Henry Morgan Park near the Bowser Village Centre includes a playground, shelter and washroom. Dunsmuir Community Park has a small tennis court and basketball half-court, and at the time of updating this Plan in 2017, there were plans for improvements to this park in the near future.

There are numerous unconstructed road rights-of-way in the Plan Area, some of which were dedicated in the past for highway plans that never came to fruition. These rights-of-ways are assets for future trail construction and are an integral part of Regional District trail and active transportation planning.

### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

1. Parkland and trails shall be permitted in all land use designations.
2. This Plan designates all Provincial/Crown lands above known unconfined aquifers as Park Lands to protect finite groundwater resources into the future.
3. This Plan designates Department of Fisheries and Ocean owned properties along the Big Qualicum River, at Horne Lake, and that part Block 40, plan 1339R, Alberni Land District as Park Land to protect this important river and regional park area.

### OBJECTIVES

1. *Ensure* that parks and recreational uses form an integral part of the community infrastructure.
2. *Recognize* the importance of regionally significant parks and natural features.
3. *Support* the parkland acquisition strategies of the Regional District’s Regional Parks and Trails Plan and the Community Parks and Trails Strategy.
4. *Support* public open space opportunities on Provincial, Federal, and Regional District park lands.
5. *Improve* public water access, and linear recreational connections.
6. *Identify, maintain and improve* wildlife corridors.
7. *Work* with public and private institutions to facilitate integration of schools, community halls, the E&N Rail Corridor, and associated open space as an integral part of the community parks and open space system.
8. *Encourage* private forest land owners to continue to make their land available for public recreation.

4. Although park land is supported for the protection of environmentally sensitive features, protection of these features should be in addition to the minimum 5% park land dedication in the *Local Government Act*.
5. Parkland proposals should provide a benefit to the community and lands with no benefit to the community should not be accepted.
6. It is strongly preferred that land being considered for parkland be maintained in its original state and should not be cleared. Cleared and disturbed lands should only be accepted where the proposed parkland is to be used for recreational uses which requires cleared lands.
7. 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 Regional District Board, or
  - b. pay to the Regional District an amount that equals the market value of the land that may be required for park purposes, or
  - c. provide a combination of land and cash to the satisfaction of the Regional District Board.
8. In areas where parkland is desired, developers are encouraged to dedicate greater than 5% parkland.
9. Known priorities and criteria for park acquisition must be considered and given priority at the time of park dedication such as those indicated in this Plan or by any other Plan of the Regional District such as the Community Parks and Trails Strategy, the Regional Parks and Trails Plan, or Active Transportation Plan. Key priorities for parkland acquisition and development in the Plan Area include:
  - a. “Olympic Torch Relay Trail” that would connect the Lighthouse Country Regional Trail through Bowser Village Centre;
  - b. Historic Horne Lake Trail;
  - c. Trails in Oakdowne Park through License of Occupation with the Province;
  - d. Connection between the Bowser Elementary at the end of Faye Road and the Thompson Clark Ocean Trail Community Trail via unconstructed Jackrabbit Road;
  - e. Those identified in Section 2.1 Sensitive Ecosystems Policy 7 of this Plan; and
  - f. Those identified in Goal 4.1 of Schedule B, the Bowser Village Centre Plan.
10. The Regional District shall evaluate the suitability of parkland proposals and may also consider parks and publicly accessible open space provision through means other than subdivision approval in accordance with Policy 11 of this Section.
11. The Regional District may consider accepting parkland at the time of subdivision or rezoning on any land 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, a lake and any other watercourse.
  - b. The land is identified for parkland, trail, or conservation area by this Plan or any other RDN 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 areas to be retained in a natural, undisturbed state or archaeological features to be protected, although generally the protection of environmentally sensitive lands or archaeological features should be in addition to the minimum parkland 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 is preferred where other parkland 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
  - 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.
  - i. Preference shall be given to the acquisition of those lands identified in Map No. 3 for future community and regional parks, trails and corridors, and natural areas, and Map No. 2b for well protection areas and recharge areas for community water systems. However, other lands may be considered in accordance with the criteria outlined in this policy.
12. The Regional District will not support encroachment applications into rights of way to beach areas, the foreshore, streams, or watercourses in the Plan Area.
  13. 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*”.
  14. When responding to referrals from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for road closure applications, the Regional District will:
    - a. consider the value of retaining the right-of-way as public land for recreation and active transportation purposes;
    - b. refer to its parks and trails and active transportation plans and strategies, and
    - c. not support the closure if retaining the right-of-way as public land will benefit parks and trail development or active transportation.
  15. This Plan supports the creation of a parks development cost charge bylaw to support acquisition and development of select Community Park amenities.
  16. The Regional District recognizes that public involvement is essential in the planning, acquisition, and development of the community and regional parks. Consultation with the public, as well as parks and recreation commissions, volunteer groups and service organizations is encouraged and is considered vital for the success of the Parks System.

*ADVOCACY POLICIES*

17. The Regional District shall encourage management of Crown lands as Parks/Reserve south and west of Bowser along Nile Creek, Thames Creek, Lymn/Chef Creek, Gainsburg Swamp, Annie’s Woods and the unconfined aquifer on Crown Land in District Lot 86 (see Map No. 2).
18. The Regional District shall support the prohibition of motors on Spider Lake to protect the water quality and the existing character of human-powered recreation.
19. The Regional District shall encourage the Province and forest companies to provide opportunities for controlled use of trails and private logging roads during non-operation periods for outdoor recreation except during times of high and extreme fire hazard.
20. The Regional District shall encourage and support volunteer assistance in the development and management of community parks, Streamkeeper projects and trails.
21. Partnerships among residents, landowners, business owners, and government agencies to improve Park Lands are encouraged and supported by this Plan.

## 4.2 Community and Institutional

### INTRODUCTION

Community and institutional uses include facilities such as schools, universities, religious and service organizations, community halls, community care facilities, fire halls, ambulance stations, and marinas and wharfs in the Plan Area.

Institutional uses are permitted in all designations of this Plan, and these uses generally require appropriate institutional zoning prior to the use of land for such purposes.

School District No. 69 has jurisdiction for the Bowser Elementary School, the single public school within the Plan Area (high school students attend school in Qualicum Beach or Courtenay). With current school enrollment and population trends, there is no anticipated need for additional school facilities over the next 10 years.

Community fire protection is provided by three volunteer fire departments in the Plan Area. The Deep Bay Volunteer Fire Department is administered and financed by the Deep Bay Improvement District, and the Bow-Horn Bay and Dashwood are volunteer fire department societies financed by property taxes collected through the Regional District.

While current community and institutional facilities are found throughout the Plan Area, future uses shall be encouraged to locate within the Rural Village Centres. Some of the key existing community and institutional facilities are illustrated on Map No. 3.

### COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

1. Institutional uses will be permitted in all land use designations in this Plan but may require rezoning to institutional use.
2. The Regional District shall encourage the integration of future school sites into Rural Village Centres and integrate their location with the parks, trails and open space network.
3. This Plan supports the continued service of Bowser Elementary School. The Regional District shall work with School District No. 69 on the long-term plans for this school.
4. The Regional District will consider future agreements with the School District to implement the School Site Acquisition Provisions in the *Local Government Act*.
5. The Regional District shall encourage new proposals for institutional facilities to be situated within the Village Centres, except where a location outside of a Village Centre is demonstrated to be more appropriate or essential to its use.
6. Establishment of a cemetery in the Plan Area is supported subject to rezoning and adherence with applicable provincial requirements.

### OBJECTIVES

1. **Work with School District No. 69 in planning for the future needs of the community and coordination of school site and parks and open space planning.**
2. **Encourage community use and support of community facilities.**
3. **Direct the location of new institutional facilities for public assembly, for educational, religion, cultural and service organizations to Village Centres.**
4. **Recognize the existing emergency services provided within the Plan Area.**
5. **Support coordination for providing emergency services for existing and future residents.**
6. **Support the strategic location of fire halls and future ambulance and police stations to serve the growing needs within the Plan Area.**

7. The Plan recognizes the location of existing fire halls, and fully supports the valuable volunteer fire fighting and emergency services provided by the Deep Bay, Bow Horn Bay, and Dashwood Volunteer Fire Departments.
8. The Regional District will continue to develop coordination, communication, and information sharing with Improvement Districts and volunteer fire departments to ensure that adequate fire fighting services are able to accommodate the future development of the Rural Village Centres at Dunsmuir, Qualicum Bay, and Bowser and to improve fire protection service to rural areas, to include, but not be limited to, development of emergency evacuation plans and encouragement of community emergency preparedness, in coordination with the appropriate federal and provincial government agencies.
9. The Regional District will coordinate with fire departments in planning for future growth and development and in review of applications to amend this Plan and the zoning bylaw.
10. At the time of updating this Plan in 2017, the Regional District is coordinating an expansion of a Crown lease area at the end of Shayla Road near Spider Lake for the Bow-Horn Bay Volunteer Fire Department to construct a new hall. This Plan supports consideration of expansion of the Bow-Horn Bay Volunteer Fire Department service area to the south-west up to and including the properties around the shores of Horne Lake.

#### *ADVOCACY POLICIES*

11. The Regional District encourages public consultation with District 69 School Trustees on any future plans or uses for area schools.
12. The Regional District shall encourage the School District to complement other community facilities by continuing to be make available schools and school grounds for recreation, cultural activities, and educational programs during non-school hours.
13. The Regional District encourages Vancouver Island University to continue community programming and events at its Marine Research Station and to integrate its future growth and development with the surrounding community.
14. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is encouraged to request that all proposed subdivision plans are reviewed by the relevant fire department.

## 4.3 Community Water and Sewer Systems

### INTRODUCTION

There are three community water systems that serve the developed coastal area. These are Deep Bay Water District, Bowser Water District, and Qualicum Bay Horne Lake Water District. The Plan Area relies on groundwater resources in the vicinity of Bowser and Dunsmuir. These areas have an undefined quantity of water in unconfined Quadra Sands and associated aquifers. The water quantity and quality continues to be sufficient and is expected to remain so if precautions are taken to protect this valuable resource.

#### *Deep Bay Improvement District:*

A 2016 *Aquifer and Well Protection Plan for the Deep Bay Improvement District* by Payne Engineering Geology identifies a well protection area for the District's wells. Approximately 80% of the well protection area is within the Coastal Douglas Fir land use order area which is designated for ecosystem protection and therefore effectively also offers some protection for the Deep Bay Improvement District wells. The rest of the well protection area is on private property within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

#### *Bowser Waterworks:*

A 2015 *Aquifer and Wellhead Protection Plan for Bowser Waterworks District* by Payne Engineering Geology identifies a wellhead protection area for the District's wells in close proximity to its wells on Crosley Road. The well capture zone extends from the wells south and west through Crown Land that was formerly the Bowser Seed Orchard, and including private properties on Cowland Road. All of the wells and some of the protection area are within the Coastal Douglas Fir land use order area which effectively offers some protection. The site of the former Bowser Seed Orchard is not protected by the Coastal Douglas Fir land use order area and any proposed future use of that property should be considered in relation to potential contamination of the water supply for Bowser Waterworks.

#### *Qualicum Bay Horne Lake Water District:*

A 2017 *Well Protection Plan* for Qualicum Bay Horne Lake Waterworks identifies a well protection area for the District's wells that extends upslope to Highway 19. The well capture zone extends further up slope, and both of these areas include rural and agricultural properties, as well as the inland highway. The Well Protection Plan also identifies an area at risk of artesian conditions below its wells, which requires care during development to protect from uncontrolled artesian flow.

### OBJECTIVES

1. *Encourage* the efficient location of public utilities to serve the needs of residents.
2. *Liaise* with the local water purveyors to ensure water quantity and quality is sufficient and can be sustained for current and future development.
3. *Identify and protect* groundwater recharge areas.
4. *Advocate* the environmentally safe and economically feasible development of community sewer systems.
5. *Prepare* strategies for provision of community wastewater services within Village Centres, in coordination with the Qualicum First Nation for Dunsmuir and Qualicum Bay.
6. Support provision of community sewer outside of village centres where there is a threat to public health or the environment due to the wastewater management method being used.
7. *Support* provision of community water and sewer outside of village centres where necessary to support other goals of this plan related to alternative forms of rural development.



## COMMUNITY WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM POLICIES

1. The Regional District recognizes the important role played by Improvement Districts in providing community water and will liaise to ensure adequate quantity and quality of water is available for any future development.
2. Where identified, groundwater recharge areas and well protection areas shall be protected through land use regulation and development permit area.
3. Except for agriculturally-designated lands, the Regional District does not support the drilling of wells for domestic purposes where community water services exist and have adequate capacity to meet reasonable domestic demand.
4. In the absence of a groundwater protection bylaw that otherwise recommends such development, the creation of new parcels, serviced by private wells within community water services areas, is not supported.
5. This Plan supports the comprehensive development of community sewer systems within the Rural Village Centres.
6. This Plan supports provision of community sewer outside of Rural Village Centres where there is a threat to public health or the environment due to the wastewater management method being used.
7. Provision of community water and sewer outside of Rural Village Centres is supported where necessary to achieve other objectives of this plan related to alternative forms of rural development, and where small systems are not proposed to be owned by the Regional District. Implementation of this policy is subject to amendment of the Regional Growth Strategy.
8. This Plan supports locating future community infrastructure where it will have the least impact to environmentally sensitive areas and the environment.
9. This Plan supports establishing a septic maintenance program in all areas not served by community sewer system in order to protect the environment including surface, marine and ground water from contamination.

## 4.4 Transportation Network

### INTRODUCTION

The effective integration of transportation modes such as automobile, transit, cycling and walking creates well connected communities and results in other significant benefits. Communities that have good active transportation facilities that are well connected with other modes such as public transit, have lower rates of obesity and chronic illness. In addition, transportation networks that provide alternatives to automobile travel help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The recreational trail system is addressed in section 4.1 of this Plan and is part of the overall transportation network. Movement around the Plan Area by foot or bicycle can include a combination of road shoulders and off-road trails.

Island Highway No. 19A had long been the sole vehicular route connecting north and south Island communities until the completion of the Inland Island Highway No. 19 in the late 1990's. Today, both of these highways accommodate passenger, freight and service transportation up and down the Island. The Plan Area includes two major intersections connecting the Inland Island Highway with Island Highway No. 19A: at Horne Lake Road and Cook Creek Road. The highways and major roads in the Plan Area are shown on Map No. 3.

Emergency access to neighbourhoods with only one road in and out is a concern for residents. New road connections are desired in two key locations where Gainsburg Road is the only access: new access connecting Highway 19A with the western portion of Gainsburg Road, and a connection between Thompson Clark Drive and Ocean Trail.

### TRANSPORTATION NETWORK POLICIES

1. The Regional District supports improvements to the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of Island Highway No. 19A including the safety of those travelling by foot, bicycle or other non-vehicular means on the road shoulders.
2. The Regional District supports the eventual upgrading of Inland Island Highway No. 19 intersections to overhead interchanges at Horne Lake and Cook Creek Roads.
3. The Regional District shall coordinate with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for developing bicycle and pedestrian routes along Island Highway No. 19A and other roads to implement the Active Transportation Plan, 2017.
4. Known priorities for active transportation facilities in the Active Transportation Plan, 2017 must be considered at the time of rezoning for community amenity contribution pursuant to policies in Section

### OBJECTIVES

1. *Accommodate* safe, efficient, and effective passenger, freight, and service transportation throughout the Plan Area.
2. *Enable* safe, non-vehicular mobility through improved walking and cycling trails or routes between neighbourhoods, schools and commercial areas.
3. *Improve* safe bicycle and pedestrian routes on Island Highway No. 19A.
4. *Support* the visual protection of the Inland Island Highway Corridor with buffer areas including setbacks, greenways, and landscaping requirements.
5. *Encourage* appropriately located wayfinding and tourist and attraction signage on Island Highway Nos. 19 and 19A.
6. *Encourage* second road accesses to neighbourhoods with only one way in and out.

6.2 of this Plan. At the time of adoption of this Plan, key priorities for active transportation facilities include:

- a. Pedestrian crossings of Highway 19A in Bowser near Magnolia Court, at Coburn Road, and near Lions Way
  - b. Paved shoulder on all of Highway 19A with a higher priority on the section from Crosley Road to just north of Fisheries Road
  - c. Improvements to safety of walking and cycling on Faye Road
  - d. Trail construction on unopened Jackrabbit Road that connects the end of Faye Road to the Thompson Clark Ocean Trail Community Trail
  - e. Shoulder widening on Gainsburg Road
5. Preserve the natural visual character of the rural portions of Highway Corridors on Highways 19, and 19A.

#### ADVOCACY POLICIES

6. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is encouraged to improve bicycle and pedestrian routes on Highway No. 19A in coordination with the Regional District and pursuant to the Active Transportation Plan, 2017.
7. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is encouraged to coordinate with the Regional District and local business community to ensure that wayfinding and tourist and attraction signage is current and best serves the needs of the local community and travelling public.
8. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is encouraged to construct or require through subdivision, roads that provide a second access to neighbourhoods with only one way in and out.
9. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is encouraged to improve the safety of Horne Lake Road between the Highway 19 and Highway 19A which may include realignment if the opportunity exists.

## 4.5 Public Transportation

### INTRODUCTION

As of the 2017 review of this Plan, VIA Rail’s passenger train service has not run through the Plan Area for several years and its future is uncertain. The E&N rail corridor remains a valuable community asset that if not used for rail, should be used for as a non-vehicular (active) transportation and recreation corridor.

In 2014, Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Services began operating a bus to and from Deep Bay and connecting to Nanaimo via Qualicum Beach in the morning and afternoon on Tuesdays. The service is planned for expansion to 5 days per week in September, 2017. It is a long standing desire for this community to have public transit connection north into the Comox Valley Regional District, where many residents travel to regularly for work, shopping and appointments as it is often more convenient than travelling to Nanaimo. Transit service in the Comox Valley Regional District currently goes as far south as Fanny Bay, less than 10 km from where transit service ends in Deep Bay. Focussing growth and development in Rural Village Centres will make continued expansion of the frequency of service more viable.

### OBJECTIVES

1. *Support* existing transit service in Area ‘H’ and *encourage* expansion.
2. *Support* the development of commuter transportation opportunities for residents of Area ‘H’ in addition to the current transit service.
3. *Protect* the E&N railway line as a continuous linear transportation corridor by designating the lands as a transportation corridor for rail travel and for non-vehicular mobility options.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

1. The E&N Railway corridor lands shall be designated Transportation Corridor where subdivision is not supported.
2. The Regional District shall support the development of public transportation nodes in Rural Village Centres such as bus shelters in strategic locations linked with active transportation facilities.
3. Should rail transportation services cease to exist, this Plan supports the establishment of walking and cycling trails on the E&N railway corridor.
4. The Regional District shall encourage the development of alternative transportation opportunities such as mini-bus commuter services, carpooling, and park and ride connections to Regional District Transit routes in consultation with Regional District Transit Services.
5. The Regional District supports accessibility in public transportation; an accessible transportation system works to support aging place, and the independence, comfort, self esteem, and security of everyone, including people with disabilities.

### ADVOCACY POLICIES

6. BC Transit and the Comox Valley Regional District are encouraged to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo to develop a public transit connection between the Deep Bay area and transit in the Comox Valley Regional District.

## 4.6 Marine Transportation

### INTRODUCTION

The Deep Bay Harbour provides opportunities for recreational and commercial marine transportation. Commercial fishing, shellfish aquaculture, and recreational boat travel are accommodated within the Deep Bay Harbour.

The Government Wharf provides facilities for commercial fishing, shellfish aquaculture and recreational vessels, and the adjacent private marina is home to the Deep Bay Yacht Club which shares a floating clubhouse with the Lighthouse Country Marine Rescue Society. The Deep Bay Harbour Authority manages the federal government wharf on behalf of DFO Small Craft Harbours Program. There is a privately owned boat ramp adjacent to the parking lot for the Harbour.

There are no publically-owned boat launches in the Plan Area, however there is a private boat launch open to the general public to the south of the marina parking lot.

### OBJECTIVES

1. *Recognize* the role of the Deep Bay Harbour Authority in managing the federal government wharf at Deep Bay.
2. *Encourage* opportunities for recreational and commercial marine transportation from Deep Bay Harbour.
3. *Support* solutions to marina parking lot overflow for vehicles and trailers.

### MARINE TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

1. The Regional District encourages the tourist, recreational, fishing and aquaculture industries to continue their use of Deep Bay Harbour.
2. The Regional District recognizes the importance of existing private boat launch in the Plan Area for recreation, tourism, and emergencies, but does not support development of new private boat launches due to their impact on the foreshore environment
3. This Plan supports development of new public boat launches in locations with minimal environmental impact and sufficient trailer parking, and subject to development permit area guidelines in the zoning bylaw<sup>4</sup>.
4. The Regional District shall develop a plan in coordination with the Deep Bay Harbour Authority and local businesses for accommodating overflow parking for the harbour.
5. The Regional Board shall not consider rezoning the surface of the water in Deep Bay Harbour without consultation with the Deep Bay Harbour Authority and local residents.

### ADVOCACY POLICIES

6. The Regional District encourages the Deep Bay Harbour Authority to provide additional off-street parking to reduce reliance on the nearby road shoulders for boat trailer parking during the busy season.

<sup>4</sup> Bylaw 1335.07, adopted December 4, 2018