Our Place, Our Future

BYLAW 4373
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
FOR THE ELECTORAL AREAS

MARCH 2022

CVRD

The Cowichan Valley Regional District sits on the traditional, unceded territories of the Cowichan Tribes and the Ditidaht, Penelakut, Halalt, Stz'uminus, Lake Cowichan, Lyackson, Malahat and Pauquachin First Nations.

The region covers an area of 3,473 km² on Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands of Thetis, Penelakut and Valdes, between Malahat/Mill Bay and North Oyster.

On the western edge of the region is the Pacific Ocean; the Salish Sea sits on the region's eastern border.

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Purpose

There are nine electoral areas in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and four incorporated municipalities. The electoral areas fall within the purview of this regional Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas (OCP) while the incorporated municipalities of Duncan, North Cowichan, Ladysmith and Lake Cowichan each have their own OCPs. The CVRD provides services for residents throughout the region; however, it is the primary land use and planning authority for the electoral areas through this OCP. As part of the CVRD's effort to modernize its OCP, this document is intended to provide both context for and options considering a preferred OCP policy direction.

The document has been organized according to two parts:

PART ONE | INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

provides an overview of the OCP, including its overall vision and goals, growth containment objectives, overall plan structure and overall relationship to the Cowichan Valley transect, jurisdictional limitations, and general policy options.

PART TWO | POLICY DIRECTION & OPTIONS

are detailed within individual chapters to provide greater local context and description, summarize the current status of each policy topic, provide a draft of proposed policy direction, and offer additional policy options to further advance each topic, should the CVRD directors desire.

Process

The process we are following to create the CVRD's OCP works off the significant efforts completed to date on the Cowichan 2050 Regional Collaboration Framework and the harmonization of the electoral area OCPs.

The OCP is a multi-year, multi-faceted project aligned with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan seeking to support more "sustainable and coordinated growth and development in the region". The OCP is intended to bring clarity and simplicity to a range of complex issues that the CVRD's electoral areas face.

The OCP's vision, goals and broad policy categories have been refined through community engagement efforts held in early 2020. Along with the OCP's vision are eight goals, each of which forms a policy chapter. These policy chapters, along with the proposed draft growth containment boundaries and land use designation maps, are intended to be the subject of engagement activities in 2022. Feedback and input gained during these activities will help develop a final OCP for consideration by electoral area directors.

The OCP will also provide the framework for future, more detailed, local area and neighbourhood planning.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TBC once engagement activities have concluded.

PART ONE

Introduction & Context

1.1 OCP Vision & Goals

The following vision statement will guide future growth and development in the CVRD's electoral areas:

Surrounded by thriving natural environments and farmlands, the Cowichan Valley is a collective of vibrant and distinct communities.

Our connection to nature is at the heart of our identity.
Our communities, complete with shops, services, parks and playgrounds, are steps away from pristine forests, trails and water bodies. Sustainable local jobs, prosperous industries, diverse housing options and a flourishing public life inspire people of all ages and incomes to enjoy our rural way of life.

Growth is intentional and managed.
Our water and land resources are protected, our infrastructure is maintained responsibly, our agricultural landscapes are supported and celebrated, and our communities are complete, connected and co-exist with nature. Lands designated as Agricultural are reserved for agricultural and related uses.

Resilience to emerging trends will define our community's future.
Our ability to adapt and respond will be strengthened by our relationships with our residents, local First Nations, member municipalities, neighbouring regional districts and senior levels of government. Transparency, trust and openness in these relationships will allow our region to make responsible decisions, be accountable, embrace the future and thrive.

A collective of vibrant and distinct communities

"Community character" is defined by a range of elements: historical and intangible, permanent and ephemeral.

From forests to resource lands to coastal edges, the Cowichan Valley Regional District is home to a vast range of landscape types—to name them is to paint a picture of a diverse region where the local environment shapes human settlements and economic activity. Understanding the natural setting and context of each community helps to define uniqueness and "sense of place."

This understanding further supports the development of land use policies and design guidelines that are sensitive to the nuances of specific places and local communities. Simply put, this approach helps ensure that the rules governing future growth will result in development that is respectful of local culture and is rooted in the CVRD's unique values and identity.

The following character sketches explore more closely the many unique, character-defining elements associated with specific landscape types and traditional architectural styles and design responses found throughout the Cowichan Valley:

- **Coastal** | defined by coastal edges and the waterfront
- **Lakefront** | defined by inland water bodies and riparian areas
- **Highlands** | defined by forests, resource lands and the backcountry
- **Lowlands** | defined by woodlands and agricultural valleys.

While OCP policy, zoning regulation and design guidelines must necessarily deconstruct specific attributes, such as building size, shape, elements and physical relationships (in order to effectively manage them), character sketches are intended to be integrative.

In simple terms, the following drawings illustrate typical and traditional architectural styles from the Cowichan Valley and give direction to the general forms and character that are preferred in the region.
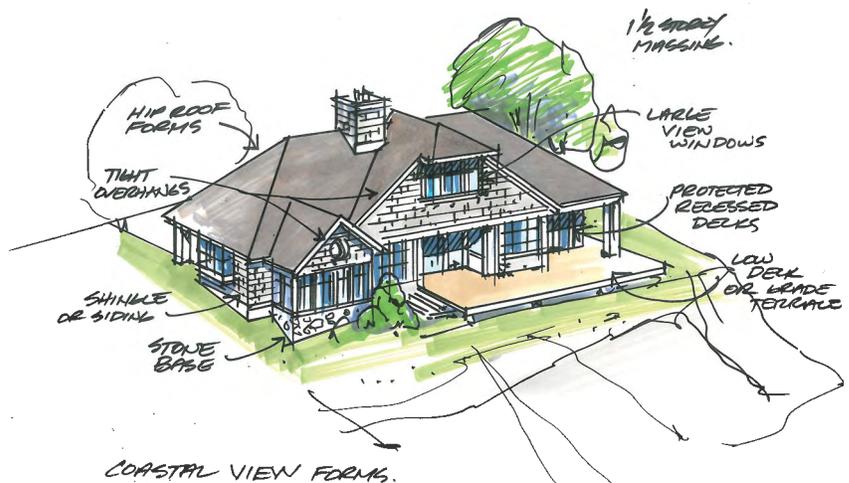
COASTAL

The "coastal" type (seen on the previous page) is similarly defined by low-pitch roof forms and more sprawling massing (in less-constrained sites), large windows to take in water views and the extension of interior rooms with decks and/or terraces that relate to outdoor spaces.

The "seafront" type is defined by character elements of low-pitch roof forms, bay windows and eclectic massing, with defining elements that often include shingle-style cladding, shed dormers and through-passages that connect to waterfront boardwalks and frame water views.

COASTAL SEAFRONT.
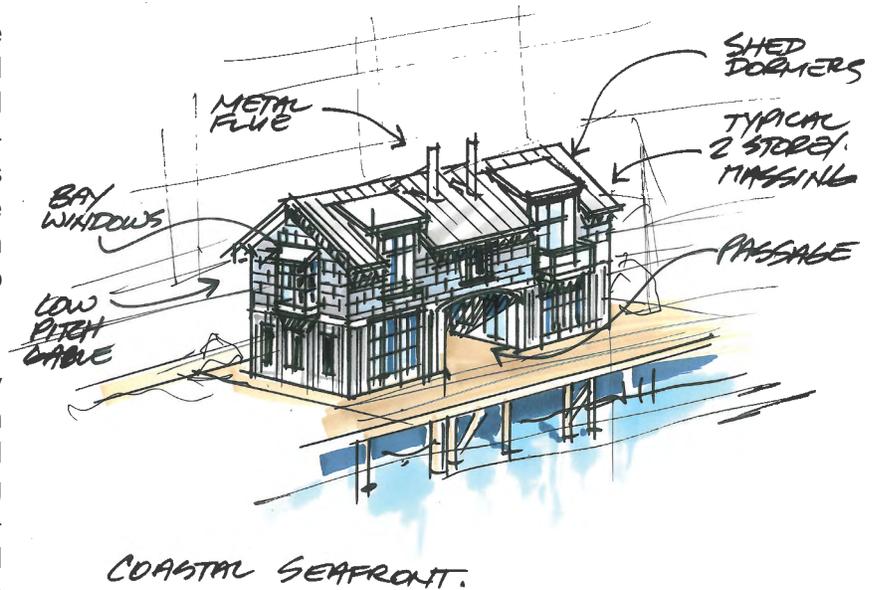
LAKEFRONT

The "lakefront" type is defined by "cottage" character elements of low-pitch roof forms and exposed timber details/timber framing. Large, view-oriented windows are typically organized as part of open gable ends and generous decks that take advantage of water views. In hillside conditions, walk-out basements resolve stepped building forms to the natural grade.

LAKESHORE COTTAGE FORM.
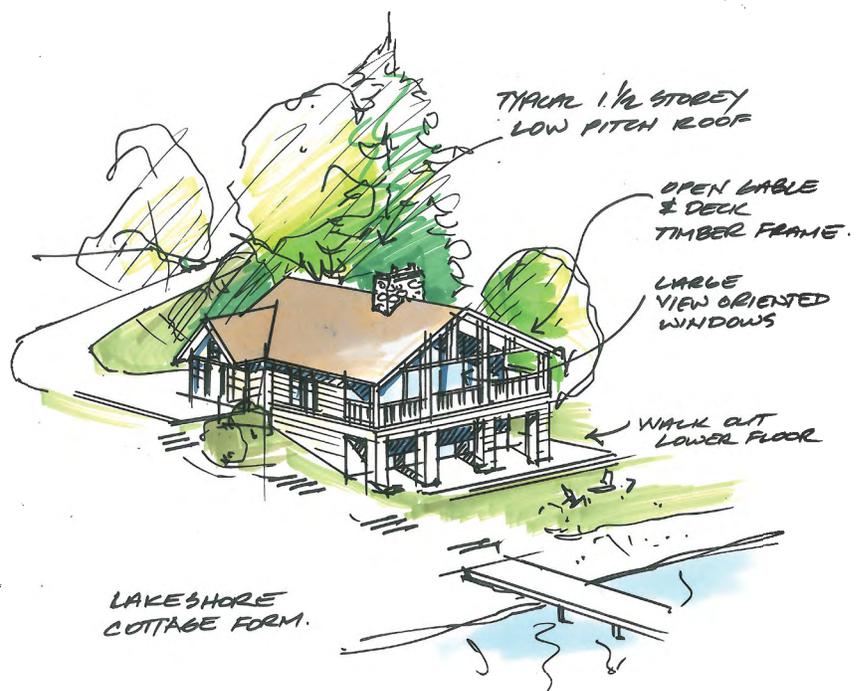
LOWLANDS

The "lowlands" type is defined by character elements of low-pitch roof forms, extended overhangs and covered porch structures. Typical of working landscapes and rural acreages, the building program is often deconstructed into a collection of purpose-built structures (e.g., detached garage, wood-shed, barns) and organized around central, interior spaces (for arrival/access) and/or provide service to exterior spaces (e.g., garden shed).
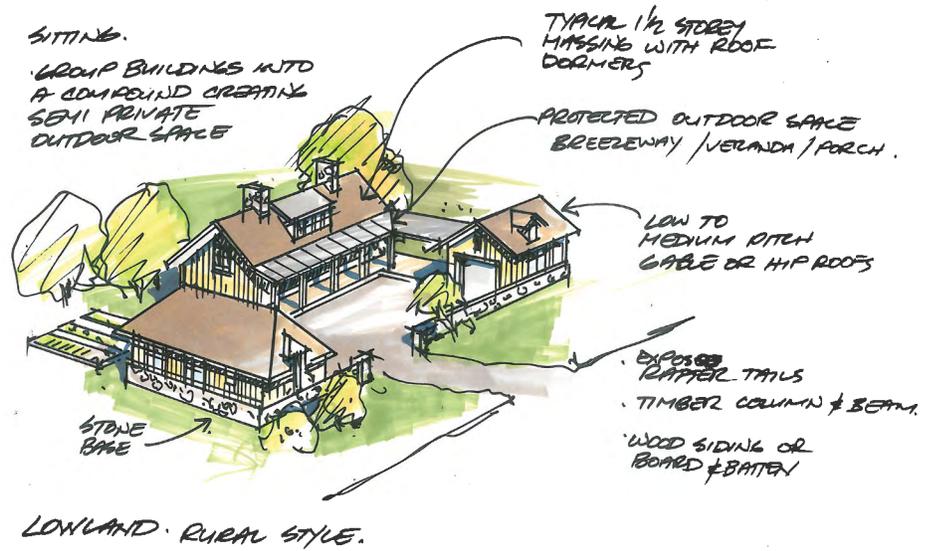
HIGHLANDS

The "highlands" type is defined by "mountain cabin" character elements of relatively higher-pitched roof forms (associated with shedding snow loads), exposed timber details/timber framing and a greater extent of stone masonry reflective of native materials. Side decks connect to natural grade, and tighter massing is more vertical in response to terrain constraints in steep and/or forested hillsides.
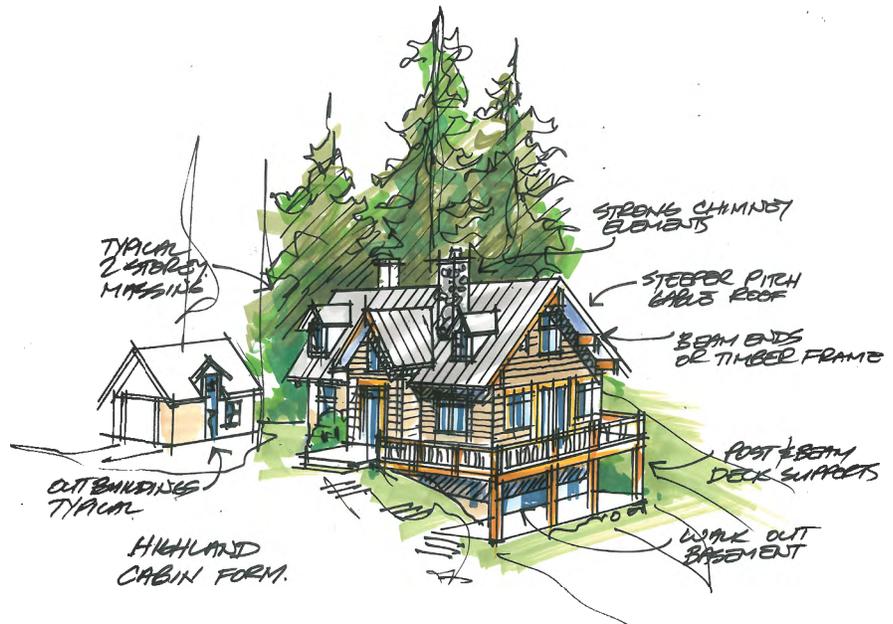
Coastal Villages | Examples include: Cowichan Bay, Mill Bay, and Saltair

These villages offer a direct and crucial connection to the sea. They often include an industrial port, recreational marina and/or ferry connection that help draw residents, employees and tourists. On the edge of these villages and more urban centres, residential subdivisions have emerged to supply relatively affordable single-detached homes. Some include compact lots, while others resemble more of an estate character.

COASTAL PRECEDENT

Lowland Crossroads & Rail Stations | Examples include: Cobble Hill, Cowichan Station, Diamond/North Oyster, Glenora and Sahtlam

Historically, several communities emerged along the southern railway of Vancouver Island. The increased connectivity helped grow local economies, create jobs and encourage clusters of development in close proximity to stations. Similarly, at the corner of major highway intersections, a small cluster of buildings—often a community hall, gas station and/or convenience store—supported a larger rural community. This pattern of development has and continues to help define the Cowichan Valley's many rural "crossroads" identities.

Lakefront Townsites | Examples include: Caycuse, Honeymoon Bay, Mesachie Lake, Shawnigan Lake and Youbou

On the shores of Shawnigan, Cowichan and Mesachie Lakes lie several communities that have a strong relationship with the water. While the forest industry and a mill may have been the original catalysts for development, now, patterns reflect the desire to be in close proximity to the scenic landscapes.

LAKESHORE PRECEDENT

Highland Settlements | Examples include: Malahat and Shawnigan Station

Constrained by steep slopes, thin soils and rocky hillsides, the highlands are a complex landscape dominated by forest ecosystems and resource uses with the exception of a few small communities. Ideally, these settlements are situated to take advantage of their prospect and associated views.

HIGHLAND PRECEDENT

Eight OCP Policy Area Goals

Along with the OCP's vision are eight goals. Central to the goals is the region's determination to address, using the jurisdictional powers at its disposal, several crises that have emerged over time: the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, the affordable housing crisis, the food system crisis and the inequality crisis. The eight goals are:

1. MITIGATE & ADAPT TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

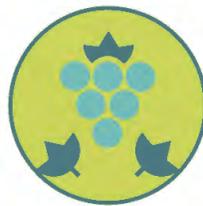**5. PROTECT & RESTORE NATURAL ASSETS**

2. MANAGE INFRASTRUCTURE RESPONSIBLY

6. STRENGTHEN LOCAL FOOD & AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

3. MAKE DISTINCT, COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

7. ENHANCE REGIONAL PROSPERITY

4. EXPAND MOBILITY OPTIONS

8. IMPROVE GOVERNANCE & IMPLEMENTATION

1.2 Jurisdiction

The OCP establishes objectives and policies for its land use designations and for the eight goals listed previously. Broad objectives are applied to matters over which the Regional District does not have jurisdiction. Policies are applied to topics that are within the Regional District's jurisdiction.

Regional Districts have the authority to develop official community plans under the *Local Government Act* (Part 14, 4). The following section establishes the broad jurisdictional divisions between various levels of government and helps define where the CVRD has direct authority to apply policies as distinct from areas where it will seek to influence through advocacy policies.

FEDERAL

The federal government holds jurisdiction over important topics that impact local planning and development. This overlap of jurisdiction is most obvious in cases of:

- regulation of marine navigation (Transport Canada and the Coast Guard) and fisheries regulation (Department of Fisheries and Oceans);
- telecommunications (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission); and
- aerodromes (Transport Canada).

Beyond jurisdiction, the federal government also plays a significant role in funding several of the aspects the OCP hopes to implement and achieve. It provides many funding programs for expensive projects that local government budgets could not complete because they do not have access to the necessary loans or funding. Often, funding for these projects must align with the federal government's priorities and address topics like the climate crisis, social inequity and economic development. Projects that receive funding include large scale infrastructure (i.e., Mesachie Lake Wastewater Treatment and Collection Upgrade Project), transportation projects, ecological restoration, affordable housing, building retrofits, First Nations partnerships, agricultural innovation and more. The Federal Gas Tax Fund is perhaps the most well known program that provides financial support to local governments.

PROVINCIAL

The provincial government holds jurisdiction over additional matters that significantly impact local planning and development. These include:

- major infrastructure and transportation projects (Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [MoTI]), including roadside drainage infrastructure;
- affordable housing (BC Housing);
- protection of riparian areas (Ministry of Environment and the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation);
- management of the agricultural lands (*Agricultural Land Commission Act*, Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation and the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*;
- water allocation and licencing (*Water Sustainability Act*); and,
- privately managed forest lands (PMFL), which make up nearly half of all of the lands within the CVRD and are governed under provincial legislation.

Like the federal government, the provincial government has significant access to funding and plays a similar role in financing important projects for local governments.

REGIONAL DISTRICTS & INCORPORATED MUNICIPALITIES

Regional District and incorporated municipality powers come primarily from the provincial *Local Government Act* and Community Charter.

Regional Districts provide services, including emergency management, planning for regional solid waste management and governance for electoral areas. Regional Districts have no role in roads and policing, as these services are municipal or provincial responsibilities. That said, Regional Districts can and do choose to provide a broader range of services, but only with the support of the electors or taxpayers.

Regional Districts are able to regulate land use and development in electoral areas using generally the same planning and land use management processes and tools available to incorporated municipalities, including zoning and official community plans. Regional Districts differ from incorporated municipalities insofar as they do not have a direct role in approving the subdivision of land (a provincial responsibility in non-municipal areas).

FIRST NATIONS

"Our Sacred Land: The Indigenous People's Community Land Use Planning Handbook in BC" (2019), details the aspects of First Nations legal and jurisdiction rights. These include rights and title, acts and legislation, land tenure, government-to-government, Nation-to-Nation and private sector/partnerships.

Rights and Title l First Nations have specific rights set out in the constitution that relate to land governance. These rights drive supreme court decisions, land claims, duty to consult and treaties.

Acts and Legislation l A variety of acts and legislation will affect different degrees of law-making authority. These involve federal acts (e.g., *Endangered Species Act*), and sometimes federal laws (e.g., *Fisheries Act*), which recognize First Nations' power to govern, regulate and manage land-related activities, usually on reserve. Under the *Indian Act* and through delegated authorities under the *Indian Act*, for example, a First Nation can only enact certain bylaws with approval from the Ministry of Indigenous Services Canada. Other governance systems, such as the *First Nations Land Management Act* and treaty agreements, provide First Nations increased authority to make laws in relation to lands and resources.

Land Tenure l Land tenure structures determine the different forms of occupation and ownership and possibilities a community or individual has with respect to land use and development. First Nations might be involved with planning for lands with a mix of land tenure, including fee simple lands, reserve lands, Traditional Territory lands and/or crown lands, or certificates of possession and customary lands.

Government-to-Government l Land governance involves working and negotiating with other governments. Some of the tools used for this purpose include memoranda of understanding, engagement protocols, reconciliation agreements or service agreements. First Nations might also collaborate with other governments on a regional land use plan or official community plan.

Nation-to-Nation l Land governance may also involve working and negotiating with other First Nations regarding shared territory or partnering on joint ventures.

Private Sector/Partnerships l Land governance may also involve working and negotiating with the private sector through impact benefit agreements, joint ventures or limited partnerships.

1.3 Equity Framework

Across BC, our communities are experiencing growing inequities in resources, access and power.

The CVRD applies a social equity lens to better understand the needs of diverse populations in relation to the eight policy areas: climate crisis, infrastructure, complete communities, mobility, natural assets, food and agriculture, regional prosperity, and governance and implementation. As the CVRD learns more from the community, this equity lens should continue to adapt to reflect equity considerations.

The policies within the OCP have been examined to identify the policies that:
- should be considered given their benefits to diverse populations; and
- need greater consideration to ensure implementation doesn't harm, and may benefit, diverse populations.

Equity is defined as "just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential." Equity recognizes that certain barriers prevent the full potential of diverse populations. These barriers have been constructed over time and are perpetuated through cultural practices, norms and institutional factors—such as policy. As policy is written and implemented, equity should be considered in analysis. The implementation section of this document includes an Equity Checklist (page 117) that policy makers can use to understand the equity impacts of different actions.

SOCIAL EQUITY

EQUITY POLICY

PRIORITIZE

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS
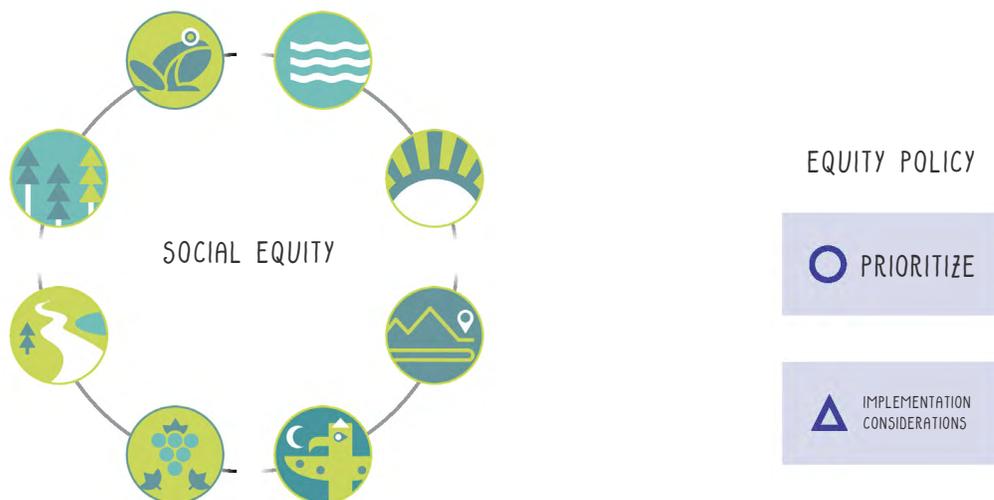
Social equity applies to each policy chapter and should be central in decision making.

These symbols identify policies that should be prioritized or need greater consideration.

Key Concepts

This page introduces some key concepts relating to social equity, diversity and inclusion. These definitions and concepts may evolve over time.

- **Assumptions I** Something we presuppose or take for granted without questioning. We accept these beliefs to be true and use them to interpret the world around us.

- **Accessibility I** Accessibility involves removing the barriers faced by individuals with a variety of disabilities (which can include, but are not limited to: physical, sensory, cognitive, learning and mental health) and the various barriers (including attitudinal and systemic) that impede an individual's ability to participate in social, cultural, political and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age, our abilities change; and therefore, an accessible society is one designed to include everybody.

- **Equity I** Refers to both the fair and just distribution of benefits and burdens to all affected parties and communities (distributional equity) as well as the fair and inclusive access to decision-making processes that impact community outcomes (process equity). In practice, taking an equitable approach means understanding and deliberately addressing current and historic under-representation and disadvantages.

- **Inclusion I** Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich social planning, decision-making and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive district, we each have a sense of belonging and acceptance, and we are recognized as valued and contributing members of society. Real inclusion takes place when those already included in the "mainstream" learn from those who are excluded and initiate change.

- **Intersectionality I** The intersection, or crossover, of our many identities affects how each of us experiences the region and its communities. These intersections occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, state governments, other political and economic unions, religious institutions and media).

- **Privilege I** The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded to members of a dominant group in a society or in a given context.

- **Systemic barriers I** Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society works. Existing policies, practices and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes, reinforce them.

Definitions adapted from the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI). Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities*, 2015.*

1.4 Social & Planetary Boundaries

The Doughnut of Social and Planetary Boundaries model is a useful framework for this OCP. Kate Raworth, creator of the Doughnut, explains the concept as a compass for human prosperity in the 21st century, and the goal is to meet the needs of all people within the means of the planet. It consists of two concentric rings:

- A social foundation - to ensure that no one is left falling short on life's essentials.
- An ecological ceiling - to ensure that humanity does not collectively overshoot planetary boundaries.

Between these two limits lies a doughnut-shaped space that is both ecologically safe and socially just—a space in which humanity can both survive and thrive and where a regenerative and distributive economy can flourish.
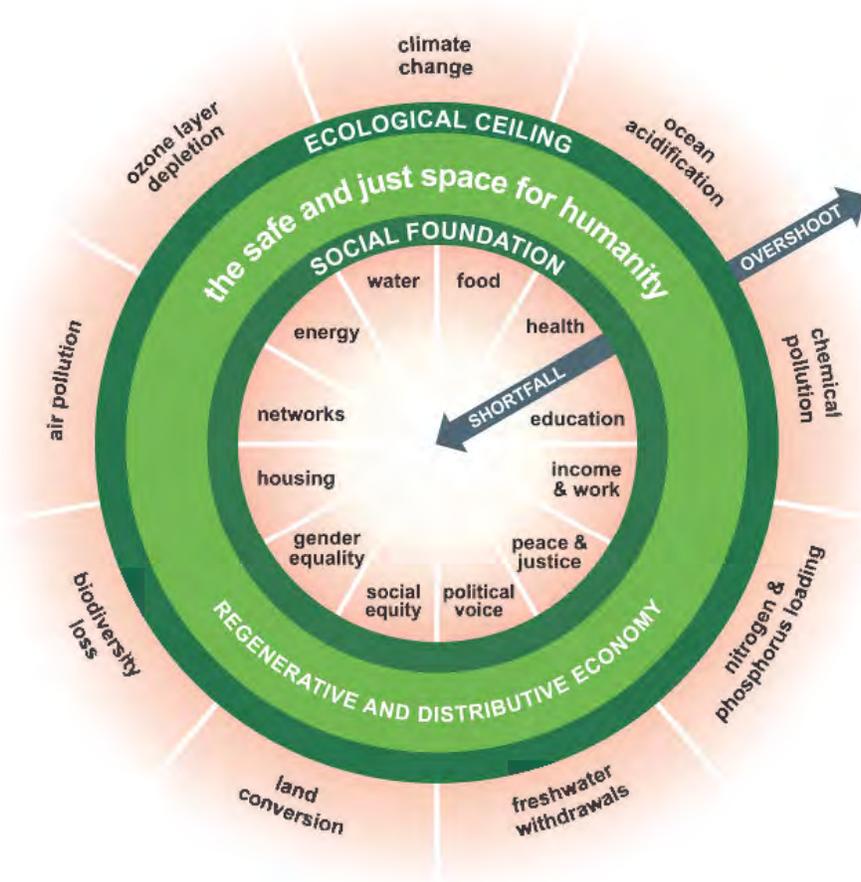
Doughnut of Social and Planetary Boundaries. Image taken from: doughnuteconomics.org/tools-and-stories/11

1.5 Growth Projections

In 2019, rennie & associates© prepared population and dwelling projections for the CVRD with an outlook to 2050. These projections were updated based on new growth containment boundaries (GCB) within the electoral areas. The tables on the following pages summarize the projections by electoral area.

Population Projections

	YEAR		
	2020 (estimate)	2025 (projection)	2050 (projection)
Electoral Area A	5,178	5,584	6,714
Electoral Area B	9,297	10,073	12,326
Electoral Area C	5,060	5,456	6,635
Electoral Area D	3,507	3,658	4,060
Electoral Area E	4,320	4,332	4,305
Electoral Area F	1,986	2,450	3,797
Electoral Area G	2,526	2,515	2,410
Electoral Area H	2,612	2,689	3,858
Electoral Area I	1,549	2,010	3,360
Total	36,036	38,766	46,463

Notes:
- *These projections are based on existing growth containment boundaries.*
- *The rest of the CVRD's resident population is located within the incorporated municipalities of Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan and North Cowichan.*

Dwelling Projections

	YEAR		
	2020 (estimate)	**2025 (projection)**	**2050 (projection)**
Electoral Area A	2,038	2,239	2,950
Electoral Area B	3,427	3,749	4,888
Electoral Area C	2,275	2,421	2,938
Electoral Area D	1,429	1,513	1,812
Electoral Area E	1,634	1,680	1,843
Electoral Area F	771	964	1,647
Electoral Area G	1,067	1,110	1,260
Electoral Area H	1,098	1,166	1,406
Electoral Area I	652	835	1,484
Total	**14,391**	**15,676**	**20,227**

Notes:
- *These projections are based on existing growth containment boundaries.*

1.5 Housing Needs

The Housing Needs Assessment report was completed in parallel with the OCP process and explored both quantitative and qualitative data to help understand the current state of housing and the types of units that will be required in the future.

With an outlook of five years, the Housing Needs Assessment report determined the following total units by number of bedrooms would be required by 2025. This report used rennie & associates© projections based on the CVRD's existing GCBs and used a different methodology than the dwelling projections shown on the previous page. This explains the disparity in projected dwelling units by 2025.

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3+ bedrooms	Total
Electoral Area A	1,369	262	426	2,057
Electoral Area B	1,784	530	862	3,176
Electoral Area C	1,621	226	381	2,228
Electoral Area D	905	201	283	1,389
Electoral Area E	980	263	394	1,637
Electoral Area F	457	94	129	681
Electoral Area G	794	124	143	1,060
Electoral Area H	826	133	185	1,144
Electoral Area I	405	68	88	561
Total	9,141	1,901	2,891	13,933

Compared to the rest of BC, housing is generally more affordable for owners, and somewhat less affordable for renters. According to the Housing Needs Assessment report, from 2016 to 2019, prices for market ownership homes increased considerably each year. This suggests that since 2016, the region's supply of available land has been insufficient to meet growing demand.
Other findings from the report include:

- Current housing sizes are unsuitable for resident needs, as most households need only one bedroom.
- An ageing population represents a greater need for ageing-in-place housing options, accessible housing units and co-operative housing models.
- Younger community members face housing instability and unaffordability.
- There is an acute shortage of rental housing.
- Housing costs are misaligned with regional wages and pushing residents to more affordable communities further away from their jobs.
- Current housing options are not adequately sized or culturally appropriate for First Nations.
- There is a need for more non-market housing, including supportive and emergency housing options.
- Affordable housing options for families are hard to find.

It is important to note both population and dwelling projections are a point in time prediction within a very dynamic demographic and housing environment. The dwelling projections should also be seen as the minimum required to house anticipated population growth. To achieve certain objectives related to housing affordability, community compactness and vibrancy, economic development, effective and sustainable infrastructure servicing and others, more housing may be needed.

1.6 Growth Containment Objectives and System Boundaries

The GCBs identify lands that actively support growth management objectives (e.g., infrastructure servicing, transportation, housing and employment) and where the majority of public investment will be directed.

The OCP GCBs (Schedule G) is a refinement and reassessment of the former village containment boundaries and urban containment boundaries in the electoral area OCPs. Technical expertise and community engagement helped inform the location of the new GCBs with the intent of aligning service provision and allocation of resources within existing developed areas and projected growth areas. Growth within the GCBs supports the effective delivery of infrastructure and community services.

Key changes to the GCBs include:
- A contiguous growth area across electoral areas A, B and C, linking Mill Bay, Shawnigan Lake and Cobble Hill
- Containment of Saltair (electoral area G), North Oyster/Diamond (electoral area H) and Paldi (electoral area F) within new GCBs
- A contiguous growth area connecting the communities of Mesachie Lake and Honeymoon Bay (electoral area F)
- Formalization of existing development patterns through expanded GCBs in Cowichan Bay (electoral area D) and Youbou (electoral area I).

The following growth objectives direct the Cowichan Valley's electoral areas toward a more sustainable future:

- The CVRD does not support further expansion of the GCB, except where special study areas indicate the potential for future comprehensive development and/or infrastructure servicing needs.
- Growth is focused within the GCB. ✳
- Growth is focused within existing centres and residential neighbourhoods, with some greenfield sites available for future development.
- Growth is not occurring in floodplain or hazard areas.
- Growth is not occurring on agricultural lands.
- Growth is occurring primarily in areas that have community water and sewerage systems.

✳ METRIC

1.7 CVRD Transect and Land Use Designations

The Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas consolidates over 160 land use designations across various electoral areas into approximately 21.

FROM OVER
160
LAND USE DESIGNATIONS TO...

▶ **21**

Each of the land use designations includes density thresholds that align closely with local mobility capacities and strategic upgrade projects. The intent is to provide a standardized approach to land use, infrastructure and transportation infrastructure (asset) management across the region. The transect is aspirational and provides the thematic framework for future work within local plan areas.

Each policy chapter includes policies for each of the CVRD transect's sub-areas. These sub-areas are shown on the following page, and their relationships to the land use designations is illustrated on page 27. There are seven sub-areas:

 • Resource & Natural
 • Rural & Agricultural
 • Suburban
 • Village
 • Urban
 • Downtown
 • Special District

A Guiding Framework | The CVRD Transect

RESOURCE & NATURAL

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL

SUBURBAN

VILLAGE

URBAN

DOWNTOWN

SPECIAL DISTRICT
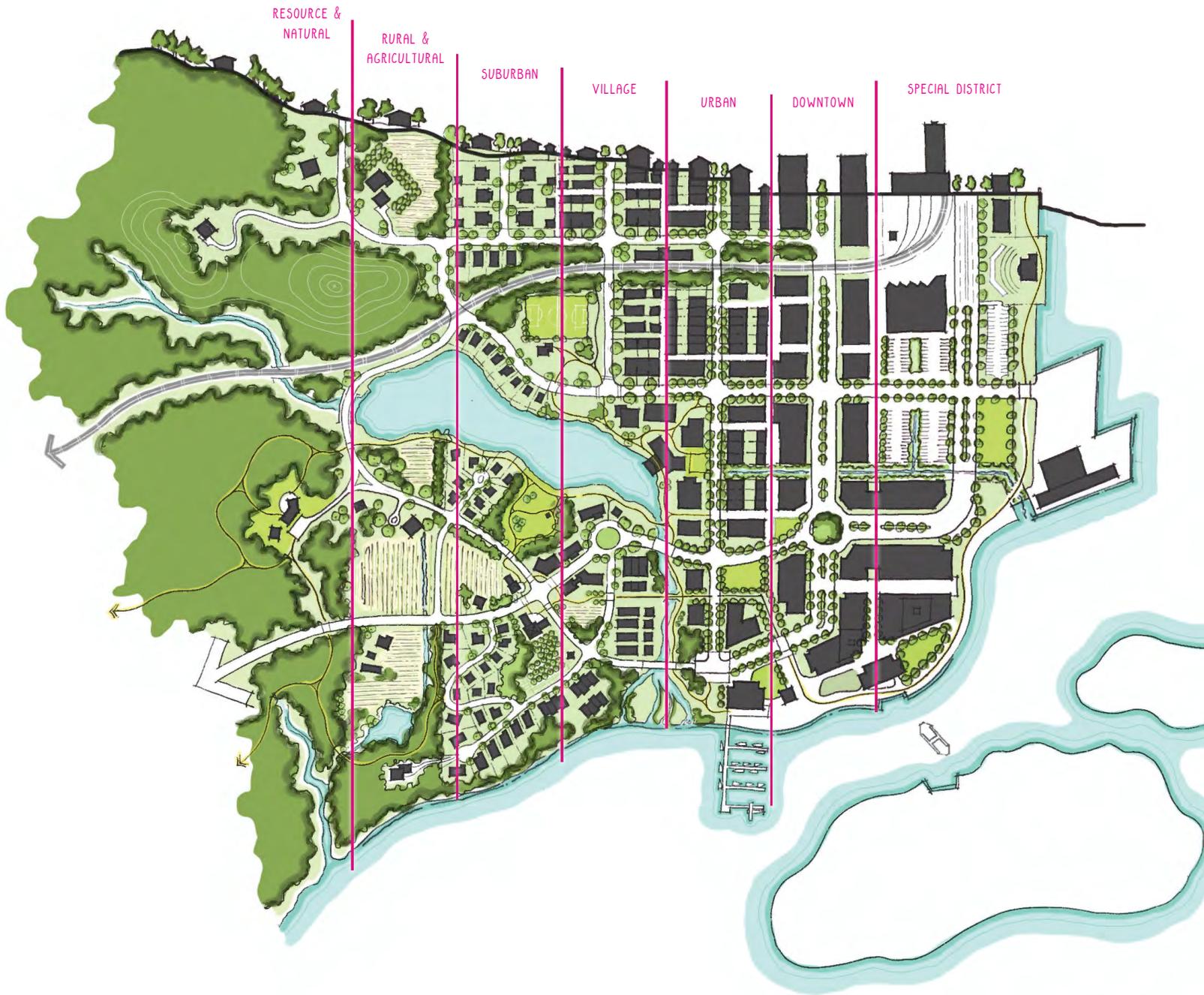
A Range of Land Use Options

		RESOURCE & NATURAL	RURAL & AGRICULTURAL	SUBURBAN	VILLAGE	URBAN	DOWNTOWN	SPECIAL DISTRICT
RESIDENTIAL								
1.	large rural	███████						
2.	small rural		███					
3.	country suburban			███				
4.	large suburban			███				
5.	medium suburban			███				
6.	compact suburban				███			
7.	village residential				████			
8.	village core					████		
MIXED EMPLOYMENT								
9.	mixed employment							███
COMMERCIAL								
10.	crossroads commercial		███					
11.	general commercial			███████████				
12.	village commercial				████████			
13.	tourist commercial							███
INDUSTRIAL								
14.	resource industrial	███						
15.	light industrial							███
16.	general industrial							███
CIVIC								
17.	infrastructure			███████████████				
18.	institutional				████████			
PARKS & OPEN SPACE								
19.	parks & open space	███████████████████████						
AGRICULTURE								
20.	agriculture	███████████████████████						
MARINE								
21.	water	███████████████████████						

Residential Land Use Designations

⬛ Large Lot Rural

PURPOSE: Preserve natural and rural settings with large lots, where residential uses are situated in a safe and flat area, causing little disturbance to the surrounding environment. Properties in this designation do not typically have access to infrastructure services, such as water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes

DENSITY: Maximum 0.2 UPH (units per hectare)

⬛ Small Lot Rural

PURPOSE: Protect rural settings with housing on lot sizes that are typically considered acreages or hobby farms. Residential uses are situated in a safe and flat area, causing little disturbance to the surrounding environment. Properties in this designation do not typically have access to infrastructure services, such as water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes

DENSITY: Maximum 1 UPH

⬛ Country Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable single detached housing with country character, where homes face and front a street. Properties in this designation do not always have access to infrastructure services, such as water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes

DENSITY: Maximum 2.5 UPH

Large Lot Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable single detached housing with suburban character, where homes face and front a street and provide opportunities for clustering units into pocket neighbourhoods. Properties in this designation do not always have access to infrastructure services, such as water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes

DENSITY: Maximum 5 UPH

Medium Lot Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable single detached housing with suburban character and provide opportunities for clustering units into pocket neighbourhoods. Properties in this designation typically have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems. Transportation choices are more varied with some access to sidewalks and bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes

DENSITY: Maximum 15 UPH

Compact Lot Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable single detached housing with some ground-oriented duplexes and provide opportunities for clustering units into pocket neighbourhoods. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems. Transportation choices are more varied with greater access to sidewalks and bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes & Duplex

DENSITY: Maximum 30 UPH

Village Residential

PURPOSE: Enable high-density single detached housing forms and townhomes near village and urban centres. Homes face and front a street, with small lot configurations and ground-oriented plex housing (e.g. duplex, triplex, fourplex) and townhomes. Ground floor commercial uses in the form of live-work may be allowed through a local area plan. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems. Transportation choices are rich with access to sidewalks and bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Single Detached Homes, Duplex, Triplex, Fourplex, Townhomes

DENSITY: Between 25 and 50 UPH

Village Core

PURPOSE: Enable multi-family housing to support village and urban centres. Residential forms include townhomes and low-rise apartment buildings. Ground floor commercial uses in the form of live-work and mixed-use buildings may be allowed through a local area plan. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems. Transportation choices are the richest with access to sidewalks and bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Townhomes, Stacked Townhomes, Apartment buildings up to four storeys. Six storeys may be considered if the proposal contributes to the types of units needed in the community (as determined by the latest Housing Needs Assessment report).

DENSITY: Between 40 and 100 UPH

Special Study Area (electoral area A)

PURPOSE: Signal the need for further planning study and analysis related to lands that may accommodate future growth through a comprehensive development. Specifically, key considerations should be given to aquifer health, sensitive ecosystems, steep slopes, infrastructure servicing and transportation networks.

BUILDING TYPE: Buidlings up to two storeys

DENSITY: Variable

Employment Land Use Designations

■ Mixed Employment

PURPOSE: Allow the greatest flexibility and diversity of employment uses, including light industrial, commercial and office. Mixed employment development is typically located on large lots along major highway corridors. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Buildings up to two storeys

DENSITY: Variable

■ Crossroads Commercial

PURPOSE:Preserve rural settings and existing services to agricultural and resource based areas, outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Mix of small scale commercial and industrial uses, like convenience stores, markets and mechanic garages. Properties in this designation do not typically have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Small scale buildings up to two storeys in height

DENSITY: Variable
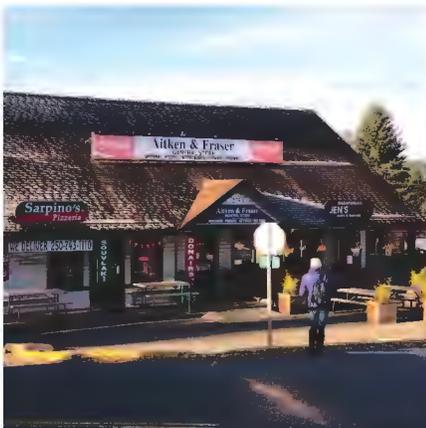
■ General Commercial

PURPOSE: Enable medium and large format commercial malls and strip malls with off-street surface parking serving both local and regional areas. Encourage residential uses above the primary ground floor commercial uses. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Medium and large format retail centres up to two storeys in height

DENSITY: Up to 1.0 FAR (floor area ratio)

Village Commercial

PURPOSE: Enable commercial or mixed-use buildings (multi-family residential and commercial uses) that function as settlement, village or urban gathering places and destinations. Uses include shops, restaurants, cafes and services. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Single or multi-storey buildings up to four storeys

DENSITY: Between 0.5 and 1.5 FAR

Tourist Commercial

PURPOSE: Accommodate a variety of tourist and recreational commercial uses that span across natural and rural areas, and village and urban centres. This designation intends to protect and enhance the CVRD's burgeoning tourist industry.

BUILDING TYPE: Single or multi-storey buildings up to four storeys

DENSITY: Variable

General Industrial

PURPOSE: Enable industrial buildings and structures on large lots. This development type is typically oriented around circulation, loading areas, surface parking and storage space. Accessory commercial uses are allowed. Development is typically located along major highway corridors for access and distribution of materials. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems.

**BUILDING TYPE:** Buildings up to two storeys

DENSITY: Variable

Light Industrial

PURPOSE: Enable industrial or mixed-use buildings (multi-family residential and industrial uses) focused on artisan studios, manufacturing, assembly and/or repairing of materials with light impacts on infrastructure and on small lots. This type of development is typically located in or near village and urban centres, or at a crossroads in more rural settings. Properties in this designation have access to infrastructure services, such as water and sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Buildings up to three storeys

DENSITY: Between 0.5 and 1.5 FAR

Forestry & Resources

PURPOSE: Enable the large-scale extraction of natural resources such as forestry, gravel and mines. These uses are generally located in isolated locations, far from villages and urban centres.**BUILDING TYPE:** n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Agriculture

PURPOSE: Accommodate and recognize the provincial ALR regulations that permit a variety of farming and non-farming activities, including basic production of agricultural products, value-added production activities and agri-tourism. Support the agricultural sector by accommodating supplemental employment opportunities, such as home-based businesses and value-added opportunities to maintain the viability of farm businesses.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Civic & Open Space Land Use Designations

Infrastructure

PURPOSE: Maintain existing civic infrastructure, like pumping stations and water treatment facilities, across the region to ensure effective distribution of public utilities.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Institutional

PURPOSE: Protect and facilitate the development of buildings with institutional uses that support a complete community. This includes schools, recreation centres, fire halls, places of worship, libraries, social enterprises (where appropriate) and other community-focused services.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Parks & Open Space

PURPOSE: Protect existing parks and create new parks, trails, fields and open spaces, including sensitive wildlife habitat and steep slopes.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Water

PURPOSE: Protect water bodies for their continued use as safe and adequate year-round potable water supply and for their significant value as sensitive wildlife habitat.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Land Use Designation Overlays

Special Study Area - Infratrastructure & Servicing

PURPOSE: Further study ways to enhance servicing sustainability in locations outside of the growth containment boundary.

Special Study Area - Potential ALR Exclusion

PURPOSE: Signal the potential exclusion of lands from the ALR for the following reasons:

• land is not actively farmed; and,
• location is strategic for future growth with strong servicing potential.

Special Study Area - Comprehensive Development

PURPOSE: Large greenfield parcels that require a comprehensive development plan showing the general layout of the ultimate buildout of the property, including:

• siting of buildings;
• mobility, connections and road network; and,
• parks, open spaces and public spaces.

Special Study Area - New Parks & Open Spaces

PURPOSE: Indicate the requirement for a land dedication or rezoning that would provide a new public park or open space in line with local community needs.

1.8 Neighbourhood & Local Area Plans

Neighbourhood and local area plans are planning documents that provide greater detail on growth management, often needed for communities that are expected to experience rapid and/or significant change. These plans help shape growth in a way that contributes to more place-specific, well-designed and livable neighbourhoods.

Where community infrastructure is unable to accommodate growth and expanded capacity is not anticipated within current plans, no neighbourhood or local area plans are necessary. Instead, community character statements will seek to respect the unique identity of communities as defined by local settlement patterns, landscapes and buildings.

Where growth is planned, measurable criteria defined within the OCP will provide clarity and consistency regarding what triggers the development of a neighbourhood or local area plan. Specifically, local plans will be developed as growth management tools to address more critical local issues in detail, especially as they relate to the allocation of density and the provision of infrastructure.

Neighbourhood and local area plans should be developed to define future land use and development in greater detail and specifically considering the necessary partnerships between the public and private sectors in implementing community visions. Specifically, each neighbourhood and local area plan will contain more detailed policies, strategies and guidelines to address:

- specific land use and density provisions (block scale);
- park dedication, trails and open space planning;
- infrastructure servicing and natural asset management;
- employment lands;
- circulation, access and accessibility;
- housing diversity and affordability;
- place-specific form and character;
- resilience and adaptation to natural hazards; and,
- development phasing and financing.

1.9 Development Approval Information

The entire CVRD is designated as a development approval information area. The CVRD may require, by bylaw, information on the anticipated impact of a proposed activity or development on the community, including but not limited to, information regarding impacts on the following:

- transportation patterns including traffic flow;
- local infrastructure;
- public facilities including schools and parks;
- community services; and
- the natural environment of the affected area.

Policies

The CVRD Board:
1. Ensures that any new development incurs all costs associated with any required infrastructure upgrades or servicing requirements.

2. Supports, in recognition of several of the electoral areas being rural communities with agricultural uses, obtaining, for any development of non-farm uses and subdivision within the ALR or any developments within 300 m of ALR lands, where appropriate, an assessment of the likely impact of the development on surrounding agricultural uses, including a report prepared by a professional agrologist.

3. Supports drainage impact assessments at the cost of development for any wetlands, creeks and sensitive areas.

Justification

1. The natural environment of the CVRD supports an ecosystem of great diversity, including rare species of plants, plant communities and animals. It also supports human habitation. Information may be required to understand conditions and put in place mitigation strategies to limit or reduce any potential impact that development may have.

2. Any new development could increase the traffic flows along any road within the regional district. Many of the electoral area roads are designed for limited traffic flows. They do not have curbs and gutters or sidewalks. Information may be required to understand the potential impact that increased traffic generated by new development may have upon transportation patterns, including traffic flows, transit and associated infrastructure, and other non-vehicular road users.

3. New development may affect the provision of fire and police in the regional district. The regional district is served by volunteer fire departments. Policing is provided by the RCMP, and the Regional District is responsible for planning and responding to emergencies in the electoral areas. As development could have a significant impact on fire services and increase the cost to the Regional District of providing the service, information may be required on the possible impact that development may have upon the provision of these two services.

4. New development may affect the provision of basic infrastructure services—water, sewer, drainage, solid waste management, parks and schools. As development could have a significant impact on these services and increase associated costs to the Regional District, information may be required on the possible impact that development may have upon the provision of these services.

5. Given the topography and the rich biodiversity of the regional district, the plan area has numerous environmentally sensitive features that may require a thorough analysis prior to development. This might include an analysis of any liquid waste systems, water and drainage to ensure that there is no adverse effect on human health or the natural environment.

1.9 Temporary Use Permits

Land must be designated as a temporary use permit area in order for temporary use permits to be considered. Temporary use permits may be considered by the CVRD Board to allow specific land uses to occur for a short period of time. The permit can contain detailed requirements such as the buildings that can be used, the time frame of the permit and other conditions. Such permits are provided at the discretion of the CVRD Board and are only in effect for a limited time. The designation of land for temporary uses are in Schedule L – Land Use Designations.

Policies

The CVRD Board:
1. Would consider holding a public meeting prior to deciding to issue a temporary use permit.

Policy Direction & Options
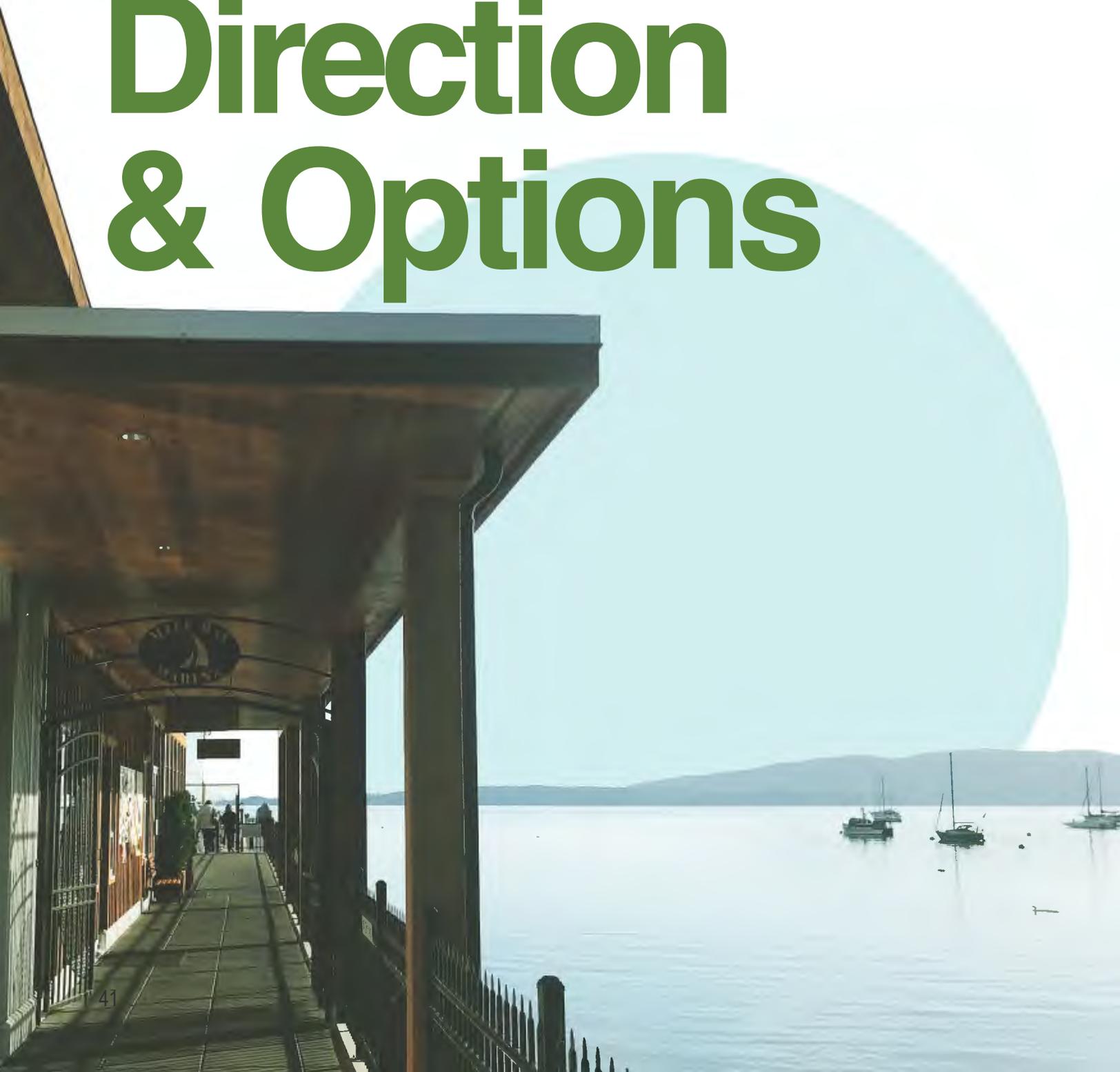
Introduction

The following chapters are organized according to a "systems approach" whereby individual sections follow a consistent and simple structure that:

- **introduces** the topic with a general description and definition of each "system" (components, boundaries, etc.);

- identifies current **challenges** to those systems and highlights associated sources of those challenges;

- explores **objectives** (e.g., high-level strategic direction) to best address identified challenges; and,

- further examines a range of **policies** (and associated metrics, where identified) to effectively address implementation of the objectives as explored.
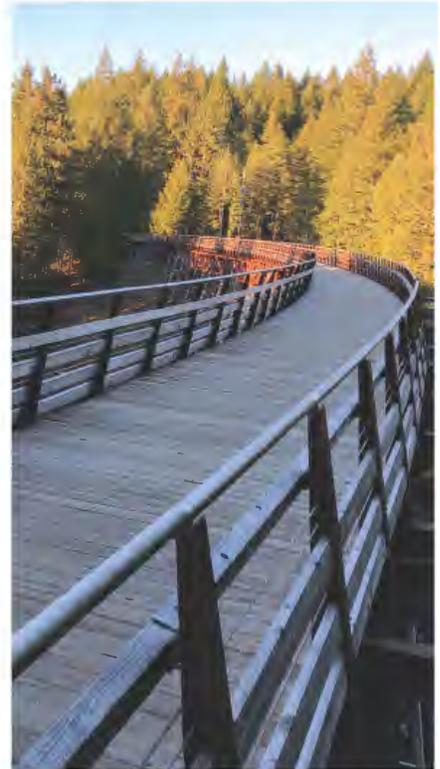
POLICY CHAPTERS:

- Mitigate & Adapt to the Climate Crisis
- Protect & Restore Natural Assets
- Manage Infrastructure Responsibly
- Strengthen Local Food & Agricultural Systems
- Make Distinct, Complete Communities
- Enhance Regional Prosperity
- Expand Mobility Options
- Improve Governance & Implementation

POLICY CHAPTER FORMAT:

Policy Chapter

CONTEXT
- **Introduction**
- **Challenges**
- **Objectives**

POLICIES
- **Policy by Transect Area**
- **General Policy**

1 Mitigate & Adapt to the Climate Crisis

Introduction

The Cowichan Region's climate has large variations over short distances because of complex geography.

Areas with the least precipitation include the east coast of the region. The highest amounts of precipitation occur on the west coast of the region and upland areas in the interior of the Island. However, these conditions are expected to change over the next century as GHG emissions continue to rise and disturb our natural and built environments.

The CVRD is currently addressing the climate crisis through a two-pronged approach: climate mitigation and climate adaptation. Mitigation means changing behaviours to reduce the causes of climate change—such as burning fossil fuels or removal of forests and important natural (green) infrastructure such as wetlands. Adaptation is about increasing the ability to withstand these impacts. By planning for wetter winters or drier summers and a number of other significant changes, the CVRD can ensure its landscapes, buildings and residents are adapting and thriving.

BC's provincial target is to achieve a 40% reduction of 2007 GHG emission levels by 2030, as part of the *Climate Change Accountability Act*. Reducing GHG emissions requires a multi-faceted strategy, including transportation policies to reduce reliance on cars and increase transit ridership and alternative modes; moving agricultural systems to a more ecologically sustainable foundation with lowered GHG emissions; and increasing food production.

The *Local Government Act* requires the CVRD to establish GHG emission reduction targets in the OCP, and to identify mechanisms to achieve and undertake ongoing monitoring for course correction.
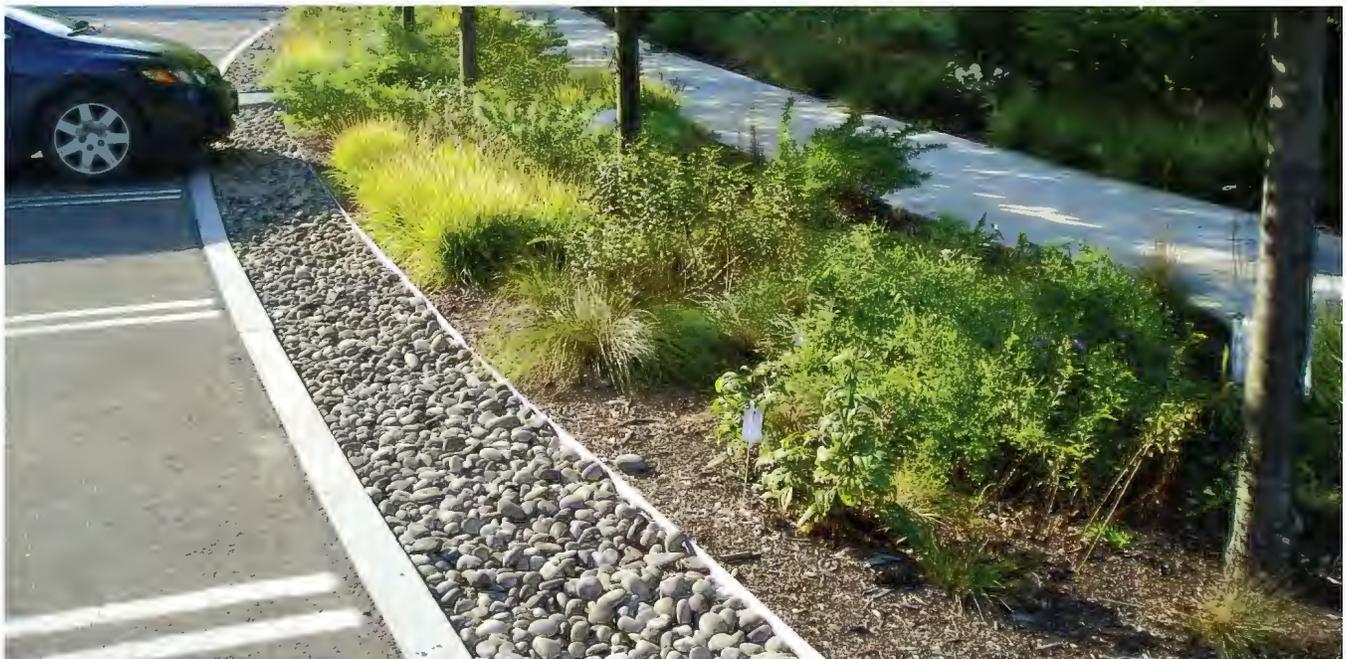
Challenges born out of the climate crisis

1. Impacts to water quality and quantity

In a region with significant low-lying coastal areas and floodplains, sea level rise will present multiple land use planning challenges across the region. Climate models project an increase in annual average temperature of almost 3°C in our region by the 2050s. There will be a doubling in the number of summer days above 35°C from an average of 16 days/year to 39 days/year. This will impact future water and cooling demands, which in turn impacts our ecosystems, watersheds and communities. Overall precipitation amounts are expected to decline, with more precipitation expected to fall during extreme storm events.

2. Threats to ecosystem biodiversity

Decrease in snowpack, frost days and summer precipitation, combined with increasing temperatures, will cause tree growth to decline and mortality rates in vulnerable species to rise. Certain tree species in our region's mountains may migrate to different elevations in search of suitable temperature and precipitation conditions. Water shortages during the dry spells and associated increases in water cost may have a significant impact on the viability of forestry in our region over the long term. Recent heat waves have decimated marine animals and many types of insects, birds and fish are decreasing in numbers.

3. Risks to silviculture activity

Increased risk of extreme rain events in winter, with their increased erosion potential, can be expected to challenge harvest opening sizes, cut-block orientation, road-building and deactivation practices, slope-stability practices, blow-down prevention, forest regeneration, rotation lengths and commercial viability.

4. Risks to agricultural activity

As the fall, winter and spring months become wetter and the summer months become hotter and drier, agricultural lands will face significant environmental challenges. It is expected that more frequent flooding and waterlogged soils may result in reduced productivity and crop loss and damage. Summers will continue to lead to increasing drought risk and place pressure on water resources for irrigation and livestock watering needs. Additionally, an increase in extreme weather events, such as severe winter storms, threatens livestock health, and has the potential to damage agricultural infrastructure.

5. Extreme heat, flooding and wildfires

In the face of more frequent and extreme weather patterns, including the risk of extreme heat, flooding and wildfires, emergency preparedness will be crucial to maintaining healthy and safe communities and the agricultural sector. Further, public health, air quality, heat stress and economic impacts will place the region's social fabric at risk.

*Source: Cowichan Valley Regional District. (2017). *Climate Projections for the Cowichan Valley Regional District.* p.46

Objectives

MITIGATION

- Reduce transportation, building and solid waste GHG emissions.✳
- Advocate to the Province to allow local governments to enact property assessed clean energy financing bylaws, which would allow building owners/operators to finance energy efficiency, renewable energy and other environmentally-related building upgrades through property taxes.
- Advocate to the Province for authority to regulate building emissions.
- Advocate to the Province and real estate sector that house energy efficiency metrics be disclosed at point of home sale.
- Advocate to BC Assessment to collect and track primary and secondary heat sources, including the numbers of houses that have upgraded heat sources or have alternative energy sources and/ or woodstoves.
- Advocate to the province and ICBC for mileage-based vehicle insurance.
- Advocate to the federal government to allow local governments to release green bonds to fund adaptation or mitigation work.

RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION

- Increase resilience to climate change and implement climate adaptation strategies.
- Improve resilience to climate change impacts, including climate-related natural hazards.
- Build resilience through design to reduce environmental, social and economic vulnerabilities.
- Protect coastal development from the growing flood hazards related to sea level rise.

✳ METRIC

Climate Crisis Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL

SUBURBAN

VILLAGE

URBAN

DOWNTOWN

SPECIAL DISTRICT

RESIDENTIAL
1. large rural
2. small rural
3. country suburban
4. large suburban
5. medium suburban
6. compact suburban
7. village residential
8. village core

MIXED EMPLOYMENT
9. Mixed Employment

COMMERCIAL
10. crossroads commercial
11. general commercial
12. village commercial
13. tourist commercial

INDUSTRIAL
14. resource industrial
15. light industrial
16. general industrial

CIVIC
17. Infrastructure
18. institutional

PARKS & OPEN SPACE
19. parks & open space

AGRICULTURE
20. agriculture

MARINE
21. water

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

- Support ecosystem health through ecological management and restoration at the watershed scale.
- Support the protection of old growth forests and mature trees that act as carbon sinks and help maintain watershed health.
- Encourage the expansion and protection of forested areas.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

- Support agricultural practices that mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as crop practices that increase soil carbon sequestration.
- Support agricultural practices that reduce impacts on aquifers and support healthy watersheds.
- Support the protection of old growth forests and mature trees on farmland that act as carbon sinks.
- Support ecosystem health and natural assets on farmland by partnering with agricultural operators to restore and maintain ecosystem services .
- Support emergency planning for the agricultural sector, such as the development of livestock evacuation plans and on-farm flooding preparedness plans.

SUBURBAN AREAS

- Support compact subdivision and development patterns that cluster housing units and protect adjacent natural areas.
- Increase requirements for heat pumps and alternative energy systems.
- Support subdivision and development patterns that enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity to nearby destinations, including transit stops.
- Enhance suburban residential areas with complementary uses that promote short travel distances for daily needs.
- Incorporate electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in new development.
- Support the use of energy efficient building methods and materials with low embodied energy.

VILLAGE AREAS

- Support subdivision and development patterns that enhance pedestrian, cycling and transit connectivity to nearby destinations.
- Support development that protects and enhances the tree canopy while incorporating more permeable surfaces.
- Support the use of energy efficient building methods and materials with low embodied energy.
- Incorporate EV charging stations in new development.
- Support development in village areas that help build complete neighbourhoods with a mix of uses and where daily needs are within walking distance.

URBAN AREAS

- Support subdivision and development patterns that enhance pedestrian, cycling and transit connectivity to nearby destinations.
- Support development that protects and enhances the tree canopy while incorporating more permeable surfaces.
- Support the use of energy efficient building methods and materials with low embodied energy.
- Incorporate EV charging stations in new development.
- Support high density residential and mixed-use developments where daily needs are within walking distance.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- Support compact development patterns that cluster parcels and protect adjacent natural areas.
- Support subdivision and development patterns that enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity to nearby destinations, including transit stops.
- Support special energy districts.
- Incorporate EV charging stations in new development.
- Support the use of energy efficient building methods and materials with low embodied energy.

General Policy

MITIGATION

CC.1 Develop a Climate Crisis Mitigation Strategy.

CC.2 Encourage retrofitting of older buildings and green construction of new buildings to achieve energy efficiency and a reduction in GHG emissions. ✳△

CC.3 Develop guidelines to support improved energy efficiency and recovery from retrofits and new development. △

CC.4 Encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable, clean energy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in all decision-making.

CC.5 Incentivize a shift away from use of woodstoves and oil and gas furnaces to reduce emissions and impacts on public health.

CC.6 Create incentives for rooftop solar systems and energy storage.

CC.7 Support a transition towards vehicle electrification by requiring all new buildings to include or be ready for EV charging.

CC.8 Minimize waste generation and encourage greater diversion of all waste materials, including organics, recyclables and construction and demolition waste, from solid waste streams, with the goal of achieving zero waste.✳

CC.9 Acquire green spaces, including planting additional trees, that contribute to climate change mitigation.

CC.10 Collaborate with adjacent local governments and First Nations to provide a region-wide climate mitigation strategy, education and incentive programs to decarbonize the existing built environment.

CC.11 Develop partnerships with industry and senior levels of government for the construction of large-scale solar and wind energy generation.

CC.12 Implement mitigation recommendations found within the tools and resources developed by the BC Climate Agriculture Initiative (BC CAI) (climateagriculturebc.ca/issues-solutions)

CC.13 Aim to reduce the use and distribution of natural gas in new developments as a primary heat source and support more robust electrical grids and renewable energy alternatives to lower the dependence on the provincial grid.

CC.14 Support region-wide information campaigns to give people the information needed to help them reduce their emissions. This may also include: ⭘△

- citizen-led climate education and engagement initiatives
- business climate education and engagement initiatives
- school district climate education and engagement initiatives

EQUITY POLICY

⭘ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION

CC.15 Prepare a Hazard, Risk, & Vulnerability Assessment and communicate the findings to CVRD communities through a proactive strategy for outreach and education. ⬤▲

CC.16 Update development permit areas to reflect the results from Natural Hazard Risk Assessments.

CC.17 Continue to work with local First Nations on the development of coordinated and collaborative climate adaptation initiatives and programs.

CC.18 Support species that are more resilient to climate change (i.e., native, drought-tolerant species, including those that provide nuts, berries and flowering plants that support pollinators).

CC.19 Support erosion control measures to protect against sea level rise along key foreshore areas, encouraging the use of natural systems and/or green infrastructure wherever possible. ▲

CC.20 Conduct analysis of drought-related indicators to more fully understand climate impacts to soil, water supply and ecosystem health at the landscape level. ✳

CC.21 Manage wildfire risk as a result of drier summers and reduce the impacts of forest fire on buildings, property and public safety and health. Explore the creation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans in at-risk areas. ▲

CC.22 Increase the resilience of natural and built systems to more intense rain events, as well as drought-like conditions. ▲

CC.23 Strengthen emergency management capacity to respond to weather-related emergencies. ✳

CC.24 Incorporate climate change projections and risk assessments into electoral and regional planning and service delivery. ▲

CC.25 Improve the resilience of energy infrastructure to weather-related disruptions.

CC.26 Consider natural hazards (e.g., erosion, flooding, sea-level rise, etc.) to protect development from hazardous conditions and maintain the functionality of green and grey infrastructure.

CC.27 Develop a coastal flooding mitigation strategy. ▲

CC.28 Explore the possibility of a "no adverse impact" flood level policy for future developments on floodplains.

CC.29 Develop hazardous land mapping as a component of a climate change adaptation strategy.

CC.30 Support the retrofitting of existing development and infrastructure in all redevelopments.

CC.31 Encourage economic activities that are resilient and adaptive to climate change.

CC.32 Encourage citizens and stakeholders to foster climate excellence in communities.

CC.33 Support new development to include climate change adaptation methods and technologies in the design, change or modification of existing infrastructure or new services.

EQUITY POLICY

⬤ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

▲ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

CC.34 Support ongoing studies to identify and understand the risks associated with climate change.

CC.35 Support the use of green infrastructure solutions.

CC.36 Promote and support water conservation measures with residents, business owners and industry (e.g., xeriscaping, water audits).

CC.37 Where appropriate, design, manage and construct climate change-adaptive and risk-adaptive infrastructure and utilities.

CC.38 Keep up to date with best practices for adaptation action, and work with local communities to inform climate impacts and equitable adaptation and risk mitigation planning.

2 Manage Infrastructure Responsibly

Introduction

This chapter addresses infrastructure related to water, stormwater, wastewater, solid waste, and energy systems, along with emergency preparedness.

The CVRD manages and operates various infrastructure systems across the Cowichan Valley.

With ongoing efforts to create an OCP, it has never been more important to provide strong direction related to responsible infrastructure management and ensure that land use policy is aligned with the provision of regional services.

The CVRD operates and maintains $181 million in capital infrastructure assets in the electoral areas to serve approximately 80,000 residents, including:

- 19 water systems
- 16 sewer systems
- 9 drainage systems
- 17 streetlighting systems

The CVRD's water and sewer utilities serve a range of 30 to 900 households, which is very small in comparison to typical small local government utility systems that may serve approximately 10,000 households.

To help maintenance and ensure resident safety, the CVRD employs a 24/7 emergency response system with electronic monitoring and control via a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. The infrastructure is mostly in good condition but around 15% is considered in poor to very poor condition. Current works include $18.25 million of upgrade projects in about nine utility systems.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The CVRD produces approximately 358kg/person of solid waste that is sent to the landfill. There are no landfills in the CVRD at this time; and therefore, the CVRD's solid waste is trucked off Island to a landfill located in Washington State, USA. The costs associated with this trucking mean the CVRD has some of the highest tipping fees of any jurisdiction in BC. It also has a high level of GHG emissions associated with solid waste because of the transportation.

A Solid Waste Management Plan is targeting the reduction of waste to approximately 250kg/person in a move toward a zero waste goal through increased recycling and other measures. Associated with this goal, the CVRD wants to increase its recycling capacity, reduce illegal dumping, increase drop-off convenience for many types of waste and increase the system's resilience.

ENERGY SYSTEMS

BC's electrical energy system is managed through BC Hydro, a crown corporation, and natural gas is provided through Fortis BC. The carbon content of BC's electricity grid is relatively low because most of its electricity is created through hydro power generating systems. Some energy still comes from natural gas plants in the province, and the province is continuing to invest in more hydro power infrastructure. The demand for electricity is expected to rise significantly in the future as all new vehicles in BC are slated to be zero-emission by 2035, and most of the new vehicles will then be electric vehicles. National and provincial commitments to reducing emissions to net zero by 2050 will further drive demand for green electricity.

There are opportunities for decentralized, small scale electricity generation in the region including solar, wind, biomass and waste-to-energy generation systems.

Challenges to Local Systems

The following are five significant challenges to the CVRD's local infrastructure systems.

1. Life cycle considerations
Several existing water and sewerage utilities are reaching end of life and require replacement and/or upgrading to meet provincial standards. Across the region, studies have indicated negative environmental impacts associated with current sewage discharges into the ocean, Cowichan River (joint utilities sewage lagoons) and Cowichan Lake, while other systems require upgrading to meet current standards and to comply with the Ministry of Environment's regulations (e.g., Mesachie Lake).

2. Limits to capacity
Liquid waste is managed in the region through community sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities operated by the CVRD and municipally operated systems in Ladysmith, North Cowichan (Crofton, Chemainus, Maple Bay), Duncan and Lake Cowichan. Some wastewater treatment plants are at or nearing capacity and require expansion and/or amalgamation with neighbouring utilities. Population growth will continue to drive up the need for increased capacity.

3. Oversight and maintenance
On-site sewage disposal and treatment systems are generally regulated through the Sewerage System Regulation, under the Public Health Act. If a sewage treatment and disposal system or septic system is not maintained properly, effluent quality can decline sharply, overloading the drain field and possibly posing health risks in the general community. Such a situation may also lead to environmental degradation, if not addressed appropriately. Design and construction of septic systems by registered onsite wastewater practitioners or professional engineers and long-term maintenance of these systems are important. Furthermore, the cumulative impacts of septic systems should be considered in the approval process.

4. Increasing costs, revenue shortfalls
Safety and environmental standards are ever increasing, adding pressure and costs on maintenance and operations of the systems. Each service is established in a separate bylaw and operates under its own budget. Revenues cannot move between services and, given the poor economies of scale, it can be difficult to resolve infrastructure issues without relying on grants or other revenue streams.

5. Takeover of private systems
In the past, there have been efforts to take over existing utilities from improvement districts and private systems. This requires formal consent and usually a petition, but very often it comes with significant liabilities. Private systems being acquired may be out of compliance, lacking in servicing capacity, contaminated and more. A moratorium on takeover of existing systems is in place until a new takeover policy is approved.

Objectives

Key objectives include responsible infrastructure management through long-range plans that address growth demands, operational efficiency, and financial and environmental sustainability.

WATER
- Align water servicing with the GCB.
- Protect water in line with the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Plan.
- Protect the region's water resources and promote sustainable water use.

WASTEWATER
- Update wastewater management plans to align and provide services within the GCB.
- Reduce the environmental impacts of treated wastewater discharges on watercourses and the environment.
- Protect the environment, with particular attention to the discharge of treated wastewater effluent and stormwater into the receiving environment (e.g., groundwater, fresh surface water, marine water and soil).

STORMWATER & DRAINAGE
- Address stormwater challenges at a watershed scale.
- Preserve watercourses and natural drainage channels in their natural state and, where feasible, develop them as drainage rights-of-way.

GENERAL
- Adopt universal access to garbage, recycling and organics collection at the curbside.
- Plan for strategic asset management
- Retain existing levels of servicing in communities and identify the appropriate level of services to meet the electoral areas' future projected needs.
- Develop hazard, risk and vulnerability criteria for new development.
- Ensure telecommunication infrastructure minimizes health impacts and appearance.
- Consider the full life cycle costs of new infrastructure systems.
- Discourage private infrastructure systems.
- Develop the foundational infrastructure that supports new and existing businesses.

Infrastructure Policy (by transect sub-area)

		RESOURCE & NATURAL	RURAL & AGRICULTURAL	SUBURBAN	VILLAGE	URBAN	DOWNTOWN	SPECIAL DISTRICT
	RESIDENTIAL							
1.	large rural	██						
2.	small rural		██					
3.	country suburban			██				
4.	large suburban			██				
5.	medium suburban			██				
6.	compact suburban			██				
7.	village residential				██			
8.	village core				██			
	MIXED EMPLOYMENT							
9.	mixed employment							██
	COMMERCIAL							
10.	crossroads commercial		██					
11.	general commercial			██████				
12.	village commercial				████			
13.	tourist commercial							██
	INDUSTRIAL							
14.	resource industrial	██						
15.	light industrial							██
16.	general industrial							██
	CIVIC							
17.	infrastructure			████████				
18.	institutional			████				
	PARKS & OPEN SPACE							
19.	parks & open space	████████████████						
	AGRICULTURE							
20.	agriculture	████████████████						
	MARINE							
21.	water	████████████████						

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS
- Community-based hard infrastructure is not supported to reduce land speculation and development pressures.
- Work with PMFL owners and the Province to manage water and water quality issues.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS
- Avoid installation of water and sewer infrastructure to reduce land speculation and development pressures.
- Consider treated wastewater for agricultural use.
- Work with the Province to manage drainage and diking issues and assess and address flood risk.
- Undertake an Agricultural Water Demand Model exercise in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and associated Agricultural Land Use Inventory work.
- Work with producers to facilitate the development of on-farm water storage opportunities.

SUBURBAN AREAS
- Ensure access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.
- Require existing and new developments to tie into public infrastructure systems.

VILLAGE AREAS
- Ensure access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.
- Require existing and new developments to tie into public infrastructure systems.

URBAN AREAS
- Ensure access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.
- Plan for fire flows that can control fires in multi-family residential buildings.
- Require existing and new developments to tie into public infrastructure systems.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS
- Ensure access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.
- Connect these areas with high-speed internet.
- Ensure alignment between high-intensity industrial uses and proximity to infrastructure servicing.
- Plan for fire flows that can control fires in high-risk industrial settings.

General Policy

WATER

MI.1 Improve water quality and supply by mapping and analyzing subareas where water supply is stressed, and by applying investments accordingly. ⭕

MI.2 Continue the installation of water meters across the region and retrofit those at existing businesses and residences. ⭕

MI.3 Support rainwater quality control for development sites near freshwater and marine environments, and upslope from agricultural areas.

MI.4 Consider long-term resilience of water systems to provide necessary water to communities.

MI.5 Establish aquifer protection development permit areas for aquifers with community water supplies and monitor groundwater quality.

MI.6 Consult with jurisdictions dependent on a given water supply prior to approving new development within that watershed or water supply.

MI.7 Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the delivery of sufficient quantities and the efficient use of water for agricultural productivity.

WASTEWATER

MI.8 Support all wastewater disposal agencies to:

- consider cumulative effects of ineffective individual onsite sewage disposal systems;
- ensure wastewater systems are not subject to flood inundation;
- consult affected landowners with respect to corrective measures; △
- enforce legislative requirements;
- encourage safe re-use of effluent and bio-solids in conjunction with agriculture and/or aquaculture operations.

MI.9 Identify highest priority opportunities for consolidation of private and public septic systems in village centres.

MI.10 Cooperate with the Municipality of North Cowichan, City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes and electoral areas D and E to manage the Joint Utilities Board treatment plant and seek innovative approaches, such as greenway routes to the long-term management and funding of the facility.

MI.11 Work with Island Health to develop public education communications on individual sewerage system maintenance rules and practices for new and ageing systems.

MI.12 Ensure individual onsite sewerage systems meet standards outlined in the "BC Sewerage System Practice Manual" and prevent ecological degradation.

STORMWATER & DRAINAGE

MI.13 Explore creative strategies to address drainage issues at both the watershed and parcel scale, including:

- leveraging other processes (i.e. liquid waste management plan processes) to find drainage solutions;
- using feasibility funds to assess and better understand current drainage issues;
- assessing road density in areas with sensitive drainage issues;
- considering low-impact development approaches to address increasing precipitation levels and their effects at multiple scales;
- advocate for the establishment of integrated stormwater management plans in partnership with the Province; and,
- encouraging developers to study development impacts on drainage as part of a development approval information requirement.

MI.14 Work with the Province in relation to its rights-of-way to better understand drainage issues and establish integrated stormwater management plans at a watershed scale.

MI.15 Develop integrated stormwater management plans for key watersheds to ensure chemical and biological contaminants do not enter rainwater flows and to reduce the impacts of localized flooding. Plans should:

- include review stormwater management and other nonpoint sources of pollution with all new development applications; and
- develop stormwater and runoff management guidelines. ⭕

MI.16 Support rainwater management techniques in the design and construction of new developments to control quantity and quality of rainwater runoff.

MI.17 Minimize impervious surfaces and maximize infiltration to reduce runoff, particularly in developments upstream and/or upslope from agricultural areas.

MI.18 Advocate for changes to logging practices that impact the water-cycle, cause flooding, harm fish habitat and wash invaluable non-renewable topsoil into the ocean, especially in the Koksilah watershed.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

MI.19 Develop a Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment to better understand and consider both natural and unnatural hazards putting communities at risk.

MI.20 Encourage residents and organizations to mitigate and prepare for risks through an understanding of potential impacts and how they may be vulnerable by presenting consistent risk information to the public through multiple sources. ⭕ 🔺

MI.21 Designate a network of neighbourhood support hubs within the region as locations to focus and coordinate assistance efforts and share resources. These are post-disaster locations where staff and trained volunteers will prioritize getting information and providing services to the public.

MI.22 Coordinate and integrate partner emergency plans to address priority risks, with an expectation of joint decision-making, unified communications and resource sharing. This should include:

- developing a regional concept of operations;
- identifying public and private resources available in the region's concept of operations; and
- developing procedures to support regional supply chains, including transportation.

MI.23 Plan, coordinate and regularly test emergency and disaster response services in conjunction with First Nations, municipalities and neighbouring regions. ⭕ 🔺

EQUITY POLICY

⭕ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

🔺 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

GENERAL

MI.24 Consult with local First Nations and explore opportunities for infrastructure service agreements where plans include shared priorities and goals. ⭘

MI.25 Discourage further installation and expansion of private infrastructure services by incentivizing connection to public infrastructure services through a bonus density program.

MI.26 Manage growth with the aim of ensuring at least 75% of new development is connected to infrastructure services. ✳

MI.27 Avoid expansion of any services outside of future growth areas except those developed for health, fire safety, agricultural support or sea level rise adaptation reasons. △

MI.28 Monitor solid waste flows and seek to minimize and divert waste from landfills. ✳

MI.29 Consider the creation of a bylaw to require the deconstruction, rather than demolition, of buildings to recover and reclaim old-growth wood and other materials.

MI.30 Ensure all waste collection receptacles are housed in a bear-proof enclosure.

MI.31 Encourage infrastructure services such as water and sewerage systems to be installed prior to new development and ensure development contributes to service efficiency. Ensure required infrastructure upgrades are cost to the developer. △

MI.32 Employ low-impact development practices for all residential, commercial, industrial and mixed employment land use designations. These include:

- protecting natural features that catch and retain water, such as wetlands, streams and forest corridors;
- disturbing land as little as possible when laying out streets and lots;
- reducing the size of building footprints;
- emphasizing cluster developments where appropriate; and
- minimizing stormwater generation and runoff, for example by reducing contiguous paved areas or by using pervious materials for surfacing.

MI.33 Work with the Province and the PMFL owners to discuss the long-term impacts of climate change on the region's natural resources and impacts on our communities including increasing natural hazards.

MI.34 When servicing infrastructure is routed through ALR lands:

- use transmission pipes instead of distribution pipes to reduce development pressures; and,
- use the route that has the least impact on ALR lands (i.e., shortest, fewest ALR adjacencies, lands less likely to redevelop, etc.).

MI.35 When servicing infrastructure is routed through PMFL lands:

- use the route that has the least impact on PMFL lands (i.e., shortest, fewest PMFL adjacencies, lands less likely to redevelop, etc.); and
- use density bonusing as a tool to provide greater consistency and clarity in negotiations with PMFL owners.

MI.36 Identify grant opportunities and other funding mechanisms from senior levels of government to help maintain and upgrade infrastructure systems.

MI.37 Encourage the siting and design of new telecommunications equipment using the following criteria:

- Locate new equipment on existing structures (e.g., building rooftops, hydro transmission

towers, utility poles).

- Locate new equipment in non-residential areas, preferably in industrial areas.
- Design towers and ancillary equipment to fit the surroundings and to minimize visual impact on surrounding properties.
- Landscape the surroundings of towers and ancillary equipment as a visual buffer.

MI.38 Ensure a public consultation process is followed for new telecommunications equipment using the following process:

- The carrier will contact, via mail, the residents and occupants of all properties located within 50m of a proposed telecommunication structure.
- The carrier will install notification sign on the subject property consistent with notification requirements for other applications at the CVRD.
- Should no response be received from the public over a 21-day period, the carrier may move forward with the application to the CVRD for review.
- Should a response be received from the public, staff will determine whether a Public Information Session conducted by the carrier is necessary, and the proposal will be reviewed by the Electoral Area Directors.

3 Make Distinct, Complete Communities

Introduction

This chapter addresses the diverse needs, services and amenities that contribute to healthy and complete communities and provide residents with a high quality of life.

The CVRD recognizes the link between a distinct The CVRD's electoral areas consist of a diverse collection of communities, each with distinct histories, landscapes, settlement patterns, economies and many other defining characteristics.

The CVRD recognizes the link between a distinct community and a thriving community. Building complete communities—where residents have access to their daily needs within reasonable proximity of home—provides the foundation on which the unique traits of the villages, towns and rural crossroads can be showcased and cherished by residents and visitors alike.

This chapter explores the various ways in which the CVRD can direct communities towards a future where residents have their daily needs nearby and within the unique and diverse settings the CVRD provides.

Challenges to Communities

The following are three main stresses in the electoral areas that make creating distinct and complete communities a challenge.

1. Urban & rural sprawl

Increasing development pressures Increasing development pressures from larger urban centres like Victoria and Nanaimo, and to a lesser degree the CVRD's incorporated municipalities, have contributed to sprawling subdivisions in far flung parts of the region. Urban and rural sprawl is the phenomenon that occurs when less expensive lands outside of urban areas are prioritized for low density, single-use and car-oriented developments. These developments are typically far from existing infrastructure, amenities, services and jobs, and they rely on people driving long distances to do most of their daily activities. It is costly not only for those living in the subdivisions (i.e., higher transportation costs) but also for society (i.e., cost of operating and maintaining infrastructure). Often, these types of developments fragment the region's beautiful landscapes and ignore the local architectural styles that make the CVRD's communities special.

2. Housing costs

As a desirable place to live with easy access to nature, growth in the CVRD is primarily linked to residents moving from other areas. New residents are often seeking more affordable homes than what can be found in Victoria, Nanaimo or even the Lower Mainland. Compared to the rest of BC, housing is generally more affordable for owners, but somewhat worse for renters. According to the Housing Needs Assessment report, from 2016 to 2019, prices for market ownership homes increased considerably each year. This suggests that since 2016, the region's supply of available land has been insufficient to meet growing demand. Other findings from the report include:

- Current housing sizes are unsuitable for resident needs, most households need only one bedroom.
- An ageing population represents a greater need for ageing-in-place housing options, accessible housing units and co-operative housing models.
- Younger community members face housing instability and unaffordability.
- There is an acute shortage of rental housing.
- Housing costs are misaligned with regional wages and pushing residents to more affordable communities further away from their jobs.
- Current housing options are not adequately sized or culturally appropriate for First Nations.
- There is a need for more non-market housing, including supportive and emergency housing options.
- Affordable housing options for families are hard to find.

3. Out-of-character development

Many communities across the province struggle Many communities across the province struggle to define "character" when assessing new development. Some will focus on the scale and density of buildings, others on the architectural design or preservation of existing tree stands. While form and character development permit areas (DPA) can help define the look and feel of multi-family, commercial, industrial and intensive residential uses, the large majority of the electoral areas' residential types are lower density single detached homes, which cannot be subject to development permits.

Objectives

Key objectives include the planning and design of communities that address resident desires for protecting the unique character of villages and landscapes, and enhancing affordability, great public spaces, safety, health and wellbeing, and inclusivity.

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES
- Plan for compact communities that can accommodate population growth and demographic change within the GCB.
- Support high-quality development that enhances and benefits the whole community.
- Build inclusive and attractive communities where daily needs and employment opportunities are close to home.

HOUSING
- Improve and expand the range of housing options.
- Coordinate housing policy development and implementation across the region in collaboration with the people who inhabit the electoral areas.
- Develop a regional specific housing continuum and increase the right supply of housing across the spectrum of affordability.
- Foster community understanding and support for affordable housing developments.
- Enhance ageing-in-place opportunities and accessibility in housing.

CHILD CARE
- Enhance and expand child care in the areas consistent with the Cowichan Region Child Care Plan (2020).
- Support eligible group, preschool or school age childcare facilities required to relocate to enable them to quickly resume their services and remain in compliance with licensing requirements under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and child care licensing regulation.
- Ensure child care locations that are more accessible and affordable for equal opportunity.
- Support childcare sites to serve the entire community.
- Develop indicators and targets for the creation and expansion of childcare spaces and programs.
- Consider a child care resource position to regularly collect information on diversity within childcare centres and promote best practices in diversity to childcare centres.
- Explore opportunities to acquire sites, either through purchase or lease agreements, to be made available to childcare operators to support target spaces and programs.

PARKS, RECREATION, HERITAGE AND CULTURE
- Protect archaeological sites of importance to First Nations.
- Provide a wide range of parks and recreational opportunities aligned with community, tourism and resident needs.
- Foster artistic and cultural pursuits and activities.

Complete Community Policies
(by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL

SUBURBAN

VILLAGE

URBAN

DOWNTOWN

SPECIAL DISTRICT

RESIDENTIAL
1. large rural
2. small rural
3. country suburban
4. large suburban
5. medium suburban
6. compact suburban
7. village residential
8. village core

MIXED EMPLOYMENT
9. Mixed Employment

COMMERCIAL
10. crossroads commercial
11. general commercial
12. village commercial
13. tourist commercial

INDUSTRIAL
14. resource industrial
15. light industrial
16. general industrial

CIVIC
17. Infrastructure
18. institutional

PARKS & OPEN SPACE
19. parks & open space

AGRICULTURE
20. agriculture

MARINE
21. water

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS
- Provide access to recreational trails and parks while conserving natural areas.
- Mitigate safety issues and apply buffers where recreational activities intersect with forestry and resource lands in balance with regional conservation strategy to support key ecosystems, species and natural processes.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS
- Provide access to recreational trails and parks while conserving natural areas.
- Protect existing small-scale, rural and agricultural-supporting commercial and community uses while respecting the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.
- Support value-added farm uses and farm viability that contribute to the celebration of agriculture and local food production while respecting the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.
- Mitigate safety issues and apply buffers where recreational, industrial, institutional, residential and/or commercial activities are adjacent to agricultural land.

SUBURBAN AREAS
- Support mixed-income suburban neighbourhoods with the sensitive infill of affordable and rental housing options, such as mobile home parks and secondary suites.
- Support suburban areas with multi-modal transportation strategies and infrastructure in partnership with the MoTI.

- Support home-based businesses.
- Support childcare facilities.
- Enhance suburban areas by providing employment lands, parks, access to transit and other amenities.

VILLAGE AREAS
- Support village areas that have a mix in uses.
- Support home-based businesses and live-work building forms.
- Support child care and seniors facilities.
- Provide great access to transit, active transportation options, parks and shopping.
- Enhance village areas with arts, culture and community facilities.

URBAN AREAS
- Support urban areas that have higher residential densities and the greatest mix in uses.
- Support mixed-use, multi-storey apartment buildings and multi-family dwellings that reflect local housing needs.
- Support childcare facilities.
- Provide a rich number of arts, culture and community facilities.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS
- Support accessory retail and office uses in mixed employment and industrial lands.
- Discourage large malls and other commercial developments that draw from village and urban markets.
- Support childcare facilities.
- Provide access to transit.

General Policy

HOUSING

DC.1 Manage the supply and demand of housing units with the aim of ensuring:

- housing price increases do not exceed the rate of inflation; ✳
- a healthy ratio between housing sales and housing inventory; ✳
- vacancy rates of rental units above 3%;
- housing addresses the specific needs of diverse individuals, as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment report, including: ✳ ⭕
  - » Indigenous peoples
  - » Seniors
  - » Youth
  - » People with disabilities
  - » Low-income families

DC.2 Increase the amount of affordable housing options for lower income households by: ⭕

- waiving application fees for cooperative and non-market affordable housing projects;
- streamlining and fast-tracking multi-family or apartments in village and urban areas; and
- identifying and designating Regional District-owned lands as opportunity sites for non-profit and supportive housing projects.

DC.3 Consider incentivizing housing densification within GCBs through density, financial or procedural incentives.

DC.4 Establish rental housing affordability targets for households living on low incomes. ⭕

DC.5 Protect existing mobile home parks as an important form of affordable housing.

DC.6 Encourage pocket neighbourhoods and clustered housing formats in single detached residential designations.

DC.7 Support the needs of households with older individuals and people with disabilities by establishing in the zoning bylaw:

- more opportunities for secondary suites, such as garden suites to support ageing-in-place;
- design criteria for adaptable and accessible units; and
- minimum number of adaptable and accessible units (as a proportion of permitted density) within multi-family developments.

DC.8 Develop strategies to support higher density housing developments that meet housing affordability targets.

DC.9 Increase affordable housing options by increasing the supply of secondary suites and mobile home parks/manufactured homes, and support eco-friendly homes and increased infill development.

DC.10 Protect and maintain existing non-market and market rental housing stock. ⭕

DC.11 Support provision of housing to people with special needs and seniors, including housing that gives people the ability to age in place. ⭕

DC.12 Encourage residential housing with new commercial and industrial developments.

EQUITY POLICY

⭕ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

DC.13 Collaborate with non-profit and for-profit sectors (including BC Housing and senior levels of government) to build a range of affordable housing options, including emergency shelters and supportive and transitional housing, especially in transit-accessible areas and within identified housing affordability targets. ○

DC.14 Encourage development to address housing options from across the CVRD's housing spectrum (as depicted in the 2021 Housing Needs Assessment).

DC.15 Follow direction from the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation regarding secondary dwellings within the ALR.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

DC.16 Complete Local and/or Neighbourhood Area Plans in the following electoral areas through the annual budget process:

- Electoral area A;
- Electoral area B;
- Electoral area C;
- Electoral area D;
- Electoral area E;
- Electoral area F;
- Electoral area G;
- Electoral area H; and,
- Electoral area I.

DC.17 Work with regional partners and First Nations to implement regional growth strategies, provide strategic transportation linkages and meet the needs of regional communities. ○

DC.18 Support development that contributes to healthy and happy public spaces suitable for 8 and 80 year olds, following the spirit of the 8-80 community framework (880cities. org). ○

DC.19 Work with residents, community groups, First Nations and developers to reveal place-based assets and stories as inspiration for building and landscape designs in new projects.

DC.20 Support shared use agreements between the school district and Regional District, community groups and local First Nations to make greater community use of school buildings and lands.

DC.21 Advance community placemaking initiatives.

DC.22 Improve the number of and accessibility to public places, including buildings and open spaces. ○

DC.23 Apply a lens of community health and well-being when reviewing and assessing the design of new development projects. Consider projects as they relate to: ○

- potable water;
- food security;
- clean air;
- socio-economic diversity; and
- access to recreation, including:
    » green space;
    » public safety;
    » biodiversity;
    » traffic safety; and,
    » active transportation.

DC.24 When appropriate, refer development proposals to Island Health.

DC.25 Where appropriate, incorporate buffering between different land uses that may not be compatible. This is especially important outside of village centres to protect residential, rural and agricultural lands from visual, noise and other pollution of intensive commercial and industrial developments.

DC.26 Support public and private initiatives that enhance the aesthetics of light industrial areas and buffer areas.

DC.27 Support housing that is consistent with the surrounding context, including character of existing neighbourhoods and rural areas. ▲

ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

DC.28 Encourage cultural expression through public art pieces that reflect diverse community backgrounds, interests and needs. Explore funding mechanisms, such as Community Amenity Contributions, to help create more public art. ⬤△

DC.29 Identify cultural conservation issues and use the land use planning process to protect and enhance landscapes, buildings and features of cultural significance. This could take the form of a Community Heritage Register and should include First Nations in the consideration of sites, landscapes and buildings. △

DC.30 Support arts and culture by sponsoring events and funding infrastructure upgrades.

DC.31 Provide recognition for designated heritage properties by means of, for example, a commemorative plaque and/or interpretive sign.△

DC.32 Identify cultural heritage landscapes that contain heritage buildings, structures, vegetation and open space of architectural or historic significance and the arrangement of which represents distinctive cultural processes in the historical use of the land. △

DC.33 Support access to cultural, archival and museum collections that facilitate learning about the Cowichan Valley's past and present.△

PARKS & RECREATION

DC.34 Engage Community Parks Advisory Commissions in the acquisition of new parkland through: ✳

- 5% dedication of subdivided land or cash-in-lieu of dedication;
- electoral area capital budgets;
- land donations; and/or
- community amenity contributions for rezoning applications.

DC.35 Where possible, cluster parks and open space (including areas for active and passive recreation use) within and/or adjacent to existing community "nodes" that accommodate institutions and social facilities, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, retail and restaurant areas (in the case of village centres), and other community amenities. ⬤

DC.36 Provide access to a diverse range of recreation programs and services in communities across the region. Explore innovative program and service delivery that can be facilitated outdoors or in schools and community halls through shared use agreements. ⬤

DC.37 Update the Regional Park & Trails Master Plan that aligns with this official community plan and the Strategic Asset Management Plan.

DC.38 Expand the recreational trail system to encourage healthy living and appreciation for the outdoors. ✳

4 Expand Mobility Options

Introduction

This chapter addresses the transportation systems that allow residents to move around the Cowichan Valley in a safe, effective and low-impact way.

The issue of mobility is central to creating a sustainable Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas.

Our daily life demands a wide range of mobility options: roads and street networks (from highways to backcountry service roads), regional transit systems, trails, cycle paths and sidewalks that connect within and beyond the region.

The CVRD's main authority related to transportation planning is in partnership with BC Transit to coordinate transit service delivery, and in the development and maintenance of trails. It also has a role in addressing inter-regional issues and providing a voice on matters of regional importance in communications with the provincial and federal governments.

The Cowichan Valley's electoral areas are auto-dependent, with approximately 90% of commuting done via personal vehicles. This auto dependence is responsible for generating most greenhouse gases (GHG) in the unincorporated areas (79% versus 58% provincially), but it is also linked to limited mobility options for the young, the old and those unable to afford a private vehicle (Community Energy and Emissions Inventory, 2010).

The regional transit provider, BC Transit, operates a fleet of 31 buses and has 17 routes:

- **Conventional fixed-route |** Cowichan Valley Regional Transit Services are offered in partnership with BC Transit, the CVRD and First Canada, the operator. Scheduled local transit service is available throughout the CVRD with the exception of electoral areas G (Saltair/Gulf Islands) and H (North Oyster/Diamond), which do not currently participate.

- **Custom handyDART |** handyDART service offering convenient door-to-door shared transportation in the Cowichan Valley is also available for people who cannot use scheduled bus routes because of a disability. handyDART services are also available for Indigenous people, both on- and off-reserve.

- **Victoria commuter |** Weekday commuter transit service is available between the Cowichan Valley and Greater Victoria via Routes 66 and 99, Monday to Friday (except statutory holidays), with six daily trips departing the Cowichan Valley early in the morning. Trips return from Victoria in the late afternoon and evening. Inter-regional transit service on Saturdays between the Cowichan Valley and Greater Victoria via Route 44 Victoria and Route 44 Duncan is also available with three daily round trips. While ridership has grown to approximately 450,000 rides a year, this number still only represents ~2% of the overall mode share. Expanding mobility options also goes hand in hand with effective land use planning. The OCP can provide more means of travel to residents by ensuring residents have access to daily needs within close proximity of where they live. Villages and communities that have a greater mix of uses and supportive residential densities nearby are more walkable and transit-friendly.

Challenges to Local Systems

The following are four main stresses in the electoral areas that make expanding mobility options a challenge.

1. Geography and population density

Linking a region of such vast geographic extent (3,473 square km) and with low population densities is the single greatest practical limitation to regional mobility.

2. Lack of authority

The CVRD does not have authority in the design of the electoral areas' road networks or in the allocation of space in the right-of-ways. This has led to a transportation system and road designs that only accommodate vehicle use. There is very little in the way of pedestrian or cycling infrastructure, even in village cores where walking and biking could be convenient options for residents.

3. Unintegrated land use & transportation systems

The fragmented nature of development in the electoral areas, at low densities and in areas that have few services, encourages car dependency and produces a greater amount of GHG emissions.

4. Gaps in the (trails) network

At present, trails within the CVRD are primarily managed as assets within the parks (e.g., recreation) portfolio with the exception of the Cowichan Valley portion of the Trans-Canada Trail, which is considered a "transportation" trail. By the end of 2015, there were 206 community parks across the nine electoral areas covering over 1,131 hectares (ha) of land. As well, there were 47 km of managed community trails in the electoral areas (not including 72 km of the Cowichan Valley Trail).

Objectives

SUSTAINABLE MODES

- Integrate land use patterns and densities with transportation systems and investments.
- Establish a safe, efficient, equitable and cost-effective integrated multi-modal system.
- Increase the proportion of trips made by non-vehicle modes.
- Enhance local and regional transit service efficiency and effectiveness.
- Support equitable investments in transportation services to improve transportation accessibility to all population segments.
- Support necessary infrastructure for ride sharing.
- Quantify the life cycle cost of transportation infrastructure and consider within the approval process of new development.
- Transition to a net zero carbon emissions transportation network.
- Encourage MoTI to incorporate pedestrian safety features at intersections where appropriate, such as:
  - extended curbs to reduce crossing distance;
  - marked pavement crossings; and
  - enhanced lighting and clear sightlines.
- Encourage MoTI to incorporate, within road allowances, cycling routes or multi-use paths. Advocate for them to be separated and protected, especially in village and urban areas and in proximity of schools. Promote their use for e-bikes, scooters and other appropriate sustainable modes of transportation. Prioritize in existing cycle tourism locations and with linkages to existing trail networks and urban areas.
- Provide zoning information on planning referral reports and share with Island Health to ensure correct determinations for approvals with MoTI

VEHICLE MODES

- Reduce reliance on single-occupant car travel.
- Minimize impacts of road and parking infrastructure on the region's rural qualities.
- Limit road density per square kilometre in efforts to protect watershed health.
- Work with the province to reduce speed limits to 30km/h in residential neighbourhoods and implement traffic calming measures to prioritize safety.
- Reduce truck traffic travelling through village centres by working with MoTI to designate preferrable truck routes.
- New roads should support the existing road network and identify gaps in local, collector and arterial roads to support new development, local travel and regional travel.

Mobility Policy (by transect sub-area)

	RESOURCE & NATURAL	RURAL & AGRICULTURAL	SUBURBAN	VILLAGE	URBAN	DOWNTOWN	SPECIAL DISTRICT
RESIDENTIAL							
1. large rural	■						
2. small rural		■					
3. country suburban			■				
4. large suburban			■				
5. medium suburban			■				
6. compact suburban				■			
7. village residential				■			
8. village core					■		
MIXED EMPLOYMENT							
9. Mixed Employment							■
COMMERCIAL							
10. crossroads commercial		■					
11. general commercial			■	■	■		
12. village commercial				■	■		
13. tourist commercial							■
INDUSTRIAL							
14. resource industrial	■						
15. light industrial							■
16. general industrial							■
CIVIC							
17. Infrastructure			■	■	■	■	■
18. institutional			■	■	■		
PARKS & OPEN SPACE							
19. parks & open space	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
AGRICULTURE							
20. agriculture	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
MARINE							
21. water	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

- Work with stakeholders to manage safety where mobility related to both resource extraction and recreational users interact.
- Support safe mobility corridors or trails for recreational users through resource lands to other areas of crown land.
- Support the development of regional and Island-wide trails.
- Minimize impact of transportation infrastructure on environmentally sensitive areas.
- Minimize potential conflict between transportation infrastructure and hazard lands (e.g. flood risk, landslide/slip, wildfire interface).
- Reduce the impact of roads and road infrastructure on hazard areas.

Rural & Agricultural Areas

- Support the safe use of roads by agricultural equipment.
- Support low cost cycling infrastructure through these areas to increase safety.
- Support the development of trails in rural and recreational areas in ways that do not create conflict with agricultural activities.

SUBURBAN AREAS

- Support initiatives that shift modal share from vehicles to transit and active transportation modes for travel between suburban areas and areas of employment, shopping, education and recreation.

VILLAGE AREAS

- Support transportation initiatives that increase transit and active transportation uses within village areas.
- Work with MoTI to establish 30km/h zones in villages.
- Work with MoTI on initiatives to pedestrianize streets within village areas.

URBAN AREAS

- Support transportation initiatives that increase transit and active transportation uses within urban areas.
- Work with MoTI to establish 30km/h zones in urban areas.
- Work with MoTI on initiatives to pedestrianize streets within urban areas.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- Support transportation initiatives that increase transit and active transportation uses to special districts (schools, universities, hospitals, event grounds and others).

General Policy

SUSTAINABLE MODES

MO.1 Support initiatives that increase sustainable transportation mode share (transit, cycling, walking). ✳

MO.2 Review development proposals against a new hierarchy of transportation modes, placing an emphasis on active transportation, transit and goods movement above private automobiles, especially within the GCB. ⭕△

MO.3 Complete and implement a regional Active Transportation Plan.

MO.4 New development should be designed to be pedestrian-friendly and provide safe access to nearby trails, sidewalks/paths and transit. ⭕

MO.5 Reduce travel distances by planning uses closer together and creating more direct connections to destinations, including transit stops.

MO.6 Provide opportunities for rest with benches at regular intervals or at scenic points along sidewalks and trails.

MO.7 Support recreational trail use within the Vancouver Island Rail Corridor.

MO.8 Support a Vancouver Island Transportation Plan.

MO.9 Promote the use of bikes and e-bikes to get around the region. Support initiatives that seek to popularize these sustainable modes of transportation and explore ways to integrate charging station infrastructure in new developments. ⭕

MO.10 Consider park and bike facilities connected to major cycling infrastructure.

MO.11 Develop a plan to complete the Cowichan Valley Trail as a regional transportation connector.

MO.12 Support new development proposals for subdivision considering greenway routes that improve pedestrian and cyclist pathways and connect to arterial roads per cycling and parks plans.

MO.13 Support compact development near transit and within service areas that have capacity for growth. ⭕
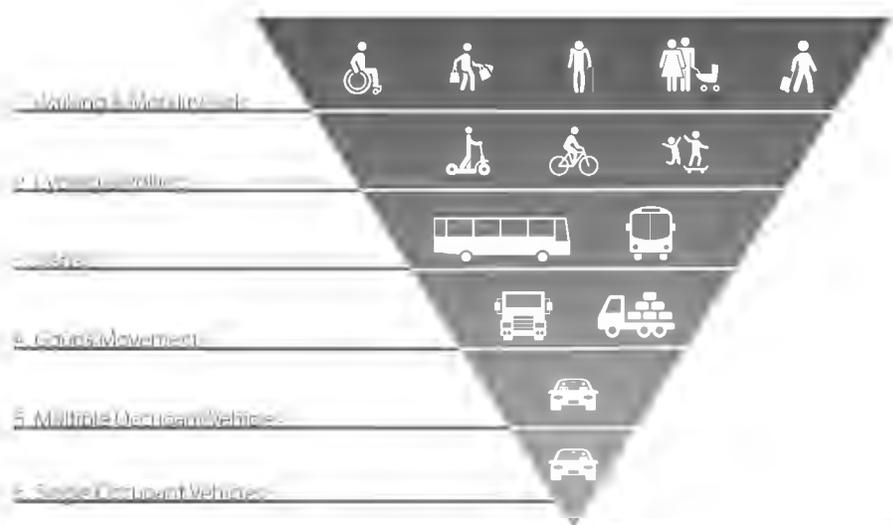
TRANSPORTATION MODE HIERARCHY

✳ METRIC

EQUITY POLICY

⭕ PRIORITIZE

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

MO.14 Support the development of a regional transportation plan to improve intermodal coordination and safety of all travel modes.

MO.15 Improve coordination of transportation infrastructure and services within electoral areas and between adjacent municipalities and jurisdictions.

MO.16 Ensure park and ride facilities are safely designed and appropriate for a range of weather conditions. ⭕

MO.17 Support BC Transit in its initiatives to make transit more effective and user-friendly by: ✳

- updating the Transit Future Action Plan (2012) to establish short- and medium-term improvements over the next one to five years;
- establishing a new interregional transit route with the Regional District of Nanaimo;
- installing bus shelters in as many locations as possible;
- incorporating real time and automatic bus locators;
- installing automated passenger counters;
- expanding handyDART and regular service; and
- finding suitable locations for expanded park and ride facilities along key bus routes including safe bike lockers.

MO.18 At subdivision, advocate for compact development with smaller block sizes and with streets in an interconnected network (to support alternative transportation).

MO.19 Work with the Malahat First Nation to advocate for BC Ferries to move the Mill Bay Ferry terminal to a more suitable location, and upgrade the ramp to allow buses.

MO.20 Encourage private commercial transportation systems to establish in the region and provide residents with additional routes and mobility options not offered by BC Transit.

VEHICLE MODES

MO.21 Support the use of electric vehicles and encourage the installation of EV charging stations in key locations by developers and property owners. Explore tools and incentives to develop EV infrastructure in private facilities. 🔺

MO.22 Update the zoning bylaw to ensure new parking facilities in mixed-use, multi-family and employment centre developments are EV ready.

MO.23 Ensure adequate parking areas adjacent to major destinations like parks, trails and beaches. 🔺

MO.24 Use design strategies to minimize the visual impacts of vehicle parking on the region's rural landscapes.

MO.25 Review vehicle parking requirements in the zoning bylaw to avoid an oversupply of vehicle parking for new developments, including in industrial areas well-connected to transit.

MO.26 Conduct ongoing identification of specific community roads and roadside pathways to support multi-modal transportation.

MO.27 Ensure new development provides access that limits impacts to major transportation networks.

MO.28 Develop a road network in a manner that encourages the use of a public transportation system along major routes where practical, and which:

- includes development and identical of gaps in the supporting road network of local collector and arterial roads supporting new development, local travel and regional travel;
- minimizes traffic impact on residential and agricultural areas;
- ensures a high level of protection for the environment;
- reflects the rural character of the regional district;
- encourages roadside paths and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists; and,
- encourages commuter car-share and co-op programs.

MO.29 When contemplating major new road and highway infrastructure, provide the opportunity, in collaboration with MoTI, for a meaningful public process of community engagement.

5 Protect & Restore Natural Assets

Introduction

This chapter addresses the region's natural assets and the strategies that will support their protection and restoration.

The CVRD is committed to protecting its natural assets and diverse ecosystems, including its natural environment, for the benefit of the entire region and the current and future generations of people who choose to live here.

"Natural assets" are the stock of natural resources and ecosystems that yield a flow of benefits to people and include: wetlands, forests and grasslands, parks, farmlands, lakes, rivers and creeks, watersheds and soils.

The health of these natural assets underpins the economic, recreational and cultural well-being of the CVRD and its electoral areas. Accordingly, protection of our natural assets is a prime concern with the following systems as top priority:

- Flora and fauna – species at risk (particularly in the ecologically rich coastal zone)
- Terrestrial & aquatic ecosystems – sensitive ecosystems, riparian protection, marine uplands and foreshore
- Aquifers and surface water quality
- Urban forest enhancement and air quality

The OCP can set a clear direction for the prioritization of natural assets within local decision making. The CVRD is currently developing a conservation strategy that will identify and establish landscape and watershed level conservation targets as well as mechanisms to reach those targets by way of enhanced regulatory frameworks, stewardship and CVRD parks strategies.

In addition, the CVRD is currently examining the potential to incorporate some natural assets into its asset management system where those natural systems are identified in the watershed management plans or are within the CVRD control and provide critical services or impact critical services.

Challenges to Natural Assets

The following are four main challenges in the electoral areas that challenge the protection of natural assets.

1.Human footprint in natural areas

For context, and as reported by the Cowichan Valley 2010 State of the Environment Report, the human footprint—including development and logging—now covers more than 75% of our land base, affecting its ability to supply and maintain basic ecological values and services. Community plans across the region anticipate more growth with hundreds of thousands of new residents and visitors to the region increasing pressures on these natural assets.

2.Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation

Loss, fragmentation and degradation of habitat—primarily associated with urbanization—is the greatest stress to the overall health of natural systems. Erosion and sedimentation of wetlands, waterways and the marine foreshore are key factors in the degradation of these most valuable habitat types. Additionally, point-source and non-point-source pollution from roadway runoff (including heavy metals, fuel, disintegrating rubber and plastic) and agricultural runoff (including fertilizers, organics, pesticides and herbicides) further degrade water quality and ecosystem health.

3.Increase in invasive species

Invasive species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity in the world, after habitat loss. Once introduced, invasive species outcompete and displace local species. Invasive species impact natural assets by: degrading soil, increasing erosion and impacting water quality; choking out habitat for native wildlife; and potentially increasing the risk of wildfire. In BC, it is estimated that 25% of our endangered species are negatively impacted by invasive species.

4.Climate change

Climate change represents a significant threat to natural assets with a range of impacts across the entire region: winters are milder and wetter with more frequent flooding and increased erosion; summer drought frequency is higher contributing to increased wildfire risk; and the aggregate changes—and increased variability—result in greater disruption to natural systems overall.

Objectives

NATURAL ASSET FRAMEWORK

- Develop watershed management plans and, Continue to support the development of a Watershed Sustainability Plan for the Koksilah River Watershed in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development, Environment Canada and the Cowichan Watershed Board.
- Develop additional watershed management plans and, where appropriate, integrate in an asset management framework.
- Strengthen current regulatory frameworks to ensure avoidance, mitigation and compensation for impacts to natural assets.

SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS

- Include the outcomes of the Regional Conservation Strategy in land use decisions and seek opportunities to protect and restore impacted ecosystems.
- Improve and protect connectivity between sensitive ecosystems, parks and protected areas, and allow for the movement of species among them.
- Ensure growth and development is consistent with the protection of watercourses, wetlands, riparian areas, aquifers and sensitive ecosystems.
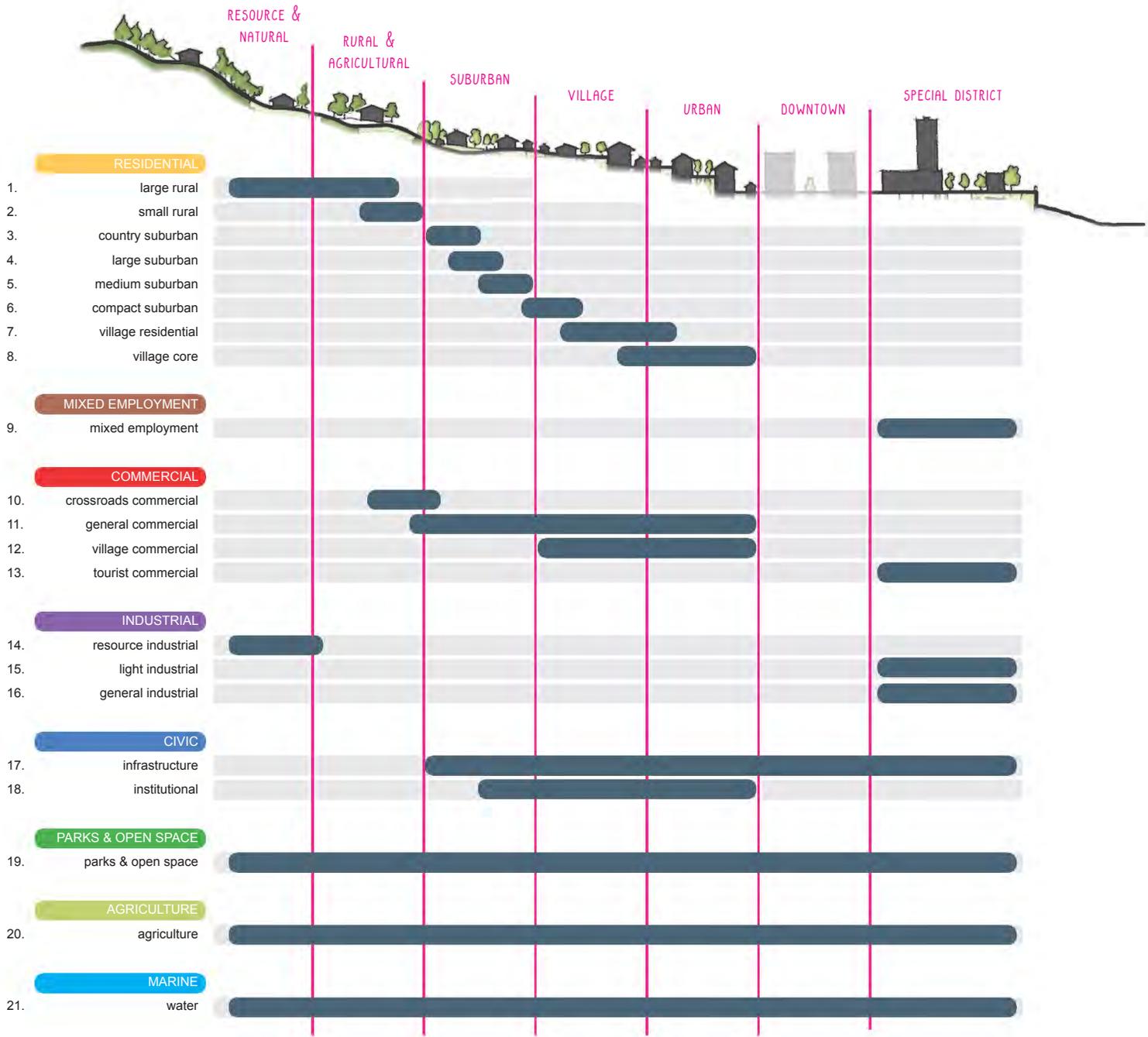
- Provide ongoing public education on regional environmental stewardship.
- Acknowledge and promote the importance of forested lands as carbon sinks.
- Encourage the use of sustainable forestry practices.
- Reduce and manage invasive species, pests and diseases that affect native ecosystems.
- Direct new development away from hazard areas including floodplains and steep slopes.

WATERSHEDS & AIRSHEDS

- Ensure land use and growth consider the limits of water supply.
- Ensure that development and land use activities support the natural hydrologic cycle, including groundwater recharge.
- Coordinate watershed management plans for regional watersheds and restore the natural hydrologic regimes of watersheds.
- Protect the quality and quantity of water and encourage stewardship.
- Minimize air and noise pollution to protect public and environmental health.
- Use clean home heating systems and transition away from woodstoves as a primary home heating system.

Natural Assets Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL

SUBURBAN

VILLAGE

URBAN

DOWNTOWN

SPECIAL DISTRICT

RESIDENTIAL
1. large rural
2. small rural
3. country suburban
4. large suburban
5. medium suburban
6. compact suburban
7. village residential
8. village core

MIXED EMPLOYMENT
9. mixed employment

COMMERCIAL
10. crossroads commercial
11. general commercial
12. village commercial
13. tourist commercial

INDUSTRIAL
14. resource industrial
15. light industrial
16. general industrial

CIVIC
17. infrastructure
18. institutional

PARKS & OPEN SPACE
19. parks & open space

AGRICULTURE
20. agriculture

MARINE
21. water

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

- Recognize healthy forests, healthy watersheds and healthy aquifers are foundational to the CVRDs natural assets.
- Support sustainable resource management and watershed-scale planning initiatives to most effectively manage natural assets.
- Limit road density to protect watersheds.
- No proposed development in these areas.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

- Recognize agricultural soils, riparian areas and woodlands as foundational to the CVRD's natural assets.
- Manage and control the impact of development on surface and groundwater resources.
- Support regenerative agriculture practices within local agricultural planning to support soil and water health.
- Encourage and support ecosystem services that farmland provides through landscape retention, riparian restoration and native-plant-based landscape remediation.
- Limit road density to protect watersheds.
- Minimize road building and extension of servicing infrastructure within rural areas.

Suburban Areas

- Support low-impact development approaches to clustering of development and retention of functional landscapes.
- Encourage landscape retention (e.g., contiguous habitat and/or corridors) and native-plant-based landscape design.
- Support tree retention on private property.

VILLAGE AREAS

- Support low-impact development approaches and retention of functional landscapes.
- Support expansion and enhancement of active pedestrian connections (e.g., trails) to natural areas.
- Support plans and designs that incorporate natural asset management considerations, including but not limited to rainwater management, soil and tree retention and native plant palettes in landscape design.

URBAN AREAS

- Support low-impact development approaches and retention of functional landscapes.
- Support plans and designs that incorporate natural asset management considerations, including but not limited to rainwater management, soil and tree retention and native plant palettes in landscape design.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- Require natural asset inventories and management strategies be developed within and specific to special districts.
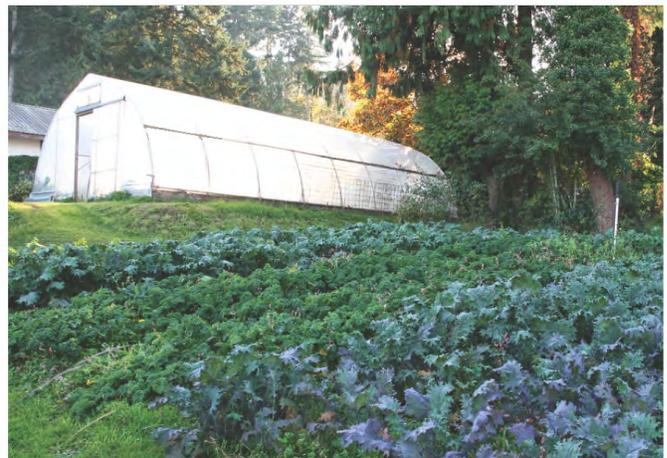
General Policy

NATURAL ASSET FRAMEWORK

NA.1 Establish a Natural Asset Management Framework that includes:

- identification & assessment;
- watershed management plans as guiding documents that inventory priority natural assets;
- evaluating the condition of identified natural assets;
- planning;
- priorities defined by risk identification;
- scenario exploration;
- implementation strategies; and
- a decision-making process based on the business case vis a vis natural asset management (non-political decision making).

NA.2 Develop a CVRD Conservation Strategy with targets linked to an area-based measure at either a biogeoclimatic or watershed scale, with particular attention to Coastal Douglas-fir and Garry oak ecosystems.

NA.3 Consider including ecosystem performance standards for comprehensive development sites.

NA.4 Leverage efforts to protect natural assets through partnerships with First Nations, land trusts, and environmental non-governmental organizations.

TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

NA.5 As part of efforts to increase the percentage of lands dedicated and managed as protected natural areas, consider committing to the UN Biodiversity goals of 30% of all land and water to be protected by 2030 and 50% by 2050. ✳

NA.6 Identify restorative development opportunities (e.g., biomimicry) and low-impact development standards. △

NA.7 Increase the restoration and maintenance of ecosystem services on farmland by protecting natural assets through programs such as the provincial Farmland Advantage initiative (http://farmlandadvantage.ca).

NA.8 Protect natural environment areas identified for preservation in the development process through measures such as dedication to the region, establishing a restrictive covenant or rezoning to park land.

NA.9 Seek to protect species at risk and monitor the scale and change of species listed as being at risk in the region. ✳

NA.10 Review the invasive species bylaw to expand beyond hogweed.

NA.11 Support retaining areas of mature tree cover and preserving other natural features for all development, particularly any development in environmentally sensitive areas and areas of steep slopes.

NA.12 Decrease the percentage of natural areas impacted by development and logging.

NA.13 Increase the canopy cover. ⬭△

NA.14 Protect life and property from hazardous conditions by limiting, controlling and mitigating development on hazardous lands and floodplains. ⬭△

EQUITY POLICY

⬭ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

NA.15 Develop and maintain a list—and up-to-date mapping if available—of ecosystems and wildlife corridors, older second-growth forest and seasonally flooded agricultural fields.

NA.16 Protect migratory routes used by wildlife (e.g., amphibians, elk, bears, etc.) by ensuring infrastructure allows for safe crossings.

NA.17 When a lot is being prepared for development, encourage environmentally sensitive lot clearing, drainage and individual water supply and effluent disposal systems, recognizing that these systems are interrelated.

NA.18 Foster shared responsibility among all levels of government and the community for protecting and restoring mud flats, watershed, estuary and coastline health, wetlands, alpine meadows, vernal pools and Garry oak ecosystems.

NA.19 Advocate for a greater voice for local government in protecting environmentally sensitive areas on PMFLs.

NA.20 Advocate for the *PMFL Act* to be revived to consider the long-term sustainability of water supply and quality.

NA.21 Advocate for a greater role and ability to protect valued ecosystems under the *Species at Risk Act (*SARA) safety net. This could include seeking authority to ticket and fine offenders impacting critical ecological and watershed values.

NA.22 Advocate for the protection and management of riparian areas in agricultural lands and increased protection in resource lands.

NA.23 Support Community Conservation Covenants, enabling adjacent landowners to cooperate in the protection of their land.

NA.24 Protect and improve the carbon sequestration and ecosystem values of natural systems, including forested lands, agricultural lands and wetlands.

NA.25 Seek authority from the Province to establish a municipal-type tree cutting bylaw for protection of trees on private property.

AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

NA.26 Discourage development immediately adjacent to a mudflat, marsh or delta areas.

NA.27 Support the rehabilitation of damaged natural aquatic spawning and rearing areas in consultation and partnership with First Nations, local and senior levels of government, community groups and property owners.

NA.28 Manage streambank erosion to maintain or enhance fish habitat and other natural resources.

NA.29 Recognize aquatic habitats and resources as environmentally sensitive sites to be protected and restored.

NA.30 Develop "Living by Water" foreshore management education materials to help property owners protect creeks and rivers that cross or are adjacent to their property.
△

WATERSHEDS AND AIRSHEDS

NA.31 Protect and restore watersheds as per their watershed management plans.

NA.32 Strengthen rainwater management policy as measured against pre- and post-development hydrograph performance (based on monitoring).

NA.33 Review floodplain maps on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date given changing conditions.

NA.34 Use water balance models and aquifer management to inform land use decisions.

NA.35 Protect Cowichan Valley community watersheds as defined under the *Forest & Range Practices Act* (FRPA) with the intent of:

- conserving the quality, quantity, and timing of water flow; and
- preventing cumulative hydrological effects having a material adverse effect on water.

NA.36 Support the Cowichan Airshed Roundtable and associated work plan by: ⬤△✳

- reducing the number of high-polluting wood burning fireplaces and old woodstoves and encouraging low-polluting heating sources;
- discouraging vehicle idling;
- supporting car-sharing programs and low-emissions vehicles;
- reducing open outdoor burning on lands, including forest and agricultural lands, within the plan area by supporting or developing a mulching and composting system; and
- supporting the elimination of pollution resulting from commercial shipping anchorages in Cowichan Bay and Saltair.

NA.37 Implement air, noise and light pollution reduction measures and explore International Dark Sky Community designation to reduce illumination of the night sky.

MARINE AND FORESHORE

NA.38 Consider the creation of an Eelgrass Protection Marine development permit area.

NA.39 TBC through Marine OCP policy development process.

6 Strengthen Local Food & Agricultural Systems

Introduction

This chapter addresses the protection of agricultural lands and food systems to ensure community resilience and the celebration of locally-grown produce.

Protection of our food system is vital for the sustainability of the Cowichan Valley. More specifically, our agricultural lands and productive soils are a defining feature of the Cowichan Valley's ambience and beauty; its associated industries form an important sector of our local economy.

Food systems "encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded."*

Food security is a multi-faceted condition that ensures that community residents have access to a safe, affordable, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a system that maximizes community self-reliance, environmental sustainability and social justice.

Agricultural lands also sustain the development of non-food products, such as nursery crops, medicinal plants, and plants and animals for textiles, fur and fibre.

The CVRD can establish clear priorities for strengthening local food and agricultural systems beyond farmland protection to include the full spectrum of production, processing, storage, distribution, consumption and nutrient cycling/composting. Local area agriculture plans will continue to play an important role in detailing opportunities.

*Source: Sustainable food systems. Concept and framework. 2018. fao.org/3/ca2079en/CA2079EN.pdf Accessed Nov 2020.

Challenges to Local Food & Agricultural Systems

The following are six main stresses in the electoral areas that make strengthening local food and agricultural systems a challenge.

1. Land conversion and land use conflict

Non-farm uses, such as golf courses, illegal soil/fill deposits, excessive residential uses and subdivision of land, reduces the agricultural viability of the farmland and over time can lead to permanent degradation and increased likelihood of alienation of farmland from being agriculturally productive. Additionally, incompatible uses at the edges of active farming practices can create conflict.

2. Water resource availability

The lack of summer moisture is perhaps agriculture's most severe limiting factor within the CVRD: encouraging water storage over wet winter months so that water resources for irrigation continue to be available during summer can significantly impact the health, diversity and resilience of the local food system.

3. Climate impacts

As temperatures rise and extreme weather events (e.g., extended droughts, extreme rainfall, wind and snowstorms) occur more frequently, potential impacts will include crop disease and pest patterns, water availability, flooding events and overall crop and livestock productivity.

4. Availability of labour and farm worker housing

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the already difficult task of securing labour within the agriculture and food sector. The challenges of attracting and retaining labour limits agricultural productivity and creates uncertainty for farming businesses. Providing housing for agricultural labourers is also difficult due to limited residential development opportunities within the ALR.

5. Rising cost of living and farming

The overall costs of living and farming (e.g., production) are in large part determined by the increasing cost of land and inputs such as fuel and feed. Operating expenses for agricultural producers are also increasing relative to their revenue gains. High demand for residential use of farmland puts cost pressures on agricultural land and reduces access to land for current and new producers.

6. Lack of food processing infrastructure and connections in supply chains

Limitations in regional infrastructure to support the "farm to table" supply chain reduces the feasibility of bringing a wide range of products to market. Without infrastructure, such as abattoirs, storage and distribution hubs, and food processing facilities, it is difficult for farming activities and food businesses to expand the local food sector.
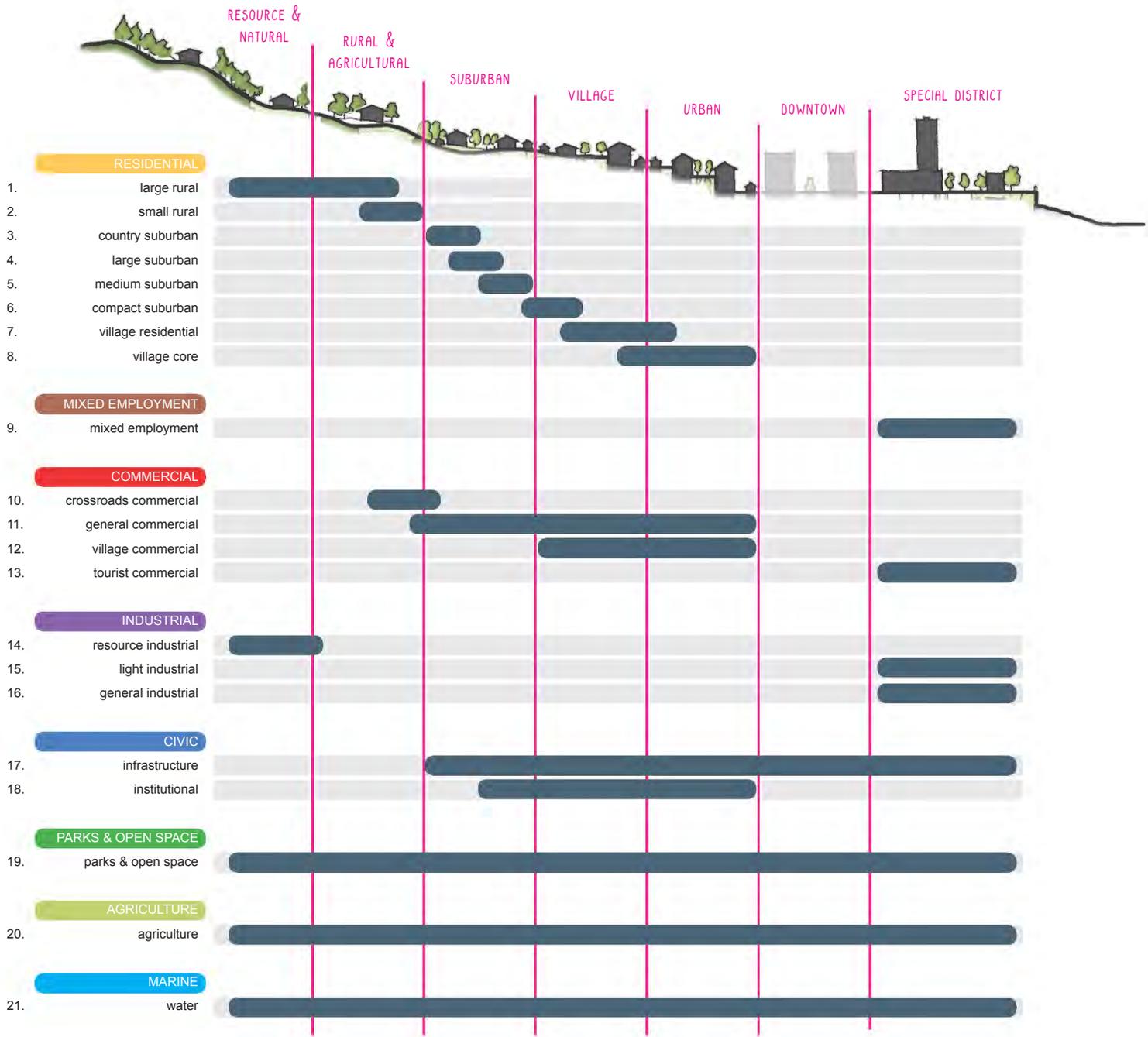
Objectives

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

- Preserve and protect ALR lands and support initiatives of the Ministry of Agriculture to assist farming to be economically viable.
- Maintain or increase the amount of land in the Agriculture designation and ensure early consultation with the ALC with respect to any land use changes that affect the ALR.
- Recognize and preserve the agricultural land base of the plan area for a wide range of agricultural activities in keeping with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation.
- Encourage agricultural economic diversity, including connections between agriculture and tourism, local agricultural processing and value-added agriculture.
- Encourage environmentally friendly agricultural practices, including programs such as the Environmental Farm Plan, Farmland Advantage, supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services, and improved water storage and management.
- Protect groundwater as an important resource to support agriculture industries in locations where potential land use conflicts can be mitigated.
- Ensure that agricultural economic development strategies align with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation.
- Ensure that residential uses within the ALR align with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation.
- Review and modernize the region's approach to aquaculture.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

- Use tools such as the provincial Agricultural Land Use Inventory and federal census of Agriculture to monitor the status of agricultural land, including the amount of actively farmed land, and other indicators, with the objective of promoting agricultural viability and food production.
- Enable food production, processing and distribution that will foster a place-based food economy that increases local food security and opportunities for agricultural production.
- Prioritize food production on agricultural lands and develop access to markets for local foods.
- Encourage residents to grow their own produce.
- Increase local food production opportunities, such as community garden plots, to assist in improving food security and mitigating climate change impacts.

Food & Agricultural Systems Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL
RURAL & AGRICULTURAL
SUBURBAN
VILLAGE
URBAN
DOWNTOWN
SPECIAL DISTRICT

RESIDENTIAL
1. large rural
2. small rural
3. country suburban
4. large suburban
5. medium suburban
6. compact suburban
7. village residential
8. village core

MIXED EMPLOYMENT
9. mixed employment

COMMERCIAL
10. crossroads commercial
11. general commercial
12. village commercial
13. tourist commercial

INDUSTRIAL
14. resource industrial
15. light industrial
16. general industrial

CIVIC
17. infrastructure
18. institutional

PARKS & OPEN SPACE
19. parks & open space

AGRICULTURE
20. agriculture

MARINE
21. water

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

- Support agroforestry practices, such as silvopasture, to diversify productivity of resource lands.
- Support food forest initiatives.
- Support conservation of forest ecosystems (e.g., within resource and natural areas) as integral to the health of agricultural systems.
- Support sustainable forestry practices that minimize impacts on watersheds that serve as irrigation and livestock watering sources for agricultural operations.

Rural & Agricultural Areas

- Recognize the authority and jurisdiction of the ALC for ALR lands within the bylaw area.
- Protect lands within the ALR for agricultural and related uses.
- Minimize conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.
- Support and promote the economic viability of the agriculture sector.

SUBURBAN AREAS

- Prevent the conversion of agricultural lands both within and outside the ALR to suburban (e.g., non-farm) uses.
- Support opportunities for affordable farm-worker housing to reduce pressure for non-farm uses on agricultural land.
- Support the creation and development of food hubs and other initiatives that can increase food production.
- Support opportunities to strengthen the local food system through the creation of food storage, processing and distribution centres within suburban (e.g, serviced) lands and adjacent to population centres.
- Support the growing of food in suburban areas.

VILLAGE AREAS

- Support opportunities to strengthen the local food system through seasonal farmer's markets.
- Support opportunities for affordable farm-worker housing to reduce pressure for non-farm uses on agricultural land.
- Support plans that incorporate local food systems (production, processing, storage, distribution, consumption and/or nutrient cycling/composting) within programming and design of public spaces.
- Support the growing of food in village areas.

URBAN AREAS

- Support opportunities for permanent market spaces to support local producers year-round.
- Support opportunities for affordable farm-worker housing to reduce pressure for non-farm uses on agricultural land.
- Support plans that incorporate local food systems (production, processing, storage, distribution, consumption and/or nutrient cycling/composting) within programming and design of public spaces.
- Support the growing of food in urban areas.

Special Districts

- Support plans that incorporate local food systems (production, processing, storage, distribution, consumption and/or nutrient cycling/composting) within programming and design of public spaces.
- Consider waste-to-energy opportunities to support agricultural production.

General Policy

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

FA.1 Recognize the authority and jurisdiction of the ALC for ALR lands within the bylaw area. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this bylaw, all lands within the ALR are subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, the Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation and any Orders of the ALC. The *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation generally prohibit or restrict non-farm use and subdivision of ALR lands, unless otherwise permitted or exempted.

FA.2 Identify areas where local agriculture plans, which would address agricultural infrastructure issues, cold storage, abattoirs, secondary processing and site-based retail, are needed.

FA.3 Permit a full range of agricultural and complementary uses in the ALR and encourage value-added activities and agricultural processing that can improve farm viability that is consistent with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation.

FA.4 Only support subdivision applications that meet the criteria of the Agricultural Land Commission's Homesite Severance policy.

FA.5 Discourage exclusion of ALR land unless it is in part with a community-wide planning process. ✳

FA.6 Encourage agricultural land leasing and the accommodation of lessees of agricultural land. Collaborate with external organizations, such as Young Agrarians, to identify opportunities to increase agricultural opportunities on public lands. ⬤△

FA.7 Do not support applications to the ALC for houses larger than 500 m².

FA.8 Support safe and appropriate housing for farm workers in recognition of federal and provincial policies and regulations related to the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program and Temporary Farmworker Housing initiatives. As a first option, encourage farm help housing to be located within the GCB, providing access to amenities for workers. As a second option, consider accommodation for farm help on agricultural land, where approved by the ALC, and when: ⬤△

- agriculture is the principal use on the parcel;
- the applicant demonstrates Farm Tax status;
- the applicant demonstrates that on-site housing for farm workers is necessary for the overall operation of the farm. The primary consideration is whether the scale of the farm operation is large enough that permanent help is deemed necessary; and
- temporary farm working housing, such as accommodation on non-permanent foundations, is the preferred solution where farm worker housing is justified.

FA.9 Only forward applications for farm worker housing to the ALC on parcels which have BC Assessment "farm" status.

EQUITY POLICY

○ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

FA.10 Support non-farm use applications only where approved by the ALC and where the proposed uses:

- are consistent with the zoning bylaws and the OCP;
- provide significant benefits to local agriculture;
- do not require the extension of municipal services;
- will not use productive agricultural lands;
- will not preclude future use of the lands for agriculture; and
- will not harm adjacent farm operations.

FA.11 Educate neighbours about normal farm practices such as odour, noise and traffic, traffic and the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*. ▲

FA.12 Discourage non-agricultural development for properties exempt from the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* under section 23(1).

FA.13 Retain agricultural zoning designations and discourage non-agricultural development for properties exempt from the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* under section 23(1) (e.g. less than 2 acres [ac] in size).

FA.14 Plan for uses that are compatible with agriculture along the ALR boundary. Require generous setbacks and buffers when developing lands adjacent to the ALR to prevent conflicts and encroachment through a DPA application when non-ALR land is being subdivided, developed or re-developed.

FA.15 Consider the inclusion of a disclosure statement in the form of a restrictive covenant under section 219 of the Land Title Act on the titles of all newly created lots located partially or entirely within Development Permit Area 8: Protection of Farming. The covenant should specify that the lot is located near a farming area and that the following impacts are to be expected:

- noise from farm operations at various times of the day, including devices used to deter wildlife;
- farm odours and chemical sprays;
- unappealing aesthetic appearances of fields and equipment; and
- light from greenhouses.

The following restrictions apply:

- the vegetated buffer is to be maintained; and
- no habitable structures shall be built within 30 m of the ALR agricultural boundary.

The proposed land use and the agricultural parcels of land on the non-farm side of the agricultural area must be consistent with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' Guide to Edge Planning.

FA.16 Encourage the adoption of Environmental Farm Plan best management practices to more farms within the region to promote sustainable and regenerative agriculture. ▲

FA.17 Increase the number of farms with water storage options to reduce the impacts of agriculture on strained aquifers and watersheds.

FA.18 Only consider outdoor recreation uses on non-ALR lands where it can be demonstrated that there is no reduction in the amount of land being used for agricultural purposes and no impact on surrounding agricultural uses on lands designated Agricultural and Rural. ▲

FA.19 Discourage subdivision of rural settlement areas and all land in the ALR to smaller parcels for residential use and encourage large minimum parcel sizes within the ALR.

FA.20 Protect and support the continued designation and use of agricultural land for agricultural purposes regardless of soil types and capabilities. Locate agricultural structures to maximize the agricultural potential of prime soil resources.

FA.21 Locate buildings and structures, including farm help housing, on agricultural parcels in close proximity to one another and wherever possible, near the existing road frontage. Follow the homeplating guidelines as per the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.

FA.22 Secondary dwellings within the ALR may be considered in alignment with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation and with any further conditions that the CVRD may choose to apply through zoning regulations.

FA.23 Promote the use of conservation programs agricultural land to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Conservation efforts will:

- recognize the important role that agricultural land plays in providing ecosystem services;
- protect environmentally sensitive areas identified through current statutory provisions (e.g., Species at Risk) and identified through current federal, provincial and local inventory programs; and
- not unduly restrict agriculture as a priority use on the property.

FA.24 Recognize and protect the needs and activities of farm operations when considering adjacent and nearby land uses. ⭕

FA.25 Preserve contiguous areas of agricultural land and avoid severance by transportation and utility corridors. Minimize the impact of road and utility corridors through agricultural lands, using only those lands necessary and to the maximum capacity prior to seeking new corridors. Ensure provisions are made for farm traffic to cross major roads.

FA.26 Encourage partnerships with the agriculture community, senior governments and private enterprise to promote the development of the agriculture sector.

FA.27 Support agri-tourism uses that are directly associated with and supportive of established farm operations as a primary use.

FA.28 Permit alcohol production facilities and farm retail sales on ALR lands where consistent with ALC policies and regulations.

FA.29 Discourage the use of agricultural lands for public or institutional uses, such as schools, firehalls, parks and churches. 🔺

FA.30 Work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to develop an Agricultural Land Use Inventory and associated Agricultural Water Demand Model.

FA.31 Work with the ALC and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to ensure zoning bylaws and other CVRD policies and bylaws are based on up-to-date provincial regulations to enable agriculture to grow and thrive.

FA.32 Support the CVRD watershed program public education, the partnership for water sustainability with the Cowichan Watershed Board, the BC Climate Agriculture Initiative, the BC Environmental Farm Plan program and other provincial initiatives in the promotion and uptake of efficient agricultural water use techniques, such as drip irrigation instead of spray irrigation.

FOOD PRODUCTION

FA.33 Inventory local food systems resources, identify gaps and define strategies for resource sharing and long-term planning in support of long-term community sustainability.

FA.34 Support the establishment of local food markets as key elements of the local food system. ⭕

FA.35 In Rural, Suburban and Urban lands, support and encourage a range of urban agriculture using approaches that include, but are not limited to: ⭕

- food production on private lands including font yards, backyards, hens and beehives;
- food production on public lands that include edible landscaping on residential boulevards, park land, backyards and rights-of-way; and
- investment into the development of new community gardens on public and private lands.

FA.36 Support a viable and diverse agricultural industry including new food processing, value-added and agri-tech initiatives.

FA.37 Encourage agriculture production that increases local food production and reduces GHG emissions. ✳

FA.38 Identify the need for local agricultural strategies and work collaboratively across the region to update the 2001 Regional Agricultural Plan and 2013 Implementation Plan and update/align with the 2010 Cowichan Food Security Plan.
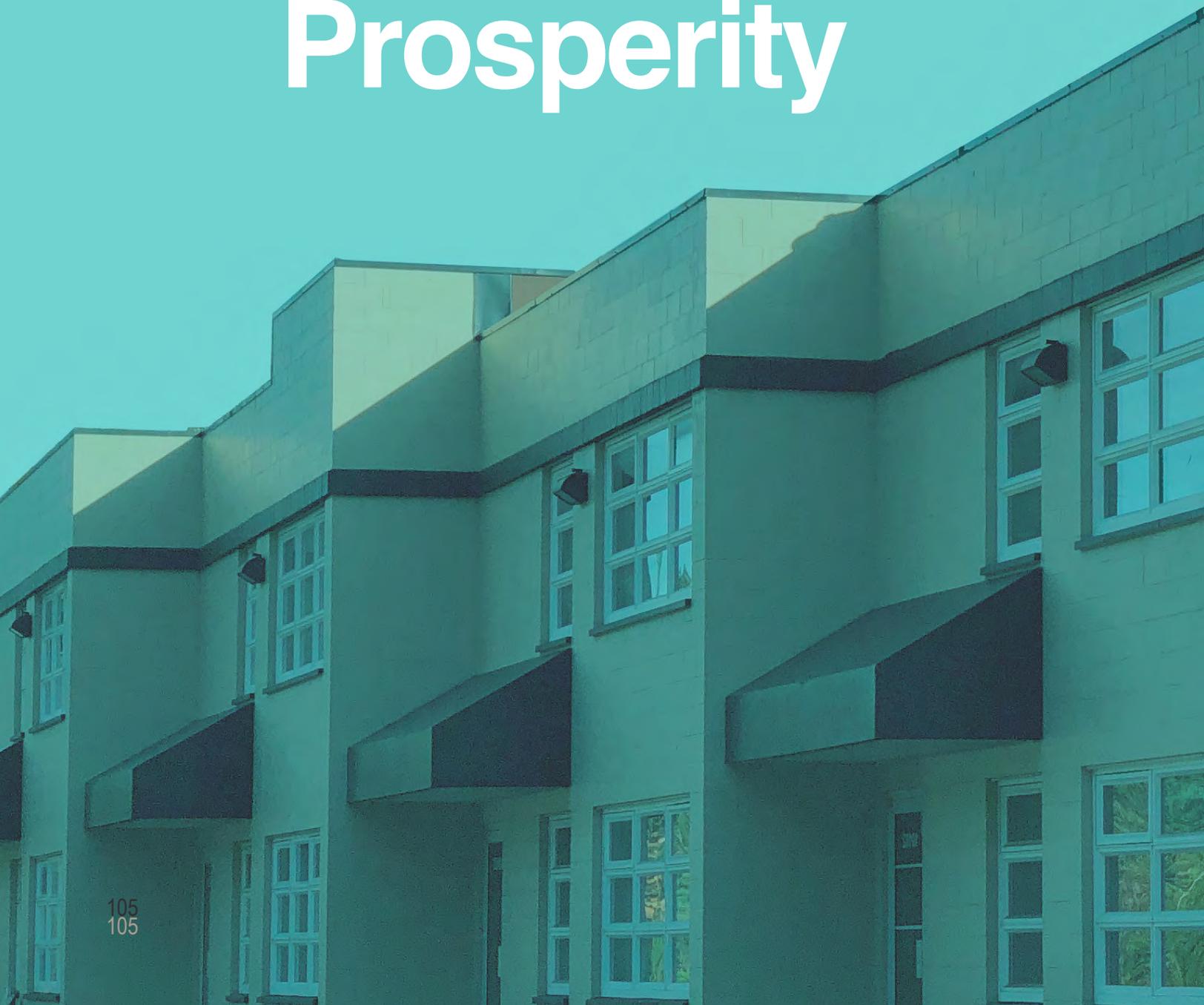
FA.39 Investigate and advocate for local processing (e.g., abattoir) to support local livestock producers. Look for opportunities to partner with local food organizations and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the regional food hub initiatives and FeedBC, BuyBC and GrowBC programs.

✳ METRIC

7 Enhance Regional Prosperity

Introduction

This chapter addresses the region's employment activities and resident access to the jobs of the future.

The region's economy is centred upon traditional resource-based activities and the services sector. However, a growing focus on technology, advanced manufacturing and value-added agriculture is shaping where and how people work in the Cowichan Valley.

The changing nature of work, a focus on economic diversity and regional aspirations to reduce the region's environmental footprint are all factors in how employment lands are envisioned in the OCP.

An analysis of industrial lands in the Cowichan region reveals that approximately 78% of the land base is zoned for forestry and 0.44% is zoned industrial. However, the suitability of this zoned industrial land is not ideal for industrial purposes. Of the 478 hectares of vacant industrial lands, just 21% of it has an optimal profile, or slopes of 5% or less. The average size of these vacant parcels (1.2 ha) is relatively small and could not accommodate most medium or large industries. Additionally, the location of these zoned lands is not always in alignment with the objectives of the OCP, which intend to designate such employment lands in proximity to villages where access to active transportation, transit infrastructure, workforce housing and other services and amenities are more common.

With population projected to continue growing and considering past employment trends, industrial land demand calls for an additional 19-38 ha by 2026. According to stakeholder consultation conducted by Economic Development Cowichan, the large majority of the demand (75%) is for 0.5-2 ac zoned and fully serviced lands in close proximity to the highway.

At the same time, the emerging tech industry is experiencing high growth across the province and the high paying jobs in this sector are key to providing excellent living standards and economic opportunities in the region. Given new trends in remote workplaces and the ability for businesses to move their offices online, the Cowichan region is increasingly attractive for professionals looking to escape the big city and settle in areas with a more direct connection to the natural environment and excellent recreational opportunities.

Challenges to Economic Systems

The following are five main challenges in the electoral areas that are posing challenges to regional prosperity.

1. Rising global energy and resource needs

As regions become central players in making energy more secure, clean and sustainable, there is growing pressure to use the CVRD's wealth of natural resources to help sustain local energy demands. This challenge means transforming from a linear to a circular economy (an economy that is restorative and regenerative and keyed to local inputs) and taking advantage of renewable resources.

2. High impact industrial areas

Certain industrial uses, like advanced manufacturing and food processing, are more resource intensive than others. They often require significant water flows to support production and waste water treatments to protect the environment from pollutants. When high-impact industrial uses are located far from existing infrastructure, the cost to build, operate and maintain that infrastructure is high. Careful planning is key to ensure this type of industry does not become a burden on the CVRD's infrastructure systems.

3. Bedroom communities

Located between Victoria and Nanaimo, two fast-growing urban centres, an increasing number of residents are moving to the Cowichan Valley in search of affordable home ownership and commuting out of the region for employment. This trend threatens the region's economic and environmental sustainability. Designating employment lands in close proximity to where people live and diversifying local economies are essential components to the continued success of the electoral area's communities.

4. Seasonal tourism

The region's tourism sector is highly influenced by the changing seasons. In the summer months, visitors have a wealth of activities in which to participate, and people flock from all over to enjoy the natural and agricultural bounty offered by the region's diverse landscapes. Holiday homes and cottages are filled with visitors escaping the city and quiet villages are lively. As the season's change, colder and wetter weather emerges and tourist activity slows down considerably. This ebb and flow of visitors to the region impacts communities and their ability to provide year-round services to full-time residents.

5. A changing commercial sector

As traditional brick and mortar commercial retail and services shift to an online environment, leasing commercial units can become a challenge. COVID-19 has only accelerated this change, and big box retail is increasingly adapting to more of a distribution role. Small-scale and local shopping that provides a unique and "boutique" experience is less affected by this economic trend, but flexibility in commercial uses is seen as essential to ensuring the vitality of shopping centres.

Objectives

EMPLOYMENT LANDS

- Provide employment lands consistent with community needs and population growth projections.
- Protect existing industrial lands and support the expansion of industrial development that meets the objectives of the OCP and meets community employment and economic development needs.
- Ensure sufficient serviced industrial land in close proximity to distribution routes, access to public transit and workforce housing.
- Align high impact industrial lands with servicing infrastructure.
- Align the regional economic strategy with CVRD growth management strategies.
- Manage the interface between employment, residential and agricultural lands.
- Consider establishing living wage employment generation per square foot of development targets.

- Foster stewardship of the land while encouraging sustainable economic development based on restorative and regenerative uses of the region's natural resources.
- Communicate the value of economic activity in the region to the public.

CIRCULAR & INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

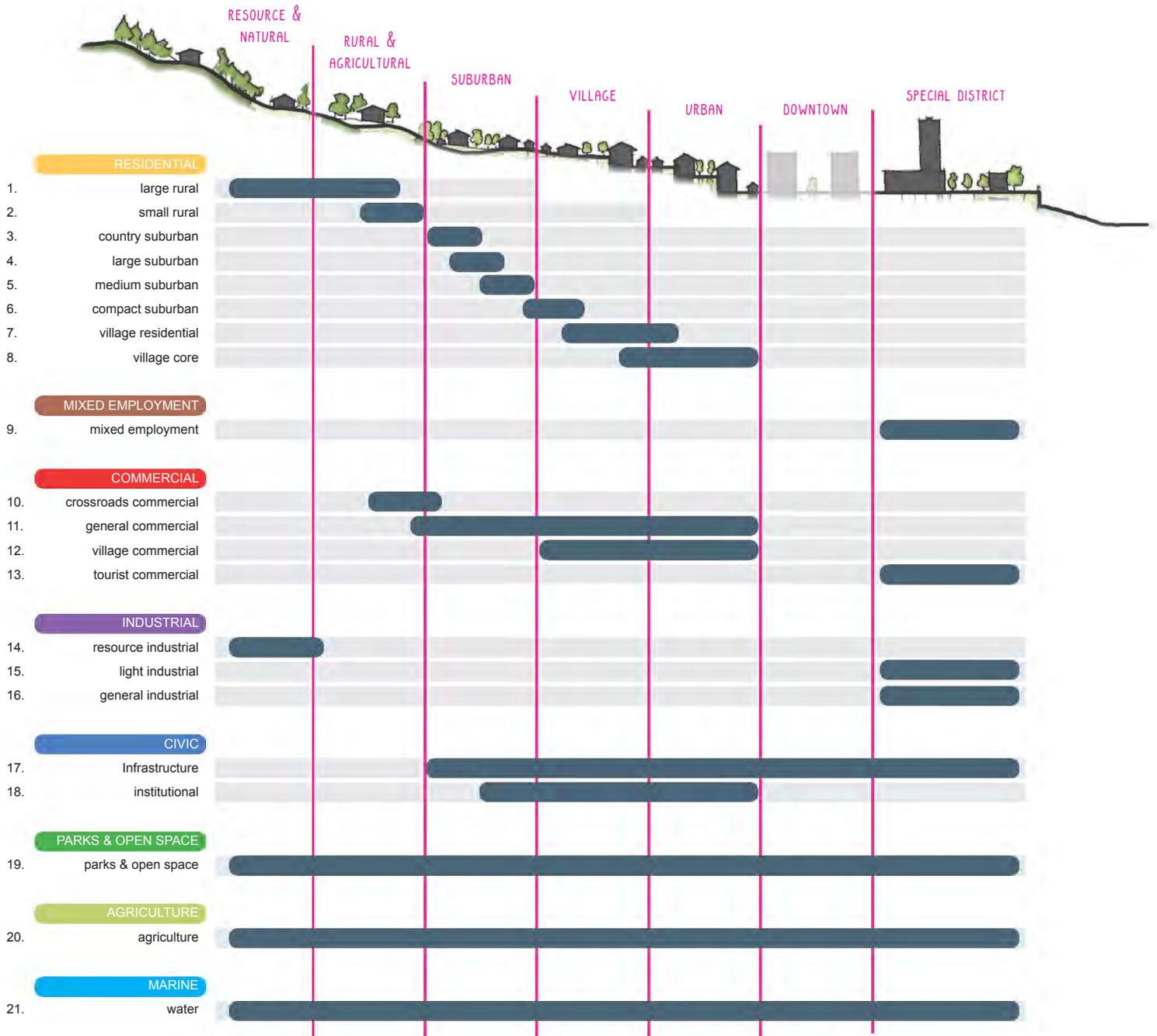- Attract green enterprise and expand renewable energy production to build a circular economy.
- Encourage innovation, adaptability and flexibility in commercial development.
- Attract emerging industries to the Cowichan region and support tech networking.

TOURISM

- Expand tourism opportunities, including agro-tourism.
- Expand tourism infrastructure and explore the potential of off-season activities and attractions.

Enhance Economic Prosperity Policy (by transect sub-area)

		RESOURCE & NATURAL	RURAL & AGRICULTURAL	SUBURBAN	VILLAGE	URBAN	DOWNTOWN	SPECIAL DISTRICT
RESIDENTIAL								
1.	large rural	■						
2.	small rural		■					
3.	country suburban			■				
4.	large suburban			■				
5.	medium suburban			■				
6.	compact suburban			■				
7.	village residential				■			
8.	village core				■			
MIXED EMPLOYMENT								
9.	mixed employment							■
COMMERCIAL								
10.	crossroads commercial		■					
11.	general commercial		■			■		
12.	village commercial				■			
13.	tourist commercial							■
INDUSTRIAL								
14.	resource industrial	■						
15.	light industrial							■
16.	general industrial							■
CIVIC								
17.	Infrastructure			■				■
18.	institutional			■				
PARKS & OPEN SPACE								
19.	parks & open space	■						■
AGRICULTURE								
20.	agriculture	■						■
MARINE								
21.	water	■						■

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RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

- Support the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Support the collection, processing and distribution or raw materials that support a transition to a circular economy.
- Support the development of local and renewable energy sources to power a circular economy.
- Support the expansion of regenerative eco-tourism opportunities.
- Balance recreational needs with development of resource lands.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

- Support sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices.
- Support the development of local and renewable energy sources that power a circular economy.
- Support the expansion of agri-tourism and value-added agricultural uses that align with the ALC's objectives.
- Provide small-scale and low-impact tourism, commercial and industrial uses that support the needs of rural and farming communities.

SUBURBAN AREAS

- Improve access to local shops and services.
- Support home-based businesses and light industrial uses (e.g., artisan studios) compatible with residential areas.
- Support flexibility and adaptability of uses and forms in existing and new commercial development.

VILLAGE AREAS

- Support small-scale commercial developments with active ground floors that align with the character and identity of a village or settlement node.
- Support home-based businesses and light industrial uses compatible with a village setting.
- Support live/work and small-scale mixed use developments that help diversify the community's economy.
- Support flexibility and adaptability of uses and forms in existing and new commercial development.

URBAN AREAS

- Support live/work and mixed use development with active ground floors.
- Encourage the development of office space, research facilities and post-secondary institutions.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- Provide access to a wide variety of strategic employment lands, including high tech, advanced manufacturing, green enterprise and filming studios.
- Limit the amount of new development in the shape of big box and power retail shopping centres.
- Support flexibility and adaptability of uses and forms in existing and new commercial development.

General Policy

EMPLOYMENT LANDS

RP.1 Consider pre-zoning industrial designated lands that are well-serviced or in close proximity to necessary services and near Highway #1.

RP.2 Encourage clustering and co-location of industries and support the production and retail aspects of a business in the same development.

RP.3 Encourage the intensification and more effective use of space in existing industrial developments, including increasing height and reducing parking requirements where located in proximity to transit, bike lanes and/or densely populated areas.

RP.4 Develop Eco-Industrial Park and Agri-Industrial Park zones with clear definitions and consider the use of incentives for competitive advantage.

RP.5 Consider the expansion of uses in industrial zones to include clean technologies like bio-gas.

RP.6 Encourage out migration of heavy industry from the Koksilah Industrial Park to a less sensitive area (e.g., not adjacent to a residential neighbourhood or on top of a vulnerable aquifer). O

RP.7 Explore incentives, either financial or through bonus density, for office space in villages.

RP.8 Support a diversity of commercial and light industrial uses that provide living wage employment and contribute to the local economy. ✳ O

RP.9 Develop key industrial business parks through a servicing and highest and best use lens.

RP.10 Limit land use activities on industrial land that do not generate employment opportunities.

RP.11 Identify existing brownfield or contaminated sites in the region for remediation purposes. O

RP.12 Support initiatives aligned with the development of rail & air transportation hubs on the island (e.g. Port Alberni Trans-shipment Hub).

RP.13 Explore economic development partnerships with local First Nations that are mutually beneficial, and support initiatives including: O

- Malahat Business Park; and
- Stz'uminus Waterfront Plan at Oyster Bay.

INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

RP.14 Consider the creation of a Cowichan Tech Park where tech businesses can benefit from the advantages of clustering.

RP.15 Create a Cowichan Broadband Strategy to expand and provide greater access to high-speed internet service. △

RP.16 Establish a connectivity vision for the region around key community objectives to achieve greater economic, environmental and social outcomes.

RP.17 Improve connectivity in underserved communities to the national standard (currently 50/10 and LTE). ✳ O

EQUITY POLICY

O PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

RP.18 Leverage economic development opportunities associated with a new district hospital.

RP.19 Encourage diverse economic opportunities that attract and retain young families. ✳

RP.20 Support home-based businesses in residential areas that contribute to the local economy, lessen auto-dependency, respect the natural environment and water resources, and enhance neighbourhood character. ▲

RP.21 Encourage businesses and development that attract and maintain a highly skilled workforce. ✳

RP.22 Encourage innovative industries, including developers of green technologies, health science research, food production and others to locate within the regional district. ▲

RP.23 Recognize the value of post-secondary institutions as key to innovation and collaborate with Vancouver Island University (VIU) on economic development initiatives, such as innovation hubs or maker spaces.

RP.24 Explore the potential of a VIU satellite campus in the electoral areas in close proximity to transit and a village core.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

RP.25 Support storage space for deconstruction and material reuse markets.

RP.26 Support the progressive rehabilitation of resource-based activities to an appropriate after-use, such as viable agricultural land or reforestation, that is compatible with the applicable regional OCP designation, surrounding environment and existing uses.

RP.27 Expect heavy and resource-based industries to minimize impacts on surrounding land use, while ensuring and contributing to the quality of life and residents and the natural environment. ⭕

TOURISM

RP.28 Encourage the growth of tourism as a keystone industry that will help the region diversify its economy. ▲

RP.29 Encourage and support agri-tourism activities that improve farm economic viability, in alignment with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation.

RP.30 Promote outdoor recreational activities and regional parks as key touristic destinations.

RP.31 Protect scenic landscapes alongside highways and rural routes to support the tourism sector.

RP.32 Encourage the growth of tourism industry associated products.

EQUITY POLICY

⭕ PRIORITIZE

✳ METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

8 Improve Governance & Implementation

Introduction

This chapter addresses how the vision, objectives and policies of this document will be implemented.

Even the best plans require an implementation strategy. This official community plan sets a bold new vision and policy framework for the CVRD's electoral areas.

However, achieving the goals laid out in this document and making progress on our desired future will require more than simply writing it down in a plan. It will require a focused effort across the entire organization, regular monitoring, relationship building, equitable implementation and adaptation in the face of changing circumstances.

The following chapter provides direction for four key components:

• Alignment with other plans
• Relationship building
• Equitable consideration
• Monitoring progress

Together they will help steer change in the electoral areas towards the common vision outlined in this plan.

Alignment with other Plans

The CVRD has many plans and strategies that provide direction for planning and development, the environment, transportation, engineering and parks, recreation, and culture in the electoral areas. Some of these plans and strategies already generally align with the OCP and may require a small update, while others may require a rethink in the approach and the outcomes.

Plans to Update

There are a number of plans that have a direct impact on the growth and development of the electoral areas that should be updated following adoption of the OCP as part of the implementation strategy. The following is a list of plans that must be updated and undergo a critical review to align with the vision, policies and regulations of this OCP.

GI.1   Zoning Bylaw (underway)

GI.2   Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

GI.3   Infrastructure & Servicing Master Plans

GI.4   Transit Future Action Plan

GI.5   Development Cost Charge Bylaw

GI.6   Community Amenity Contributions Bylaw

GI.7   Economic Development Strategy

GI.8   Subdivision & Development Servicing Bylaw

GI.9   Regional Agricultural Area Plan

Plans to Create

The following plans and policies do not exist and would further support the vision, policies and regulations of this OCP.

GI.10   Natural Asset Framework including Watershed Management Plans

GI.11   Community Heritage Register

GI.12   Cultural Heritage Strategy

GI.13   Regional Parks & Trails Master Plan

GI.14   Regional Transportation Plan

GI.15   Local Agriculture Plans

GI.16   Cowichan Broadband Strategy

GI.17   Coastal Flooding Mitigation Strategy

GI.18   Climate Crisis Mitigation Strategy

GI.19   Bulk Water Supply Plans

GI.20   Strategic Asset Management Plan

Relationship Building

In order to make progress in all of the OCP's main goals, collaboration with other levels of government, engagement with communities and the formation of new relationships will be crucial. This section lists key relationships the CVRD will need to foster in order to ensure its policies are implemented.

FIRST NATIONS

GI.21 Build and maintain relationships with local First Nations, including the Cowichan Tribes, Ditidaht, Penelakut, Halalt, Stz'uminus, Lake Cowichan, Lyackson, Malahat and Pauquachin First Nations.

GI.22 Use the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework of minimum standards for advancing reconciliation with local First Nations.

GI.23 Explore the establishment of memorandums of understanding with each local First Nation to proceed towards common goals, and promote collaboration, cooperation and dialogue.

GI.24 Explore opportunities with local First Nations for partnerships in infrastructure servicings, economic development, housing, environmental stewardship, arts & culture and wherever plans include shared priorities and goals.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

GI.25 Work with the province on matters that are within their jurisdiction:

- MoTI to analyze and resolve drainage issues and approvals for subdivision;
- MoTI and BC Transit to reduce car dependency and provide safer more sustainable transportation options;
- BC Housing to build a wider range of affordable and below-market housing options; and,
- Agricultural Land Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure a thriving agricultural industry.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

GI.26 Work with the federal government on matters that are within their jurisdiction:

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans on protecting watercourses and establishing modernized policies for marine and foreshore environments; and,
- Ministry of Environment to protect species at risk and enhance natural assets by building on and expanding the federal SARA safety net.

INCORPORATED MUNICIPALITIES

GI.27 Collaborate with all incorporated municipalities (District of North Cowichan, City of Duncan, Town of Lake Cowichan and Town of Ladysmith) to ensure alignment of visions and goals.

Equity Checklist

The following Equity Checklist should be used during the implementation of all policies or actions. Particular attention should be placed on the policies that need further consideration upon implementation (marked with this symbol △). Note that this checklist may adapt as it is used and further input is received from diverse populations.

Step 1 | Self-reflection

☐ Reflect and identify your own social position. Consider intersecting factors such as race, gender, age, sexuality, ability, education level, income, years lived in the CVRD, etc.

How does your positioning impact your perspectives during this policy review?

Step 2 | Identify who will be affected

☐ Using demographic data (ideally disaggregated by race and gender), consider how the action will affect/serve people and places. In particular, consider diverse populations.

Which people and places will be impacted by the action? What effects or impacts will the action have on people and places? How long will the action have an impact? (Short, medium and/or long term?)

☐ Identify the affected groups, including those who have historically not been included. Identify their role in decision making.

Step 3 | Assess community context

☐ Understand the history of the policy topic.

What is the historical context of this policy/action as it relates to colonization and dispossession of Traditional Territory?

☐ Learn about the affected communities' priorities and concerns through inclusive and meaningful engagement. Ensure communication materials consider cultural factors, language barrier and visual and auditory impairments.

☐ Understand who will benefit from the policy.

Who has benefited, or is benefitting, from this policy? How accessible are the benefits of this policy?

☐ Understand who is excluded from these benefits, or who may be harmed, from this policy.

Can the benefits of the policy be targeted in ways to reduce historical or existing disparities? Who may be excluded from these benefits? Who might be harmed? What may be the unintended consequences of this action?

☐ Identify potential unintended equity-related consequences of this policy. What impact will this action have in the future?

Step 4 | Analysis and decision process

☐ Project how various scenarios will affect community priorities and concerns.

☐ Evaluate each alternative to understand who will be disproportionately burdened or benefit.

Who will disproportionately be burdened or benefit today? In the future? Directly? Indirectly?
Include alternatives that target root causes to eliminate disproportionate burden.
Prioritize alternatives by equitable outcomes.

Step 5 | Implement

☐ Communicate the implementation of the policy with the community. Particularly engage with affected communities.
☐ Advance equity opportunities when possible.

How might we hire, source or promote diverse populations when implementing this action?

☐ Measure and evaluate the intended outcomes in collaboration with affected communities.

How will advancing equity be articulated in your action/policy to ensure it is visible, explicit and measurable? Are there accountability systems to identify unintended consequences?

How might course corrections be handled if needed?

Step 6 | Continuous learning

☐ Evaluate if the policy appropriately responds to community priority and concerns, particularly of diverse populations.

☐ Learn alongside the community to adjust policies as community priorities change.

☐ Communicate progress to all stakeholders.

This equity checklist was adapted from other similar checklists, including the King County Equity Impact Review.

Monitoring Progress

The long-term vision described in this plan and its accompanying objectives and policies will take many years to achieve. To ensure the CVRD's electoral areas are headed in the right direction, this section lists a range of key metrics that will help electoral area directors, Regional District staff, and the broader community measure and monitor progress.

The metrics are grouped by the OCP goals and include additional general growth management metrics as a way to better understand where focus may be needed over the years to successfully implement the whole plan. More detail on each metric can be found in Appendix 1 of the OCP.

MITIGATE & ADAPT TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Ind.1 Corporate GHG emissions per capita | This metric tracks the emissions produced from regional government buildings and operations and shows whether the region is emitting more or less emissions over time per capita.

Ind.2 Community GHG emission from buildings | This metric tracks emissions from primary energy sources (electricity/gas)—which is a proxy for emissions associated with buildings.

Ind.3 Community GHG emissions from solid waste | This metric tracks emissions from solid waste associated with CVRD residents and businesses.

Ind.4 Drought level | Drought level is an important metric to track regarding impacts on climate change on freshwater bodies and farmland. This information is reported for the entire eastern side of Vancouver Island, but it provides important information on the relative change in drought levels over time to inform policy makers of general trends and potential responses required.

Ind.5 Fire and emergency response capacity and coverage | This metric shows the amount of the community that is covered by emergency services.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Ind.6 Total growth statistics | Monitoring the demographics and growth rates of the community on a regular basis is an important basis for policy.

Ind.7 Percentage of growth occuring within growth containment boundaries | The CVRD wants to pursue compact growth and protect its rural areas. Monitoring the % of growth in/out of the GCBs is important for informing policy and investment decisions in infrastructure.

MANAGE INFRASTRUCTURE RESPONSIBILY

Ind.8 Percentage of population serviced by CVRD (or private) utility services | Compact growth needs to be in serviced areas, and monitoring growth in/out of these areas is important information for planning and infrastructure investment decisions.

Ind.9 **Solid waste stream statistics** **ǀ** The solid waste in the region is trucked to other regions for disposal, which entails significant climate emissions. Monitoring these flows informs policy and programs to minimize and divert waste from landfills.

MAKE DISTINCT, COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

Ind.10 **Area of community park lands managed by CVRD in electoral areas ǀ** Parks are an important part of the region's ecosystem and its residents' quality of life. Monitoring the growth of parks informs policy, plans and investment in parkland.

Ind.11 **Area of community managed parks ǀ** This metric shows the relative amount of park area per person in each electoral area to indicate the relative availability of open space and identify areas where additional investment in parks may be warranted.

Ind.12 **Length of recreational trails ǀ** Trails are an important part of regional mobility and healthy living. Monitoring the growth of trails informs policy, plans and investment.

Ind.13 **CVRD house prices ǀ** Monitoring house prices provides data on the relative change in affordability and land value over time.

Ind.14 **Housing affordability ǀ** Affordability of housing is measured as a ratio of the cost of housing to household income and this can be addressed for different types and tenures of housing. This information informs plans and policies regarding how housing prices are impacting households in the CVRD. The "affordability standard" is understood as housing costs are no more than 30% of household income.

Ind.15 **Housing growth ǀ** Monitoring growth in homes by type/area informs policy, plans and infrastructure investment and helps ensure attainable housing can be provided over time.

Ind.16 **Housing stats ǀ** Housing starts per year is an important metric that monitors ongoing supply of housing in a region.

Ind.17 **Sales to inventory ratio for housing (or months of inventory) ǀ** The sales-to-inventory ratio is a key determinant of whether home prices will rise or fall as it is based on the ratio of supply and demand. Monitoring this ratio over time provides important information on whether housing supply is keeping up with demand and therefore whether housing will become increasingly more expensive.

EXPAND MOBILITY OPTIONS

Ind.18 **Mode of transportation to work by electoral area ǀ** Modal share indicates the percentage of CVRD residents driving, walking, cycling or taking transit to work, and indicates climate emissions and infrastructure impacts from transportation. It can help inform land use plans and transportation policies and programs.

Ind.19 **Percentage of population within 400 m of a transit stop ǀ** This metric shows what percentage of the population have access to basic public transit where they may not have access to a vehicle or other modes of transportation.

PROTECT & RESTORE NATURAL ASSETS

Ind.20 Percentage of areas classified as sensitive I This metric shows the percentage of the region that has different sensitivities.

Ind.21 Number of species at risk I This metric shows the scale and change of species listed as being at risk in the region.

Ind.22 Air quality I Air quality metrics show the level of stress or health risk in the valley related to air quality, including the linkages to wildfires and woodstoves.

STRENGTHEN LOCAL FOOD & AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

Ind.23 ALR exclusions and inclusions I This information highlights changes in land area in the ALR within the region.

Ind.24 Land in food and/or crop production I This metric shows what % of agricultural land is truly producing food, in order to track agricultural productivity and inform plans and policies to increase food system productivity.

ENHANCE REGIONAL PROSPERITY

Ind.25 Median and gross incomes I This metric reveals the relative growth of income and prosperity in the region over time.

Ind.26 Labour force by industry I The CVRD has a range of economic sectors that are growing and changing. Tracking them provides information on how the economy is changing and any implications to the region's plans and policies that should be addressed as a result.

Ind.27 Highest level of education I Monitoring the level of education is important to determine public health and future labour trends in the region.

Ind.28 Growth of business I This metric shows the level of growth among different scales of businesses.

Ind.29 Internet connectivity I This metric monitors the percentage of population/households that have access to 50/10 Internet – Cowichan Valley Regional District. This information is important as access to the internet is an essential economic and social element in contemporary society.

CVRD