



COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

BYLAW No. 4373

A Bylaw to Adopt an Official Community Plan for Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H & I in the Cowichan Valley Regional District

WHEREAS Part 14 of the *Local Government Act* provides that a local government may adopt one or more official community plans;

NOW THEREFORE the Board of Directors of the Cowichan Valley Regional District in open meeting enacts as follows:

1. CITATION

This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as the “**CVRD Bylaw No. 4373 - Cowichan Valley Regional District Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas Bylaw, 2024**”.

2. SCHEDULES

The following Schedules are attached to and form part of this bylaw:

- (a) Schedule A - Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas
- (b) Schedule C - Development Permit Areas
- (c) Schedule D - Agricultural Land Maps
- (d) Schedule E - Fire Protection Maps
- (e) Schedule F - First Nations Reserves Maps
- (f) Schedule G - Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas Maps
- (g) Schedule H - Heritage Designation Map
- (h) Schedule J - Sand and Gravel Deposits Maps
- (i) Schedule L - Land Use Designations Maps
- (j) Schedule M - Marine Area Map
- (k) Schedule O - Floodplain and Dam Maps
- (l) Schedule P - Terrestrial Parks Maps
- (m) Schedule S - Service Area Maps
- (n) Schedule T - Transportation and Major Roads Maps
- (o) Schedule U - Development Permit Area Maps

Schedule B - Local Area Plans are in development

3. REPEAL OF HARMONIZED OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

"CVRD Bylaw No. 4270 - Cowichan Valley Regional District Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas Bylaw, 2021" is hereby repealed.

Considered in conjunction with the Cowichan Valley Regional District Housing Needs Report for the Electoral Areas (2024), Financial Plan and the Liquid Waste Management Plan under Section 477(3) of the *Local Government Act*, the 8th day of October, 2024.

Referred to the Agricultural Land Commission under Section 477(3) of the *Local Government Act* the 11th day of December, 2024,

Referred to the Boards of Education of School Districts No. 68 and 79 under Section 476 of the *Local Government Act* the 11th day of December, 2024.

READ A FIRST TIME this 11th day of December, 2024.

READ A SECOND TIME AS 8th day of October, 2025.
AMENDED this

PUBLIC HEARING this 20th day of October, 2025.
CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO
PART 14, SECTION 464 of the
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

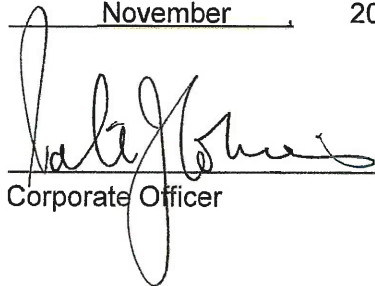
READ A THIRD TIME AS 26th day of November, 2025.
AMENDED this

ADOPTED this 26th day of November, 2025.

Chair



Corporate Officer



**COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICIAL
COMMUNITY PLAN BYLAW NO. 4373, 2024, AN OFFICIAL
COMMUNITY PLAN FOR THE ELECTORAL AREAS**

**A BYLAW TO GUIDE AND DIRECT DECISION-MAKING ON ALL ASPECTS
OF PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE ELECTORAL
AREAS OF THE COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT**

Schedule A – Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas sets out the overarching framework for the OCP, including vision, land use designations and policy areas.

Schedule A Appendices – Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas Appendix I sets out the OCP planning process. Appendix II sets out performance metrics to measure the success of the plan. The performance metrics correspond with the policy goals, objectives and policies. Appendix III sets out the growth containment boundaries and growth area methodology.

Schedule B – Local Area Plans is in development. Local area plans set out local plan areas within the electoral areas. Some local plan areas are within two electoral areas. Local area plans contain more detailed and area-specific policies that capture and enhance the unique identities and characteristics of a community. Schedule B – Local Area Plan maps are located in Schedule L.

Schedule C – Development Permit Areas sets out the development permit area designations and justifications. The exemptions and guidelines are located in a separate bylaw.

Schedule D – Agricultural Land Maps identify Agricultural Land Reserve lands and lands designated agriculture.

Schedule E – Fire Protection Maps identify fire protection areas.

Schedule F – First Nations Reserves Maps identify Indian Reserve (as defined by the Indian Act) lands near the electoral areas.

Schedule G – Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Area Maps identify growth containment boundaries and growth area lands within the growth containment boundary.

Schedule H – Heritage Designation Map identifies heritage designations.

Schedule J – Sand and Gravel Deposits Maps identify sand and gravel deposits.

Schedule L – Land Use Designations Maps identify land use designations. In addition, Schedule L includes the local area plan maps (the local area plans are located in Schedule B) and the special study area maps.

Schedule M – Marine Area Map identifies marine areas near the electoral areas. A separate Marine OCP will be developed. The CVRD does not have jurisdiction seaward of the natural boundary.

Schedule O – Floodplain and Dam Maps identify floodplains and dams.

Schedule P – Terrestrial Parks Maps sets out terrestrial parks and trails.

Schedule S – Service Areas Maps identify current service areas.

Schedule T – Transportation and Major Roads Maps identify major roads as identified by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

Schedule U – Development Permit Area Maps identify designated development permit areas.

Our Place, Our Future

COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN FOR THE ELECTORAL AREAS

SCHEDULE A TO BYLAW NO. 4373 – OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN FOR THE ELECTORAL AREAS

Clam Bed Restoration



CVRD

The Cowichan Valley Regional District covers an area of 3,473 square kilometres (km²) on Vancouver Island, 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.

This vast region encompasses the unceded territory of many distinct First Nations that have occupied the lands and waters since Time Immemorial. Indian Reserve (as defined by the *Indian Act*) lands are outside of the scope of this plan.

First Nations in the region have unresolved claims to Indigenous Rights and Title, which are recognized

and affirmed by the Constitution of Canada. Although it is the responsibility of the federal and provincial government to settle Indigenous Rights and Title claims, the implications of negotiations and settlement will be felt across the region, including the plan area.

The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and the commitments made by adopting the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) in BC signal the imperative to address our colonial history and rebuild in a spirit of respectful relations.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District is in the traditional, unceded territories of the Cowichan Tribes, Penelakut Tribe and the Ditidaht, Pacheedaht, Halalt, Stz'uminus, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Lyackson, Malahat and Pauquachin First Nations.



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List of Acronyms

2SLGBTQ+	Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Inclusive
ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
CEEI	Community Energy Emissions Inventory
CHM	Canopy Height Models
CVRD	Cowichan Valley Regional District
CVX	Cowichan–Victoria Express
DPA	Development Permit Area
DRIPA	Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act
EV	Electric Vehicle
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
GCB	Growth Containment Boundary
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HNR	Housing Needs Report
ICBC	Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
ITA	Incremental Treaty Agreements
JUB	Joint Utilities Board
LAP	Local Area Plan
LGA	Local Government Act
MoTT	Ministry of Transportation and Transit
NCX	Nanaimo–Cowichan Express
OCF	Official Community Plan
PMFL	Private Managed Forest Land
RGS	Regional Growth Strategy
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
SVX	Shawnigan Lake – Victoria Express
UPH	Unit Per Hectare
VKT	Vehicle Kilometers Travelled

"Fall Palette"

A thousand shades of green
Freed from the searing flint
Of summer's glare
A brush washed clean
Field and wood will paint
For maples' ochre yellow
To vermilion then to umber's burnt palette

September rain cools cedars' rust
And every hanging clutch of seeds
Compelled by August heat to lust

Drops of yellow upon the quince
Are impressionist
While hints of silver shine
On spires of cottonwood leaves
When comes the western wind
Down the mountain's side
To make alders dance a minuet
To invisible sounds

Then send to earth
Next spring's progeny to begin
As rivers of blue and white compete for sky
That all summer lay in wait
The land to shower
With gentle autumn light

As I for you will always stay
Until all the painted leaves that flourish
Have spent their scarlet flood

— © 2022 John Edwards,
poet laureate (electoral area H)



Image 1.1 Autumn water

Purpose

This official community plan (OCP) presents the long-term vision for growth and land use across the Cowichan Valley Regional District's (CVRD) nine electoral areas. It provides policy direction and guides decision-making related to development within a regional planning context.

The OCP applies to the entire area of the regional district except for those areas within the jurisdiction of Islands Trust, First Nation reserves and the four municipalities within the CVRD: City of Duncan, Town of Lake Cowichan, District of North Cowichan and Town of Ladysmith.

Schedule A – Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas is organized in three parts.

PART ONE VISION, GOALS & EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Part One provides the plan's overall vision and introduces the eight policy goals. It also presents a guiding equity framework that supports the development of the plan's objectives and policies.

The Social Equity Framework sets the stage for the CVRD's next evolution as a region where land use decisions are assessed against their impact on all residents, including those who are often left behind. It contextualizes the objectives and policies found within the OCP and provides suggestions for implementation that support more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Additionally, Part One summarizes the findings of updated growth projections and housing needs analyses for the CVRD's electoral areas and links them to new growth containment boundaries and land use designations.

PART TWO LAND USE DESIGNATIONS & THE TRANSECT

Part Two contains the OCP land use framework—called the transect—and all land use designations, including development approval information and temporary use designation policies.

The transect is an approach to organizing the land use designations and communicating their characteristics. It structures the CVRD's various landscapes into transect landscape types: from natural and rural to village and urban settings. Generally, land use designations with densities below one unit per hectare (UPH) are only located outside of the growth containment boundaries, and those above one UPH are located inside the growth containment boundaries. This helps protect natural, agricultural and rural lands against sprawl while ensuring future development—whether it's housing, commercial centres, industry or key community services—is focused in areas where it can be well integrated.

Land use designations are organized in three categories for a total of 21 designations:

- Residential (eight)
- Employment (nine)
- Civic & Open Space (four)

Transect landscape types are organized in seven categories:

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

PART THREE POLICIES

Part Three contains eight policy areas:

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

APPENDICES I, II & III

Appendix I Process and Planning provides a comprehensive overview of the process that has been crucial to the development of the OCP. It details the OCP's foundation in extensive community and First Nations engagement and outlines the planning tools embedded in the OCP.

Appendix II Performance Metrics presents metrics that will assist in monitoring progress on achieving the OCP's goals.

Appendix III Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas Methodology provides the objectives and methodology for the growth containment boundaries and growth areas established in the OCP and explains the connection with infrastructure servicing and land use densities.

PART ONE

VISION, GOALS & EQUITY FRAMEWORK



Image 1.2 View from Mount Tzouhalem

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.



Image 1.3 Shawnigan Lake

Eight Policy Areas

Derived from the OCP's vision are eight goals, which form the policy areas. Central to each goal is the region's determination to address, using the jurisdictional powers at its disposal, several challenges that have emerged over time: the climate challenge, the biodiversity challenge, the affordable housing challenge, the food system challenge and the inequality challenge. The eight goals are:



**1. MITIGATE & ADAPT TO
THE CLIMATE CRISIS**



**5. PROTECT & RESTORE
NATURAL ASSETS**



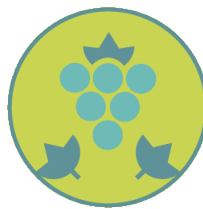
**2. MANAGE INFRASTRUCTURE
RESPONSIBLY**



**6. STRENGTHEN LOCAL
FOOD & AGRICULTURE**



**3. MAKE DISTINCT,
COMPLETE COMMUNITIES**



**7. ENHANCE REGIONAL
PROSPERITY**



4. EXPAND MOBILITY OPTIONS



**8. IMPROVE GOVERNANCE
& IMPLEMENTATION**



Image 1.4 Great blue heron

1.2 Jurisdiction

The OCP establishes objectives and policies for its land use designations and for the eight policy area goals. Broad objectives are applied to matters over which the Regional District does not have jurisdiction. Policies address topics within the Regional District's jurisdiction and are written in such a way to allow for flexibility and application where appropriate.

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 in which it will seek to influence through advocacy policies.

FEDERAL

The federal government holds jurisdiction over important topics that impact local planning and development.

These include regulation related to

- aerodromes
- fisheries
- marine navigation
- migratory birds
- species at risk
- telecommunications

PROVINCIAL

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

These include

- affordable housing
- agricultural land management¹
- conservation and management of wildlife and wildlife habitats
- Crown land tenures
- major infrastructure and transportation projects, including roadside drainage infrastructure
- protection of riparian and aquatic ecosystems
- water allocation and licencing private managed forest land (PMFL), which makes up nearly half of all the lands within the CVRD and is 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.

¹ Note: All lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve are subject to the Agricultural Land Commission Act, the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation (2019), Agricultural Land Reserve General Regulation (2020) and any Orders of the Agricultural Land Commission. The Agricultural Land Commission Act and Agricultural Land Reserve General Regulation generally prohibit or restrict non-farm use and subdivision of Agricultural Land Reserve lands, unless otherwise permitted or exempted.

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 can 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). However, through the powers of zoning, Regional Districts impact which lands can be subdivided.

FIRST NATIONS

Modern Treaties are agreements that are negotiated between the government of Canada, the government of British Columbia and First Nations through the BC Treaty Commission negotiation process. Modern Treaties recognize and reconcile pre-existing Indigenous Sovereignty with assumed Crown sovereignty. Modern negotiations are based on recognition of Indigenous Rights and Title, and recognition and support for Indigenous Self-determination and Self-government. A First Nation implementing a Modern Treaty through the BC Treaty Commission process has its own constitution and lawmaking authority over treaty land and public services. Modern Treaties also aim to foster new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments based on mutual respect, trust and understanding.

As of the date this OCP was adopted, eight First Nations with Traditional Territory in the region are in Stage 5 of the six-stage BC Treaty Commission process. This includes the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, representing Cowichan Tribes, Penelakut, Halalt, Lyackson and Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nations; Te'mexw Treaty Association, representing Malahat Nation; Ditidaht First Nation; and Pacheedaht First Nation.

Modern Treaty agreements may fundamentally alter regional governance, as First Nations with Modern Treaty agreements can appoint directors to join Regional District boards with representation equivalent to that of a municipal or electoral area official.

1.3 Social Equity Framework

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

The OCP uses a Social Equity Framework to better understand the needs of diverse populations in relation to the eight policy areas: the climate crisis, infrastructure, complete communities, mobility, natural assets, food and agriculture, regional prosperity, and governance and implementation. Policies should continue to adapt to reflect equity considerations.

The Social Equity Framework identifies policies throughout the OCP using the following symbols:

EQUITY POLICY



Figure 1.1 Equity policy key

Prioritize: policies that should be considered given their benefits to diverse populations.

Implementation Considerations: policies that need greater consideration to ensure implementation doesn't harm, and may benefit, diverse populations. Section 3.8, "Improve Governance and Implementation", includes an Equity Checklist that provides considerations on how to support the equitable implementation of policies.

Equity is defined by the Equity Manifesto² 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.

² Policy Link. (2022) *The Equity Manifesto*. <https://www.policylink.org/about-us/equity-manifesto>

1.4 Growth Projections

Provincial legislative requirements for Housing Needs Reports (HNR) were updated in 2023, resulting in a [new interim HNR](#) Method to identify the 5- and 20-year housing need, from present day, in communities. The HNR Method was developed to standardize the process of projecting housing need across municipalities and regional districts and provide communities with unit-based growth targets to be integrated in local government planning and zoning. In response, these new housing need projections (starting from 2025) have been adopted as the basis for this OCP's land use designation and housing policies and extended out to 2050.

Using the unit targets developed under the HNR Method, household growth in the electoral areas is expected to increase to 2.2% annually from present day to five years hence. To align the HNR method with the OCP's 2050 time horizon, the HNR 20-year projection was extended to 25 years using the same methodology. This results in total growth in households of 8,160 over 25 years. Using the 2021 average household size for the CVRD, 2.3 persons per household, this would represent approximately 18,770 new persons moving to the electoral areas by 2050.

The following table summarizes household projections using this method by electoral area.

Electoral Area	2025 Households (estimate)	Total Household Growth (HNR Method)		
		5-year (2030)	20-year (2045)	25-year (2050)
A	2,111	278	843	1,121
B	3,450	473	1,430	1,903
C	2,261	282	839	1,121
D	1,488	213	657	870
E	1,645	235	721	956
F	789	119	376	495
G	1,090	157	487	644
H	1,193	161	494	655
I	704	97	298	395
Total	14,732	2,015	6,145	8,160

Note: Projections are based solely on the 2024 HNR Method, which considers historic trends and present capacity for growth within the region based on historic growth and current pressures on the housing stock. These projections do not consider large-scale developments that are currently in the planning phases. They also do not account for future development capacity or if existing growth within the electoral areas was reasonable given servicing constraints.

Table 1.1 Electoral area population projections, 2025-2050.

1.5 Housing Needs

Using the dwelling projections from the HNR Method, additional analysis was done to further understand housing need by potential unit types and size. This assessment is informed by current and anticipated preferences for unit types by demographic group and household formations. The methodology used is explained in Appendix III Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Area Methodology.

The following tables summarize the results of this additional analysis.

Electoral Area	Housing Structure Type	25-year Housing Need (2050)		
		0-1br	2br	3br+
A	Attached	26	116	72
	Detached	40	152	712
B	Attached	22	67	103
	Detached	121	309	1281
C	Attached	15	79	10
	Detached	38	312	665
D	Attached	21	82	37
	Detached	42	319	545
E	Attached	18	14	23
	Detached	61	161	10
F	Attached	7	4	18
	Detached	60	106	299
G	Attached	15	5	1
	Detached	31	144	326
H	Attached	9	22	0
	Detached	28	72	265
I	Attached	17	22	0
	Detached	17	72	265
Total		597	1,989	5,551

Table 1.2 Electoral area 25-year housing needs by structure typology and number of bedrooms.

Notes:

- This method for modelling future housing need composition is informed by existing trends represented in current and past censuses. Rather than reflecting the minimum number of bedrooms needed by a census household, the modelling reflects actual housing trends. Further to this analysis, housing needs are disaggregated using income and affordability metrics, as well as core housing needs.
- Projections are based on an estimated 2025 baseline using the 2021 Census data regarding dwelling type preferences, number of bedrooms per dwelling and headship rates by age group.
- Total projected units are broken down into age groupings based on 2021 Census headship rates. Households are then further disaggregated by proportion of households within each age grouping by structure type. Finally, the number of bedrooms required for each unit is estimated by applying the proportion of each bedroom size within each dwelling typology. In summary, the unit typologies and bedrooms are based on 2021 preferences and ratios of each headship age cohort.
- Due to rounding to whole units during the disaggregation process, the estimated number of units will not perfectly align with disaggregated totals.
- Electoral area G has a total of 69 units removed from the HNR's total projected need, to account for the units assigned to Thetis Island, Valdes Island and other Gulf Islands territory under the jurisdiction of Islands Trust.
- While modelling demand based on existing conditions can provide an estimate of how many and what kind of units will be demanded long term in the electoral areas of the region, it does not address the affordability of those units. As such, additional information relating to income and wealth should be incorporated into the demand forecast.

Next, these values were compared to the estimated monthly shelter cost of a dwelling purchased and rented in the CVRD. By comparing the average value of units by dwelling with the average household's monthly maximum affordable shelter cost (defined as 30% of household income), it is possible to estimate if households in different income deciles would be able to theoretically purchase and finance homes at their assessed values.

As this method is comparing the current state (i.e. present day home values and incomes) to the future, we are relying on the assumption that home values will generally increase in proportion to incomes. Table 1.3 outlines the average household incomes and monthly affordable shelter costs for median earning (fifth decile) middle aged (35- to 44-year-old) headed households.

2025 Gap Between Household Incomes and Estimated Monthly Shelter Costs			
Electoral Area	Median Household Income for 35-44 year olds	Affordable Monthly Shelter Budget for 35-44 year olds in 5th Income Decile	Estimated Monthly Shelter Cost Detached Unit (BC Assessment)
A	\$142,929	\$3,573	\$5,170
B	\$158,726	\$3,968	\$4,722
C	\$145,153	\$3,629	\$4,575
D	\$149,434	\$3,736	\$4,736
E	\$137,234	\$3,431	\$2,650
F	\$106,180	\$2,654	\$5,435
G	\$123,112	\$3,078	\$5,270
H	\$136,912	\$3,423	\$4,894
I	\$105,464	\$2,637	\$5,834

Table 1.3 2025 electoral area affordability gap for detached units.

Table 1.4 illustrates affordability considerations, which are defined as the affordability gap and the resulting relative shift from detached demand to attached housing forms to make housing options available to middle income households.

25-year Unit Demand (2050) – With Current (2025) Affordability Considerations						
Electoral Area	Before Affordability Considerations		Affordability Decile Gap (%)	# Units Shifted for Affordability Considerations	After Affordability Considerations	
	Attached Units	Detached Units			Attached Units	Detached Units
A	213	904	20%	181	394	724
B	193	1,710	10%	171	364	1,539
C	104	1,014	20%	203	307	812
D	140	718	20%	144	284	575
E	56	899	0%	0	56	899
F	28	465	60%	279	307	186
G	26	617	40%	247	221	300
H	53	602	30%	181	234	421
I	39	355	60%	213	252	142

Table 1.4 Electoral area 25-year projected housing need with current (2025) affordability considerations, 2025-2050.

Notes:

- Electoral area G has a total of 69 units removed from the HNR's total projected need to account for the units assigned to Thetis Island, Valdes Island and other Gulf Islands territory under the jurisdiction of Islands Trust.
- While incomes, monthly affordable shelter costs and assessed dwelling values are based on historic data and are not adjusted for inflation, the use of these data to shift demand from less affordable to more affordable dwelling typologies is defensible, as it assumes local incomes and dwelling costs will increase more or less in tandem.
- While other age groups have higher incomes and/or are more likely to have larger down payments available (i.e. households headed by individuals 65+), 35- to 44-year- old headed households are used as a benchmark for the shelter cost targets of future dwellings, as this is a typical first-time home buyer age. For a healthy community, suitable dwellings should be affordable to the average first time home buyer.
- Each income decile was assumed to represent 10% of households in an electoral area. Therefore, an affordability shift of 20% from detached to attached represents a community where the median assessed value for a home was affordable to the seventh decile when translated to a monthly median shelter cost.

1.6 Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas

Growth containment boundaries identify lands where growth will be focused and where the majority of public investment for infrastructure and services will be directed.

Schedule G – Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas is a refinement and reassessment of the previous growth containment boundaries identified in Bylaw 4270, the previous official community plan. Technical expertise and community engagement supported the development of the new growth containment boundaries and projected growth areas. The growth containment boundaries and growth areas are mapped by

- illustrating the line that separates areas of growth from rural areas
- highlighting areas within the boundary as areas of growth

More detail on the methodology used to develop the growth containment boundaries and the projected growth that may occur within them is located in Appendix III Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas Methodology.

The following table projects the total new households within each electoral area, both inside and outside the growth containment boundaries, through to 2050.

25-year Projected New Households (2025-2050)				
Electoral Area	Total Units	% Units within GCB	# Units/Households within GCB	# Units/Households outside GCB
A	1,121	85%	958	163
B	1,903	82%	1,556	347
C	1,121	93%	1,047	74
D	870	96%	832	38
E	956	32%	302	654
F	495	63%	310	185
G	644	98%	631	13
H	655	55%	358	297
I	395	99%	392	3
Total	8,160	80%	6,516	1,644

Table 1.5 25-year electoral area unit projections within and outside the growth containment boundaries, 2025–2050.


Land use and capacity modelling forecasts suggest that, over time and on average, approximately 80% of growth can be accommodated within the growth containment boundaries. As such, the remainder (approximately 20%) of new growth is anticipated to occur outside growth containment boundaries, though this will vary significantly by electoral area. Three electoral areas (E, F and H) fall below the 80% average. This reflects their comparatively more pronounced rural character, where larger rural residential, agricultural and forestry lots make up a significant proportion of the land base.

It should also be noted that there is significant uncertainty regarding the distribution of growth inside and outside the growth containment boundaries as depicted above because total growth has been averaged annually, which does not account for major developments completed during singular years.

The growth containment boundaries are meant to achieve several objectives:

The following criteria is intended to assist the Board when considering development applications:

GCBO.1 Focus most new growth (~80%) within the growth containment boundaries, while keeping growth outside these areas limited (~20%).

GCBO.2  Link servicing corridors with population growth, where investments in water and sewer infrastructure can be supported by future growth.

GCBO.3 Focus growth in strategic locations near village centres, jobs, public transit and other amenities.

GCBO.4 Formalize existing development patterns where growth and subdivision have already occurred outside the former growth containment boundary.

GCBO.5 Ensure densities outside the growth containment boundary are reflective of rural land use patterns (below one UPH) and densities inside the growth containment boundary are reflective of suburban and urban land use patterns (above one UPH).

GCBO.6 Prevent growth in wildfire interface areas and in areas that are outside of the CVRD's fire emergency response capacity.

GCBO.7 The CVRD does not support further expansion of the growth containment boundary, except where the results of studies in special study areas support the expansion of the growth containment boundary with clear rationale and feasibility for future comprehensive development and/or infrastructure servicing needs.

GCBO.8 Growth is focused within the growth containment boundary, existing centres and residential neighbourhoods, primarily in areas that have community water and sewer systems, with some greenfield sites available for future development.

GCBO.9 Growth is discouraged in floodplain (Schedule O) or hazard areas (Schedule C – DPA 5, 6 and 7) and on agricultural lands.

This symbol marks a policy that is linked to the Performance Metrics in Appendix II.



1.7 Residential Capacity and Housing Need

Total residential capacity compared to housing needs		
Electoral Area	Residential Land Use Capacity	Projected Housing Needs
A	8,615	1,121
B	5,817	1,903
C	3,342	1,121
D	3,422	870
E	2,152	956
F	3,848	495
G	575	644
H	930	655
I	3,454	395
Total	32,155	8,160

Table 1.6 Total residential capacity compared to housing needs by electoral area.

Calculating the capacity within an OCP's land use designations can be done in many different ways. In this case, capacity is calculated using the net additional available land that excludes physical constraints (e.g. environmentally sensitive areas, steep slopes, floodplains, water areas, protected areas) but not infrastructure constraints (e.g. water and/or sewer infrastructure availability). The calculation also assumes the following:

- All residential designations use the maximum density allowed in this OCP
- Village Commercial parcels assume 80 units per hectare
- Agriculture assumes a 2-unit capacity per parcel
- Forestry & Resources assumes an average of 1.75-unit capacity per parcel
- General Commercial, Tourist Commercial and Institutional assume a 1 unit capacity per parcel

While the table shows a substantial housing capacity (roughly four times the number of units identified in the latest Housing Needs Report) various constraints will limit its full realization. Water and sewer constraints, private landowner interests and broader economic factors all pose significant barriers to development. For this reason, the OCP must allow for flexibility and designate for more housing units than the housing need report projects.

PART TWO

Land Use Designations & The Transect

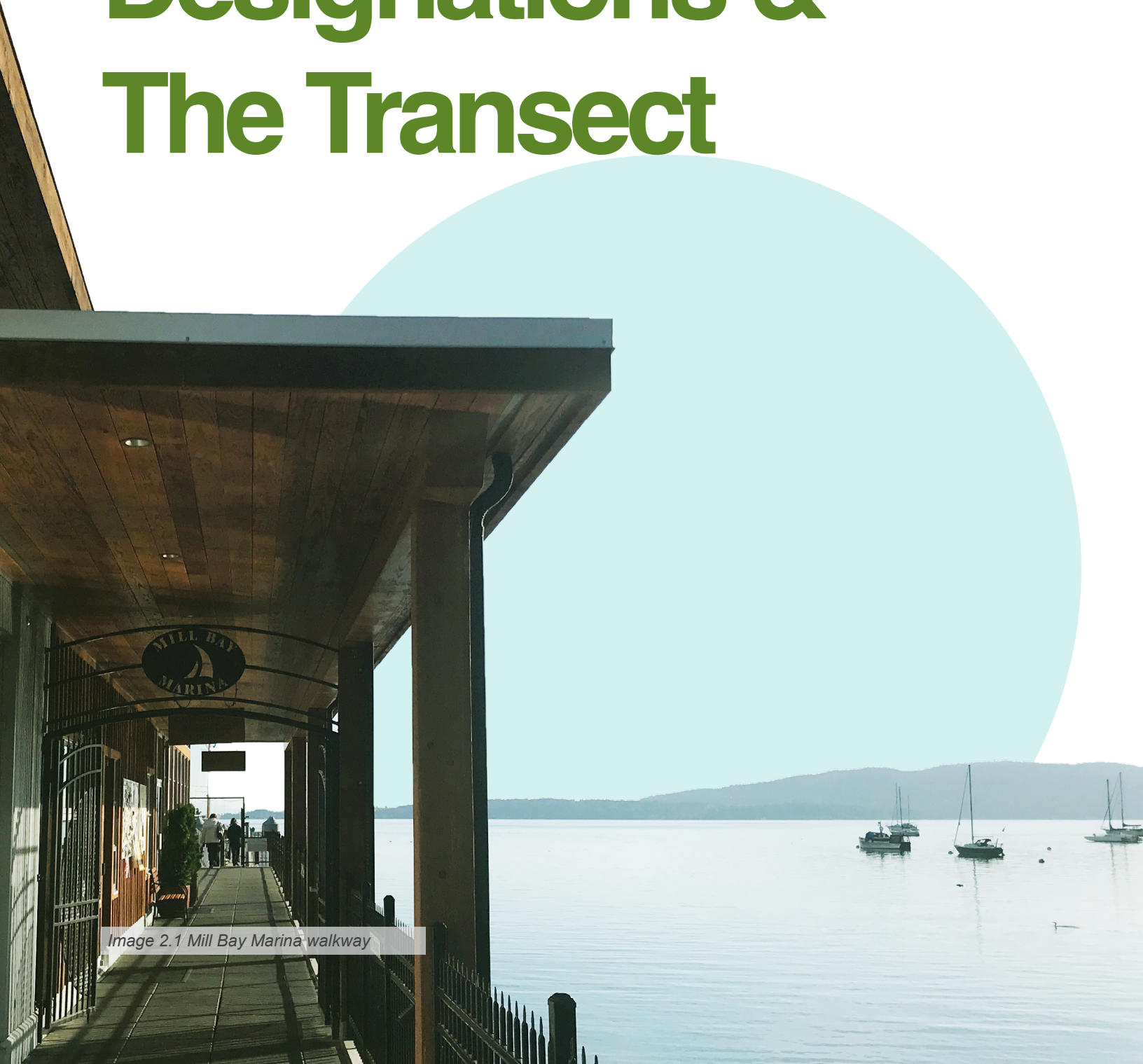


Image 2.1 Mill Bay Marina walkway

2.1 Land Use Designations & the Relationship with the Transect

The OCP presents 21 land use designations. A transect communicates the relationship between the 21 designations and seven landscape types.

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, which have evolved over time to create a range of different settlement patterns. Understanding the natural setting and context within which each community exists helps to define uniqueness and “sense of place.” Within and across seven distinct landscape types, the “transect” illustrates a range of development intensity (from natural and rural to village and urban) to reflect and contextualize the different landform types and settlement patterns found throughout our vast region. See Figure 2.1 A Guiding Framework | The CVRD Transect.

The transect helps guide decisions about future growth that will result in development that is respectful of community values. This understanding further supports the development of land use designations and policies that are sensitive to the nuances of specific places and local communities. Twenty-one land use designations are situated in the transect, which has seven landscape types. The relationship between the land use designations and landscape types is illustrated in Figure 2.2 Land Use Designations and the Transect.

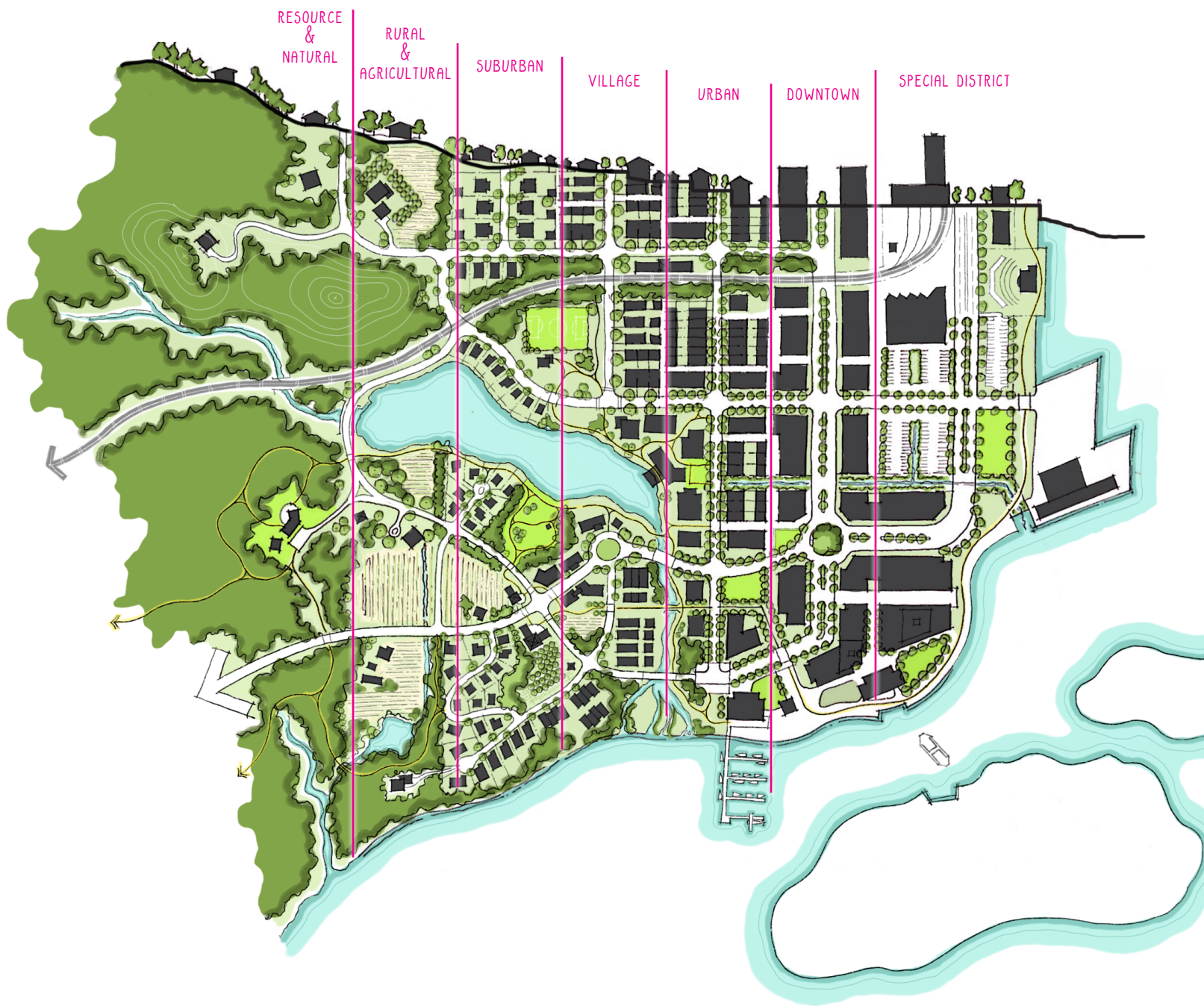


Figure 2.1 A Guiding Framework | The CVRD Transect

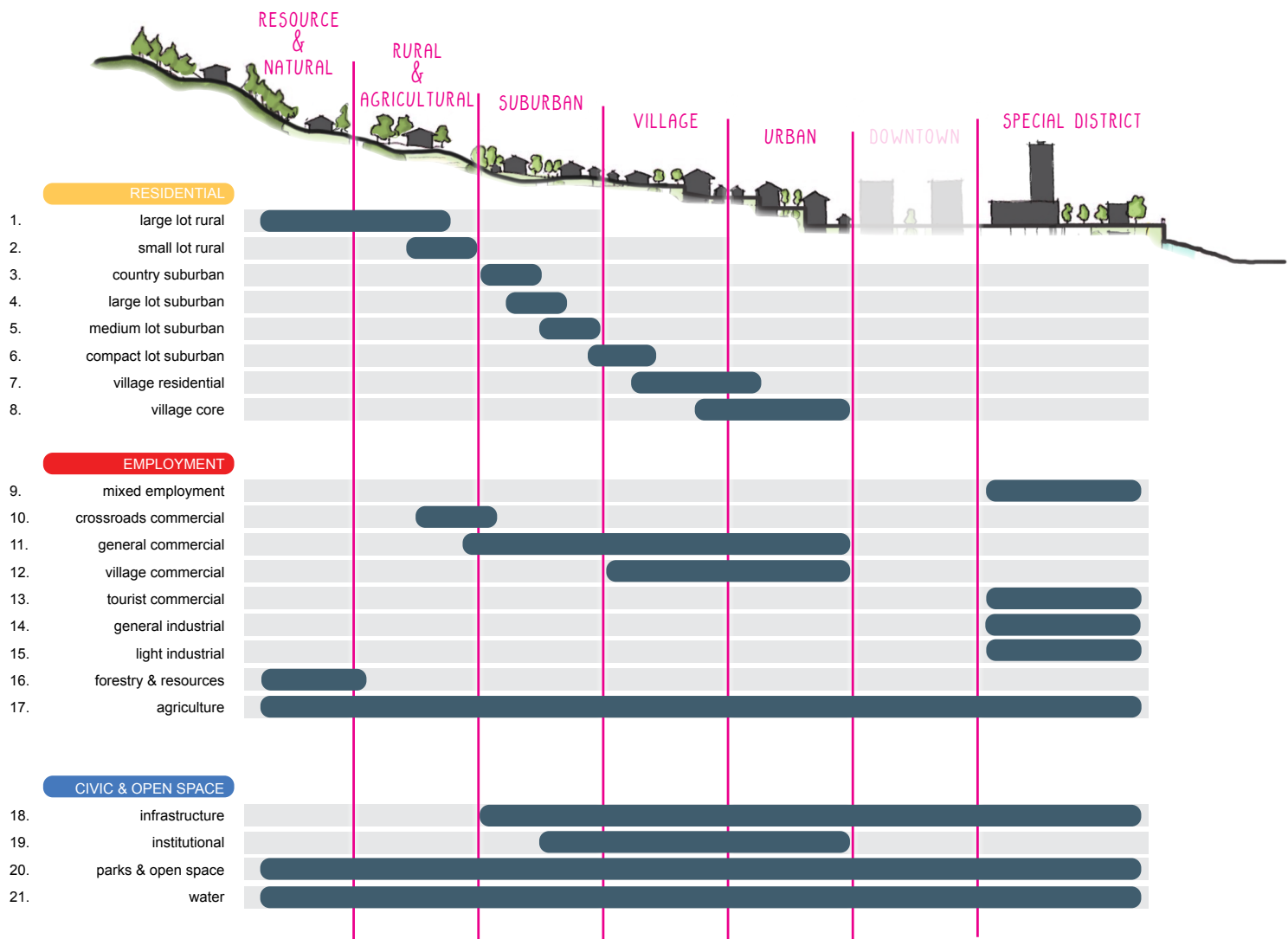


Figure 2.2 Land use designations and the transect

2.2 Transect Landscape Types

The transect has seven distinct landscape types, which are as follows.

Resource & Natural

Resource and Natural landscapes are characterized by ecologically- and resource-rich woodlands, wetlands, aquatic environments, riparian areas and old growth forests. Balancing the important forestry sector while protecting critical wildlife and plant habitat is key to the region's environmental and economic sustainability.

These areas have very few inhabitants and do not have significant servicing to support future growth. Often, steep slopes and other natural hazards (e.g. flood risk, wildfire) also prevent development from taking place in these areas.

Rural & Agricultural

Rural and Agricultural landscapes are characterized by diverse landforms and fertile soils. Much of the lower lying areas of the region are farms ideal for productive agricultural uses. These are lands in large part protected by the Agricultural Land Reserve and characterized by large-scale agricultural enterprises or small-scale farms. The long-term viability of these lands is important to the region's food security and economic vitality.

Apart from farmland and wooded residential lots, human activity in this part of the transect is somewhat limited to the occasional rural hamlet, which may include a community hall, service station or small market. Tourism is growing in these areas as vineyards and value-added agricultural uses (e.g. farm tours) become more popular.

Suburban

Suburban landscapes are characterized by low-density residential subdivision, often developed in the shape of detached housing. This type of development is often the interface between a settlement and rural and agricultural landscapes but can occasionally appear isolated and buffered from a village core.

This is the most common type of residential development in the region. Pressure for more suburban development is increasing as residents in less affordable housing markets are looking to the Cowichan Valley. This development pattern also includes secondary and/or seasonal housing that can be found on lakeshores and seafronts throughout the region.

Village

Village landscapes are characterized by village settlements, which include a small mix of uses—primarily commercial and residential. These are the beating hearts of the Cowichan Valley, where local shops and businesses attract residents and tourists alike. They are generally the focus of human activity with enhanced walkability and connections to the regional transit service.

Urban

Urban landscapes are characterized by a high concentration of uses, including multi-unit residential, commercial, institutional and industrial uses that exist within a highly connected environment with multiple transportation options. Apart from the incorporated municipalities, very few communities in the CVRD reach an urban pattern of development as illustrated in the transect.

Larger institutional uses, such as medical services, schools and community/recreation centres, along with major employers and commercial destinations help create a more complete community where daily needs are never too far from home.

Downtown

Downtowns represent the highest concentration of buildings, people and jobs within an urban context. While this part of the transect doesn't exist in the CVRD—except within its incorporated municipalities—it is included here for context and completeness.

Special District

Special District is characterized by major, single-use destinations or attractions like fairgrounds, mills, ports or touristic resorts that don't quite fit within the traditional patterns of development.

These areas require special consideration and attention as they commonly break from typical land use patterns, can be quite disruptive to their surroundings and generate significant traffic (e.g. Laketown Ranch).

2.3 Land Use Designations

A land use designation is a classification assigned to a property that indicates how the land can be used or developed. Land use designations are a tool that helps guide development, protect certain land types, and maintain an organized and sustainable growth pattern throughout the region.

The land use designations in the OCP include density thresholds that align with growth containment boundaries, local servicing capacities and strategic infrastructure projects. The intent is to provide a standardized approach to land use, infrastructure and transportation infrastructure (asset) management across the region. They generally follow parcel boundaries and, though not shown on the maps, land use designations extend to the centerline of the road right of way. Where land use designations split parcels, the boundary will be considered approximate. The Agricultural Land Reserve boundary is not always consistent with parcel boundaries.

Land use designations are mapped in Schedule L – Land Use Designations. Schedule L also includes the local area plan maps and the special study area maps.

Density Calculations

The following policies apply when interpreting the UPH and floor area ratios (FAR) for the land use designations in this section.

Minimum and maximum densities

The minimum and maximum densities in the land use designations are to be interpreted as strong recommendations in the assessment of development applications and their alignment with the vision and goals of this OCP.

Lands outside the growth containment boundary

Density for development outside the growth containment boundary is determined based on gross land area.

Lands within the growth containment boundary

Density for development within the growth containment boundary is determined based on net land area.

The following land is removed to determine net land area:

- Streams and water bodies (centre line of stream or water body to top-of-bank or high-water mark)
- Utility rights-of-way (e.g. power lines)

The following land is included in the net land area:

- Public road dedications
- Park land dedications.

Interpretation

Land use designations corresponding to shorelines are to be interpreted as following the natural boundary of the water body as defined in the Land Act. “Natural boundary” means the visible high water mark of any lake, river, stream or other body of water where the presence and action of the water are so common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to mark on the soil of the bed of the body of water a character distinct from that of its banks, in vegetation, as well as in the nature of the soil itself.

Residential Land Use Designations



Image 2.2 Large lot rural example

Large Lot Rural

PURPOSE: Preserve natural and rural settings with large lots that are suitable for small scale agricultural uses (e.g. hobby farms) and where residential uses cause little disturbance to the surrounding environment. Properties in this designation do not typically have access to community water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings

DENSITY: Maximum 0.25 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Image 2.3 Small lot rural example

Small Lot Rural

PURPOSE: Protect rural settings with housing on lot sizes that are typically considered acreages and are suitable for small scale agricultural and educational uses (e.g. hobby farms). Residential uses, occasionally in the form of co-ops, 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 community water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings

DENSITY: Maximum 1 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Image 2.4 Country suburban example

Country Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable detached dwellings with country character, where homes face and front a street. Small scale agricultural uses (e.g. hobby farms) are also permitted in these areas. Properties in this designation do not always have access to community water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings

DENSITY: Maximum 2.5 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Large Lot Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable detached dwellings with suburban character, where homes face and front a street and provide opportunities for clustering units into pocket neighbourhoods. Properties in this designation may not always have access to community water or sewer systems but otherwise typically have access to private and shared water and septic services.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings

DENSITY: Maximum 5 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Medium Lot Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable detached dwellings with suburban character and provide opportunities for clustering units into pocket neighbourhoods. Properties in this designation typically have access to community water or sewer systems. Transportation choices are more varied with some bus routes. Avoid subdivision or redevelopment of mobile home parks and protect them as a key part of the affordable housing spectrum. Mobile home parks are generally designated Medium Lot Suburban for density purposes but are not intended for typical suburban detached housing.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings

DENSITY: Maximum 15 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Compact Lot Suburban

PURPOSE: Enable detached dwellings with some ground-oriented duplexes and provide opportunities for clustering units into pocket neighbourhoods. Properties in this designation have access to community water or sewer systems. Transportation choices are more varied with greater access to bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings, Duplexes and Multi-unit Dwellings

DENSITY: Maximum 30 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Village Residential

PURPOSE: Enable high-density detached dwelling forms and townhomes near village and urban centres. Homes face and front a street with small lot configurations and ground-oriented multi-unit dwellings, such as townhomes. Ground floor commercial uses may be allowed. Properties in this designation have access to community water or sewer systems. Transportation choices are reasonable with access to bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Detached Dwellings, Multi-unit Dwellings, such as Townhomes

DENSITY: Between 25 and 50 UPH (plus permitted suites)



Village Core

PURPOSE: Enable multi-unit housing to support village and urban centres and residential forms, such as townhomes and low-rise apartment buildings. Ground floor commercial uses in the form of live-work and mixed-use buildings may be allowed through implementing a zoning bylaw. Properties in this designation have access to community water or sewer systems. Transportation choices are the greatest with access to bus routes.

BUILDING TYPE: Multi-unit dwellings, such as townhomes, stacked townhomes and 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, including non-market housing).

DENSITY: Between 40 and 100 UPH (plus permitted suites)

Employment Land Use Designations



Image 2.10 Mixed employment example

Mixed Employment

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

BUILDING TYPE: Variable

DENSITY: Between 0.25 and 1.0 FAR



Image 2.11 Crossroads commercial example

Crossroads Commercial

PURPOSE: Preserve rural settings and existing services to agricultural and resource-based areas outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve. 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 community water or sewer systems.

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

DENSITY: Variable



Image 2.12 General commercial example

General Commercial

PURPOSE: Enable medium and large format commercial malls with off-street surface parking serving both local and regional areas. Encourage residential uses above the primary ground floor commercial uses. Most properties in this designation have direct access to or access within 300 metres of community water or sewer systems.

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

DENSITY: Up to 1.0 FAR



Image 2.13 Village commercial example

Village Commercial

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

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

DENSITY: Between 0.5 and 1.5 FAR

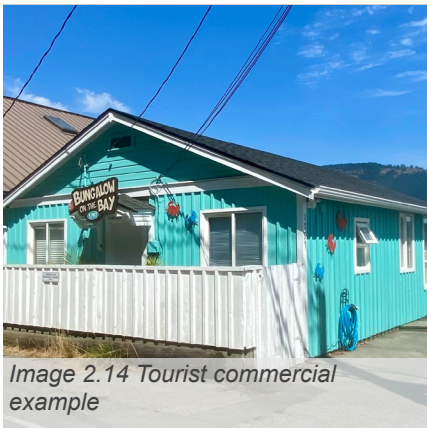


Image 2.14 Tourist commercial example

Tourist Commercial

PURPOSE: Accommodate a variety of tourist and recreational commercial uses that span across natural and rural areas, and village and urban centres. Limited accessory residential uses are allowed. 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



Image 2.15 General industrial example

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, distribution of materials and tourism-related visibility. Properties in this designation have access to community water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Variable

DENSITY: Variable



Light Industrial

PURPOSE: Enable industrial or mixed-use buildings (multi-unit residential and industrial uses) focused on artisan studios, manufacturing, small-scale food processing, 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 community water or sewer systems.

BUILDING TYPE: Variable

DENSITY: Between 0.5 and 1.5 FAR



Forestry & Resources

PURPOSE: Enable the extraction of natural resources, such as forestry, gravel and mines, with consideration for ecological impacts on biodiversity, soil health and watersheds. These uses are generally located in isolated locations, far from villages and urban centres.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: One primary dwelling (plus permitted suites depending on parcel size per zoning bylaw)



Agriculture

PURPOSE: Accommodate active agricultural activity on both Agricultural Land Reserve and non-Agricultural Land Reserve lands. For Agricultural Land Reserve lands, recognize the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve regulations that permit a variety of farming and non-farming activities, including basic production of agricultural products, value-added production activities and agri-tourism. In limited circumstances, on non-Agricultural Land Reserve lands, consider other uses that support and enhance agricultural value and innovation. Support the agricultural sector by accommodating supplemental employment opportunities, such as home-based businesses, to maintain the viability of farm businesses.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: One residence (maximum 500 square metres [m²]) and one additional residence (maximum 90 m² on parcels 40 hectares [ha] or less; maximum 186 m² on parcels over 40 ha)

Civic & Open Space Land Use Designations



Image 2.19 Infrastructure example

Infrastructure

PURPOSE: Maintain existing and future infrastructure, such as pumping stations and water treatment facilities, across the region to ensure effective distribution of public utilities. There may be instances where this designation is within the Agricultural Land Reserve and therefore agriculture is a permitted use.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a



Image 2.20 Institutional example

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), other community-focused services and lands near employment centres. Accessory residential uses may be considered on institutional lands if providing workforce housing and/or affordable below-market housing.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a



Image 2.21 Parks & open space example

Parks & Open Space

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

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a



Image 2.22 Water example

Water

PURPOSE: Protect water bodies for their ecological services and their significant value as sensitive wildlife habitat; their continued use as safe and adequate year-round potable water supply; and for tourism, recreation and sustainable commerce. Marine areas (e.g. estuaries, coastal waters) are not within the CVRD's jurisdiction but will be subject to additional planning work as part of the creation of a future Marine OCP. On the Cowichan Bay waterfront, a unique condition allows for residential uses in the water designation as part of the W-8 zone. There may be instances where this designation is within the Agricultural Land Reserve and therefore agriculture is a permitted use.

BUILDING TYPE: n/a

DENSITY: n/a

Special Study Areas

The purpose of a special study area is to indicate that regardless of an underlying land use designation there may be special considerations that would alter the usual consequences of the underlying designation. For example, there may be specific zoning updates, infrastructure requirements or environmental considerations for some lands that are key to the successful implementation of this OCP.

Applicants will be responsible to pay for the required studies at the request of the CVRD, at a phase in the development process as determined by the CVRD.

Special study areas are mapped in Schedule L – Land Use Designation Maps.



Image 2.23 Bike on a wooden bridge

Special Study Area – Infrastructure & Servicing

PURPOSE: Identify areas where additional study is needed to provide sustainable infrastructure and servicing in locations outside of growth containment boundaries for reasons including health, environmental protection and cooperation. Other special study areas can be developed for other areas.

Electoral Area A – Bamberton

South of Mill Bay village, the Malahat Nation owns the Bamberton lands, which are located adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway, south of the lands known as Ocean Terrace. These lands are key to the economic development and prosperity of the Malahat People. Development in this area requires collaboration between various adjacent landowners to coordinate infrastructure servicing, access points from the Malahat Highway and the protection from hazardous slopes, maintaining ecosystem integrity and scenic views.

The Malahat Nation has identified the need for more economic opportunities and housing for its members in general and particularly in the Bamberton Special Study Area. The intent is to convene the various landowners and the Malahat Nation in and adjacent to those areas to identify common goals and ensure development plans are aligned and adapted to servicing capacity.

The OCP holds space for the Bamberton Special Study Area to align land use on adjacent lands in collaboration with the Malahat Nation and complementary to Malahat Nation's Strategic Plan and vision for these important lands, which have the distinct potential to transform the economic and social outcomes of Malahat Nation and Electoral Area A – Mill Bay/Malahat residents.

Electoral Area B – South Shawnigan Lake

Nearly the entire waterfront of Shawnigan Lake has been developed with residences, many of which are serviced by private septic systems. Some septic systems are older and require maintenance or upgrading and this can impact the lake's pollution levels. To keep Shawnigan Lake healthy, a comprehensive lake study that includes infrastructure and servicing is needed to determine how best to prevent further pollution from entering this important water body. Options may include exploring financial incentives to homeowners for septic system upgrades or investing in a sewer system that would connect properties around Shawnigan Lake.

Electoral Area H – Woodley Range

A large rural lot subdivision exists just north of the Woodley Range Ecological Reserve and south of the Chuckwagon neighbourhood. It is connected by Prospect Drive and Aho Road, and homes in this area have required potable water to be trucked in because of a lack of capacity in the wells servicing the properties. A study is required to determine the best course of action for servicing these homes.

■ Special Study Area – Comprehensive Development

PURPOSE: Parcels that require a more complex mix of uses and planning direction than individual land use designations may be able to provide. These lands generally require a comprehensive development plan showing the overall layout of the ultimate buildout of the property, and may include information related to:

- land use and zoning strategy
- infrastructure and servicing
- siting of buildings
- mobility, connections and road network
- environmental protection
- parks, open spaces and public spaces

Special studies of this type may be undertaken as part of the development application process and studies will be produced at the developer's expense.

Electoral Area A – Stonebridge Lands

Located near the core of Mill Bay on the western side of the Trans-Canada Highway, the Stonebridge Lands represent a significant comprehensive development opportunity to deliver diverse housing types and commercial amenities in a central, transit-accessible area. This special study area alters the underlying Village Core designation to provide additional flexibility in the form of standalone commercial development and detached and duplex dwellings. It also requires development to cluster housing units while protecting adjacent natural and riparian areas and providing enhanced park amenities.

Residential forms may include a mix of detached and duplex dwellings, townhomes and low-rise apartment buildings. Commercial and mixed uses shall generally be clustered at the periphery of the site at Barry Road, Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road and The Trans-Canada Highway. Density is variable up to a maximum of 1,000 dwelling units (including seniors' housing facilities but not including commercial floor area).

Electoral Area A – Central Mill Bay

Parcels along Partridge Road and extending north and west across the Trans-Canada Highway toward Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road have been identified for potential development given their central location and proximity to Brentwood College School. These areas could accommodate much-needed affordable housing for the region; however, water capacity constraints and private ownership of servicing make building multi-unit residential buildings a major challenge. A better understanding of these constraints, along with the identification of and investment in new potable water sources, is needed to build such key community-serving developments.

Electoral Area A – Benchlands

The Benchlands Special Study Area, located southwest of the Mill Bay village, represents a significant amount of undeveloped land that may help secure a sustainable and connected water supply for Mill Bay, alternative transportation links, employment lands and tourism, and add a variety of housing options to address the region's pressing housing needs.

A development application for these lands should include a variety of background studies at the developer's expense, including study of the local water supply—providing options for the long-term improvement of capacity and connection of the water system and related liquid waste management solutions—and an overall development feasibility analysis.

The Benchlands provides a key opportunity for new trails and park space, elements strongly noted in community engagement, as well as greater vehicular and active transportation corridors along a private forestry road (historically known as the “Haul Road”). This corridor, fully developed and connected through adjacent private properties, may improve connectivity throughout the South Cowichan. (Note, the private forestry road does not connect through to other roads at this time. A plan must be in place for this redevelopment to occur.) Haul Road needs to be dedicated as a road and constructed to Ministry of Transportation and Transit standards before it is accepted.

The Malahat Nation has several key land holdings south of Mill Bay village. They have identified an interest in using these lands for future development. The challenge of water supply is a concern here, too, and all parties have an opportunity to seek mutually beneficial solutions that include a more connected and sustainable water supply.

Electoral Area E – Langtry Road

The Duncan Airport and adjacent gravel pit operation are compelling lands for potential future development. Part of the airport lands are serviced by a private water system and the location, in close proximity to Eagle Heights and Koksilah Village, represents an opportunity for a form of comprehensive development that may include residential and/or employment lands. Should the current uses reach their end of life and property owners decide to explore development options, key considerations include the remediation of the lands, working in collaboration with Cowichan Tribes whose reserve lands are immediately to the northwest, the protection of the tree canopy that currently surrounds much of the airport and gravel pit, infrastructure servicing and buffers with nearby agricultural lands. Through the Joint Utilities Board (JUB), there is sanitary servicing and growth beyond 2050 may depend on the availability and purchase of additional JUB units. There are two parcels within this special study area: one is within a New Parks & Open Space Special Study Area and the other is within a Comprehensive Development Special Study Area.

Electoral Area I – Youbou Lands

Over the years, lands immediately west of the Youbou village site along Youbou Road and North Shore Road have been subject to development interest. It is a complex site with significant challenges related to riparian areas, water supply, topographic features, wildfire interface and more. The current phased development agreement should be reviewed in connection with any development proposal in this area.

■ Special Study Area – Parks & Open Spaces

PURPOSE: Indicate the requirements to protect and enhance a key natural asset and/or for a land dedication or rezoning that would provide a new public park or open space in line with local community needs.

Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Village

In accordance with the Shawnigan Village charrette land use concept, it is anticipated that the redevelopment of a parcel along Shawnigan Lake Road would provide a new public park. More details will be provided through a local area plan for Shawnigan Village.

Electoral Area E – Koksilah Road

Eagle Heights does not have a significantly sized park and could benefit from an ecological reserve park. In accordance with the 2018 Electoral Area E Parks & Trails Master Plan, it is recommended that a new ecological reserve park be acquired in the Eagle Heights/Koksilah area near the intersection of Koksilah Road and Phillips Road, as shown in Schedule L.

Electoral Area E – Langtry Road

The Duncan Airport and adjacent gravel pit operation are compelling lands for potential future development. Part of the airport lands are serviced by a private water system and the location, in close proximity to Eagle Heights and Koksilah Village, represents an opportunity for a form of comprehensive development that may include residential and/or employment lands. Should the current uses reach their end of life and property owners decide to explore development options, key considerations include the remediation of the lands, working in collaboration with Cowichan Tribes whose reserve lands are immediately to the northwest, the protection of the tree canopy that currently surrounds much of the airport and gravel pit, infrastructure servicing and buffers with nearby agricultural lands. There are two parcels within this special study area: one is within a New Parks & Open Space Special Study Area and the other is within a Comprehensive Development Special Study Area.

Electoral Area E – Wake Lake

The Wake Lake Nature Reserve provides critical habitat for two amphibians listed by Canada's *Species at Risk Act* as species of special concern: the Western toad and the Red-legged frog. To further protect this sensitive habitat and the species within it, certain recommendations are applied when development applications are submitted in the area, some of which may require consultation with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit:

- Prioritizing the location and long-term protection of hibernacula of all female Western toads.
- Buffering toad hibernation sites to protect the hibernation structure and other important surrounding habitat features.
- Avoiding construction of new roads, especially where migration corridors exist and in and around breeding sites (e.g. within 1 km of Wake Lake or other identified breeding sites).
- Seasonal road closures where possible (e.g. Riverbottom Road during the summer toadlet migration).
- Identifying potential migration corridors that intersect with existing roads and installing suitable underpasses and directive fencing at those locations.
- Educating local homeowners and drivers about toad movement patterns and road issues (e.g. the use of signs near migration corridors, discouraging night driving during migration periods).

Additionally, opportunities to expand the Wake Lake Nature Reserve and/or connect it through ecological corridors to other nearby habitats should be encouraged.

Electoral Areas B, C, D & E – Xwulqw’selu Sta’lo’ (Koksilah) Watershed

The Xwulqw’selu Sta’lo’ (Koksilah River) watershed is located on the Traditional Territories of the Cowichan Tribes and Malahat Nation. It holds cultural and spiritual significance for the Quw’utsun Mustimuhw (Cowichan People) and is central to their origin stories. The watershed is home to diverse ecosystems, including rare wetlands, mature Coastal Western Hemlock forests, and important aquatic systems supporting culturally and economically significant species, such as chinook, coho, chum, steelhead and resident trout. The watershed also hosts a significant agricultural community, rural tourism, forestry lands, parks and year-long recreational opportunities.

The watershed is a critical water source for several communities including Cowichan Station and Glenora. Several neighbouring communities also rely on water from aquifers that partially underline the Koksilah watershed. Despite its importance, the watershed is more vulnerable to droughts and floods compared to other watersheds, due to limited natural surface area storage and increasing stress from human activity. The CVRD has an important role to play in protecting the Xwulqw’selu Sta’lo’ watershed for future generations. The goal is to protect lands and waters from the impacts of new development and restore streamside areas to enhance watershed ecosystems and habitat.

The special study area objectives are consistent with the Xwulqw’selu Watershed Planning Agreement (S-xats-thut tst – We Agree) vision to improve water quality, protect against contamination of the aquifer, address climate change impacts, restore ecological balance and return to healthy fish populations, increased summer water levels and decreased water flows in winter.



Image 2.24 Chocolate Lilies

2.4 Local Area Plans

Local area plans build upon the vision, objectives and policies in Schedule A of the OCP. These plans help shape growth in a way that contributes to more place-specific, well-designed and liveable complete communities.

The local area plans are in development at the time of adoption of this OCP. Once they are completed, the OCP is intended to be amended to include them in Schedule B. Each local area plan has a defined boundary, and areas included in the boundary are defined as local plan areas. Maps illustrating the local plan areas can be found in Schedule L.

The local area plans will

- provide greater detail on growth management for communities that are expected to experience change.
- provide local specific policies that guide growth in village and community hearts so that the qualities of these areas that people love and cherish are preserved and enhanced into the future.
- provide area-specific objectives and policies to address daily needs, infrastructure, transportation and housing.
- preserve and enhance the qualities that people love and cherish about their community.
- be guided by the transect, which provides the thematic framework.



Image 2.25 Home with a stone chimney

The local area plans are listed below by electoral area with names that may or may not match the name of the electoral area:

Electoral Area	Local Area Plan
A – Mill Bay/Malahat	Mill Bay
B – Shawnigan Lake	Shawnigan Lake
C – Cobble Hill	Cobble Hill
D – Cowichan Bay	Cowichan Bay
D – Cowichan Bay E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora	Eagle Heights/Koksilah Village
F – Honeymoon Bay/Mesachie Lake/Paldi	Honeymoon Bay/Mesachie Lake/Paldi
G – Saltair	Saltair
H – North Oyster/Diamond	Diamond
I – Youbou/Meade Creek	Youbou/Meade Creek

The local area plans for Mill Bay and Shawnigan Lake have been developed with Malahat Nation, while the local area plans for Honeymoon Bay/Mesachie Lake/Paldi and Youbou/ Meade Creek have been developed with Ts’uubaa-asatx. Stz’uminus First Nation was involved in ground truthing Bush Creek, which travels through the Diamond local plan area and Stz’uminus reserve lands.

2.5 Development Approval Information

The entire CVRD is designated as a development approval information area. That means 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

- transportation
- local infrastructure
- stormwater management
- public facilities and services
- natural environment
- hazardous conditions
- economic and social development
- archaeological and cultural heritage resources
- climate action

See CVRD Bylaw No. 4545 – Development Approval Information Bylaw, 2024, which is a bylaw that establishes procedures for requiring development applicants to provide development approval information.

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 (e.g. ecological, environmental, climate impacts) 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, 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 services in the regional district. The regional district is served by paid, on-call and 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 Regional District's cost 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 management, water (surface water and groundwater), drainage, species and ecosystems at risk, biodiversity and cumulative impacts to ensure that there is no adverse effect on human health or the natural environment.

2.6 Temporary Use Designations

Land must be designated as a temporary use area 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 consideration of temporary uses is included in the zoning bylaw.

PART THREE

Policies



Image 3.1 Lilly Beach Park

Introduction

There are eight policy area goal chapters.

Seven of the eight policy chapters are organized according to a systems approach by first identifying and defining current conditions and challenges and then proposing a set of objectives and policies to address them. This structure includes:

- **Introduction** – introduces the policy goal with a general description and definition of each system, including components and boundaries.
- **Challenges** – identifies current challenges to those systems and highlights associated sources of those challenges.
- **Objectives** – explores objectives (i.e. high-level strategic direction) to best address identified challenges.
- **General Policies** – further examines a range of policies (and associated metrics, where identified) to effectively address implementation of the objectives as explored.
- **Policy by transect sub-area** – sets out additional policies by transect area.

The eighth and final chapter—Improve Governance and Implementation—addresses how the vision, objectives and policies of this document will be implemented. It introduces key intergovernmental relationships, establishes direction on greater collaboration, lists the instruments that should be created or updated to align with the OCP, and presents metrics to help monitor progress on achieving the OCP’s goals.



Image 3.2 Dock on Mayo Lake

POLICY CHAPTERS:

POLICY CHAPTER FORMAT:



Mitigate & Adapt to the Climate Crisis



Protect & Restore Natural Assets



Manage Infrastructure Responsibly



Strengthen Local Food & Agriculture



Make Distinct, Complete Communities



Enhance Regional Prosperity



Expand Mobility Options



Improve Governance & Implementation

Policy Chapter	
CONTEXT	Introduction
	Challenges
	Objectives
POLICIES	General Policy
	Policy by Transect Area



1 Mitigate & Adapt to the Climate Crisis



Image 3.3 One World drawing

Introduction

This policy chapter describes objectives and policies on climate change that align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan to promote climate action initiatives, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and protect our communities from the adverse impacts of climate change. We are committed to mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis to ensure that our region is ecologically safe for current and future generations of people who choose to live here.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change works with thousands of leading climate scientists whose consensus is that human activity is causing direct consequences to our environment and climate. It estimates global temperatures have now risen by about 1.0°C since pre-industrial times, but stabilizing the climate at 1.5°C is still possible. It would require broad-based, economy-wide transformations and would represent a much smaller risk to the environment and our communities than 2°C¹.

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, drier summers, more intense storms and several other significant changes, the CVRD can ensure its landscapes, buildings and residents will continue to adapt and thrive.

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. BC Transit is moving toward electric buses, fleet testing in Victoria to start, but these buses will not likely be available in Cowichan for several years. The CVRD is currently looking at transitioning to compressed natural gas as a lower emission bridging technology. See Schedule T for the Transportation and Major Roads maps.

The Local Government Act requires the CVRD to establish GHG emission reduction targets at the community level in the OCP and to identify mechanisms to achieve and undertake ongoing monitoring for course correction. The CVRD's GHG emission reduction targets can be found in Objective CCO.1.



Image 3.4 Low creek water

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023). *Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6): Summary for Policymakers*. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>

Challenges Born out of the Climate Crisis

The following are six key challenges for the electoral areas related to the climate crisis.

1. Impacts to air and 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 25°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 increase, specifically during fall, winter and spring seasons.

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 and lowland valleys 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, cutblock orientation, roadbuilding 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, as well as 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, landslides and wildfires

In the face of more frequent and extreme weather patterns, including the risk of extreme heat, flooding, landslides and wildfires, emergency preparedness will be crucial to maintaining healthy and safe communities and the agricultural sector. The impacts on riparian ecosystems will also be felt with streams drying up and/or flooding more regularly. Further, public health, air quality, heat stress and economic impacts will place the region's social fabric at risk. See Schedule E for Fire Protection maps.

6. Sea level rise

Sea levels are rising as a result of climate change, which is causing melting polar ice caps and the expansion of water at higher temperatures. Coastal communities in BC are anticipating a rise in sea levels of approximately one metre by 2100 and two metres by 2200. This threatens the integrity of the shoreline along with infrastructure and uses that are in proximity to the coast. This includes threats to sensitive ecosystems, marinas, bridges and industries that require access to the sea.

Relationship to Social Equity

While climate mitigation benefits everyone, there is a risk that its advantages may disproportionately favour the wealthy. When implementing policies that reduce GHGs and combat the climate crisis, maintaining affordability is key. For example, requiring more energy-efficient homes might mean higher housing costs. However, putting individual water metres in affordable housing units allows residents to track their water usage, allowing them to save money on their utility bill and consume less water, improving affordability.

Partnering with local Indigenous communities to learn and implement traditional forest management practices and other climate mitigation practices is another way of incorporating equity into climate action. Further, marginalized populations are often located in precarious places that may require climate mitigation measures. Understanding the connection between hazardous areas and lower income neighbourhoods is important to mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis.






Image 3.5 Solar panels

Objectives


Key objectives include reducing GHGs through more sustainable transportation modes, strengthening building energy efficiency, and diverting waste from landfills while adapting our natural and social environments to a changing climate.



MITIGATION

CCO.1    Reduce transportation, building and solid waste GHG emissions, according to the following minimum targets:



- Transportation: from 200 kilotons (kt) in 2007 to 120kt by 2030 and to 40kt by 2050
- Buildings: from 53kt in 2007 to 32kt by 2030 and to 10.6kt by 2050
- Solid waste: from 5.9kt in 2007 to 3.54kt by 2030 and to 1.18kt by 2050



CCO.2 Advocate to the province for building emission monitoring improvements.

CCO.3  Advocate to the Province and real estate sector that house energy efficiency metrics be disclosed at point of new home sale.

CCO.4   Advocate to the province and ICBC for mileage and weight-based vehicle insurance.

RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION

CCO.5   Consider the impacts of climate refugees in planning for communities as individuals and families seek more temperate areas, like the CVRD, from within Canada and internationally.

CCO.6   Advocate for the Province to discuss with privately managed forest land owners the long-term impacts of climate change on the region's natural resources and impacts on our communities, including increasing natural hazards.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITY

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



General Policy

MITIGATION

- CC.1** ***OA** Develop a Climate Mitigation Strategy for the electoral areas that provides a clear path to achieving GHG emission targets—as noted in Objective CCO.1—in collaboration with adjacent local governments and First Nations to provide education and incentive programs to decarbonize the existing built environment.
- CC.2** ***OA** Encourage retrofitting of older buildings and green construction of new buildings to achieve energy efficiency and reduce GHG emissions.
- CC.3** **O** Encourage electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in new developments.
- CC.4** Support reduced setbacks and/or zoning variances for green building features.
- CC.5** Where appropriate, transition away from woodstoves, which emit a number of pollutants including fine particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.
- CC.6** Create incentives for solar systems and energy storage (e.g. allowing solar and ventilation features within setbacks, excluding spaces occupied by heating and cooling apparatus from FAR calculations).
- CC.7** **O** 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.8** Acquire green spaces, including planting additional trees, that contribute to climate change mitigation.
- CC.9** Support alternative technologies in new development.
- CC.10** * 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.11** **OA** Support 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

RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION

- CC.12** Support species that are more resilient to climate change (i.e. native, drought-tolerant species, including those that provide nuts, berries and flowering plants, which support pollinators).
- CC.13**  Develop a coastal flooding mitigation strategy that supports 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.14** Conduct analysis of drought-related indicators to more fully understand climate impacts to soil, water supply and ecosystem health at the landscape level.
- CC.15**  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.16**  Strengthen emergency management capacity to respond to weather-related emergencies.
- CC.17**  Incorporate climate change projections and risk assessments into electoral and regional planning and service delivery.
- CC.18**  Consider natural hazards (e.g. erosion, flooding and sea-level rise) to protect development from hazardous conditions and maintain the functionality of green infrastructure (trees, fields, forests, swales and other landscaped areas) and grey infrastructure (treatment plants, pipe networks, roads and other built structures).
- CC.19** Develop hazardous land mapping as a component of a climate change adaptation strategy.
- CC.20** Encourage economic activities that are resilient and adaptive to climate change.
- CC.21** Encourage citizens and stakeholders to foster climate excellence in communities.
- CC.22**  Support new development to include green infrastructure solutions and climate change adaptation methods and technologies in the design, change or modification of existing infrastructure or new services.
- CC.23**  Promote and support water conservation measures with residents, business owners and industry (e.g. xeriscaping, water audits, grey water recycling).
- CC.24** Support ecosystem health through ecological management and restoration at the watershed scale.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



Climate Crisis Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

CC.25 Support the protection of old growth forests and mature trees that act as carbon sinks and help maintain watershed health.

CC.26 Encourage the expansion and protection of forested areas.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

CC.27 Support agricultural practices that mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as crop practices that increase soil carbon sequestration.

CC.28 Support agricultural practices that reduce impacts on aquifers and support healthy watersheds.

CC.29 Support emergency planning for the agricultural sector, such as the development of livestock evacuation plans and on-farm flooding preparedness plans.

SUBURBAN AREAS

CC.30 Support development that protects and enhances the tree canopy while incorporating more permeable surfaces to mitigate heat stress for pedestrians and reduce cooling costs in summer.

CC.31 Support compact subdivision and development patterns that cluster housing units and protect adjacent natural areas.

CC.32 Support subdivision and development patterns that enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity to nearby destinations, including transit stops.

CC.33 Enhance suburban residential areas with complementary uses that promote short travel distances for daily needs.

VILLAGE AREAS

CC.34 Support development that protects and enhances the tree canopy while incorporating more permeable surfaces to mitigate heat stress for pedestrians and reduce cooling costs in summer.

CC.35 Support development in village areas that helps build complete neighbourhoods with a mix of uses and where daily needs are within walking distance.

URBAN AREAS

CC.36 Support development that protects and enhances the tree canopy while incorporating more permeable surfaces to mitigate heat stress for pedestrians and reduce cooling costs in summer.

CC.37 Support high-density residential and mixed-use developments where daily needs are within walking distance.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

CC.38 Support compact development patterns that cluster parcels and protect adjacent natural areas.

CC.39 Support consideration of district heating systems where feasible.



Image 3.6 Home with solar panels and garden



Image 3.7 Long grass with home in the background

A photograph of a white PVC water pipe on the exterior of a building. The pipe runs vertically on the left, then horizontally across the middle, and finally turns downward on the right. The background is a light-colored wall. In the foreground, there are some green weeds and plants. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a blue background and white wavy lines representing water, surrounded by a yellow ring.

2

Manage Infrastructure Responsibly

Image 3.8 Water pipe on exterior of building

Introduction

This policy chapter addresses infrastructure related to water, stormwater, wastewater, solid waste and energy systems, along with emergency preparedness. The objectives and policies align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan to demonstrate strong fiscal stewardship and to manage current and future demand for water resources in ways that recognize and respect resource limits and the needs of our natural environment. We are committed to managing our infrastructure to ensure it is fully functional, resilient against disaster and ecologically sustainable.

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 district services.

At the time of writing, the CVRD operates and maintains capital infrastructure assets in the electoral areas including

- 21 water systems
- 16 sewer systems
- 8 drainage functions
- 18 streetlighting systems
- 3 recycling centres
- 1 transfer station
- dikes and flood early warning 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.

The CVRD Drinking Water and Watershed Protection program is intended to provide a better understanding of the water resources within the region. The information resulting from this program can help inform long-range planning, infrastructure and servicing needs, asset management and more.



SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The CVRD produces approximately 463 kg/person of solid waste annually (2021) that is sent to the landfill. There are no landfills in the CVRD at this time; therefore, the CVRD's solid waste is trucked off Island to a landfill located in Washington, United States. 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 250 kg/person in a move toward a zero-waste goal through increased recycling, composting 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. Demand will also increase because of a major shift to cooling loads and needs in summer that did not exist in the past. National and provincial commitments to reduce 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.



Image 3.10 Mill site on the water

Challenges to Local Systems

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

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 and Climate Change Strategy's regulations. This is compounded by climate risks, which are changing rapidly. Additional life cycle considerations are required for infrastructure in areas subject to flooding.

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 and 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. There are also waste system challenges with only two days worth of waste storage. Our energy system has vulnerabilities due to increased windstorms causing more power outages and our power source primarily coming from mainland BC.

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 development approval process.

Effective stormwater management in the electoral areas can also be particularly challenging when roadways fall under provincial jurisdiction (Ministry of Transportation and Transit) and the majority of stormwater infrastructure (i.e. ditches and swales)—critical components of the drainage system—are located within the road right-of-way. This overlap of jurisdiction often creates issues related to planning, maintenance and upgrades to stormwater infrastructure.

Increasing costs, revenue shortfalls

Safety and environmental standards are ever increasing, adding pressure and costs on maintenance and operation 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.

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 acquired by the CVRD may not be compliant with current standards, may lack additional servicing capacity, and may be contaminated, among other issues. A Utility System Acquisition Policy (2018) has been adopted that prioritizes systems that can be connected to existing CVRD-owned systems.

Relationship to Social Equity

Water, wastewater and drainage are often perceived as neutral and technical policy topics. However, the dominant approach to water infrastructure sees water as a resource to be managed. Indigenous worldviews see water as a living being with cultural, physical, spiritual and healing importance. Historical discrimination has inhibited Indigenous communities' access to secure infrastructure

and servicing investments and the ability to co-govern the natural assets that characterize their lands. Notable are the drainage impacts of land use and infrastructure decisions on First Nation reserve lands. Further, some residents living in rural areas are not always there by choice but rather for affordability reasons. These areas are sometimes lacking crucial infrastructure and services, which may further inequities.




Image 3.11 Water treatment plant

Objectives

Key objectives include responsible infrastructure management through effective growth management planning, operational efficiency, and financial and environmental sustainability.


WATER & WASTEWATER

MIO.1  Focus water servicing improvements and wastewater management plans to areas within the growth containment boundary, relevant special study areas and areas with community services as shown in Schedule S – Service Area Maps.

MIO.2 Protect water in line with the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Plan.


MIO.3 Protect and value the region's water resources and promote sustainable water use.


MIO.4 Support water desalination plants where appropriate.

MIO.5  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).

MIO.6 Seek innovative approaches to support the long-term management and funding of the Joint Utilities Board (JUB) treatment plant.


STORMWATER & DRAINAGE

MIO.7  Address stormwater challenges at a watershed scale, in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

MIO.8  Preserve watercourses and natural drainage channels in their natural state.

MIO.9 Advocate for changes to logging practices that impact the water cycle, increase flood risk, harm fish habitat and wash invaluable non-renewable topsoil into the ocean.


SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

MIO.10  Implement universal access to garbage, recycling and organics collection at the curbside.

MIO.11 Explore ways to manage both solid and liquid waste locally.


ENERGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT

MIO.12 Plan for strategic asset management.

MIO.13  Retain existing levels of servicing in communities and identify the appropriate level of services to meet the electoral areas' future projected needs.

MIO.14 Consider the full lifecycle costs of new infrastructure systems.

MIO.15 Discourage private infrastructure systems.

MIO.16  Liaise with provincial authorities on the status and future potential of sand and gravel extraction sites as shown in Schedule J – Sand and Gravel Deposits to ensure the CVRD's interests are recognized, including the reclamation and restoration of such sites, specific reclamation and restoration criteria or guidelines when appropriate.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



General Policy

WATER

- MI.1** Improve water quality and supply by mapping and analyzing sub-areas where water supply is stressed and by applying investments in areas of most need.
- MI.2** Continue the installation of water meters throughout the electoral areas.
- MI.3** Support rainwater storage initiatives across the CVRD.
- MI.4** Consider long-term resilience of water systems to provide necessary water to communities.

WASTEWATER

- MI.5** Support all wastewater management 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 biosolids in conjunction with agriculture and/or aquaculture operations.
- MI.6** Identify highest priority opportunities for consolidation of private and public septic systems in village centres.
- MI.7** Discourage individual sewer systems on lots smaller than 1 ha.
- MI.8** Work with Island Health to develop public education communications on individual sewerage system maintenance rules and practices for new and aging systems.

STORMWATER & DRAINAGE

- MI.9** Explore creative strategies to address drainage issues at both the watershed and parcel scale, pre- and post-development, including
- leveraging other processes (e.g. 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
 - advocating for the establishment of integrated stormwater management plans in partnership with the Province
 - considering low-impact development approaches to address increasing precipitation levels and their effects at multiple scales
 - requiring developers to include study on drainage impacts as part of a development approval information requirement
 - supporting rainwater management techniques in the design and construction of new developments to control quantity and quality of rainwater runoff
 - supporting rainwater storage for businesses and residences
 - minimizing impervious surfaces and maximizing infiltration to reduce runoff, particularly in developments upstream and/or upslope from agricultural areas
- MI.10** Support the development of 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 of stormwater management and other nonpoint sources of pollution with all new development applications
 - develop stormwater and runoff management guidelines by working with the Province

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MI.11 *○△ Develop emergency management plans based on risk assessments that include electoral areas and address four stages:

1. Mitigation: focuses on identification, removal or reduction of hazards, to either reduce the likelihood of emergencies or to reduce their potential impacts.
2. Preparation: focuses on building knowledge and capacity in anticipation of emergencies.
3. Response: focuses on taking measures to respond to an emergency, including to prevent or reduce the impacts of the emergency.
4. Recovery: focuses on taking measures to restore health, safety and well-being after an emergency.

MI.12 ○△ Incorporate available Indigenous knowledge, cultural safety and considerations from relevant risk assessments into emergency management plans while mitigating the impact on vulnerable people, animals, places and properties.

MI.13 ○△ Consult and collaborate with First Nations throughout all phases of emergency management.

MI.14 ○△ 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.15 ○△ Coordinate and regularly test emergency and disaster response services in conjunction with First Nations, municipalities and neighbouring regions.

MI.16 Ensure expansion of Fire Protection Areas (as shown in Schedule E) does not negatively impact fire response times.

GENERAL

MI.17 ○△ Design all CVRD infrastructure, including operations facilities and parks, to prioritize climate resilience/energy efficiency, as financially feasible.

MI.18 Consult with local First Nations and explore opportunities for infrastructure service agreements where plans include shared priorities and goals.

MI.19 *○ Target 80% of new development being connected to infrastructure services over time, focusing on areas with community services, as shown in Schedule S – Service Area Maps. New service areas should meet a minimum density of ten residents or ten employment jobs per ha measured over a minimum developed area of 10 ha for transit service to be considered.

MI.20 Avoid expansion of any services outside of growth containment areas except

- those developed for health, fire safety, environmental protection, agricultural support or sea level rise adaptation reasons
- where necessary for the takeover of private infrastructure systems and more efficient servicing (e.g. looping of network)
- to interconnect separate systems and connect lands identified as suitable for utilities' purposes
- in special circumstances where growth outside of the GCBs is anticipated, as illustrated in Part 1, Table 1.5 of the OCP
- for specified projects as identified by the Board

EQUITY POLICY

○ PRIORITIZE

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



MI.21 Ensure community water or sewer systems are installed prior to new development and ensure development contributes to service efficiency. Ensure required infrastructure upgrades are at the developer's expense.

MI.22 Employ low-impact development practices for all residential, commercial, industrial and mixed employment land use designations. These practices 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
- minimizing stormwater generation and runoff, for example by reducing contiguous paved areas or by using pervious materials for surfacing

MI.23 When servicing infrastructure is routed through or adjacent to Agricultural Land Reserve lands, use transmission pipes instead of distribution pipes to reduce development pressures.

MI.24 Support the maintenance, upgrades and consolidation of community infrastructure systems with the help of funding from grant opportunities and other senior levels of government programs when available.

Infrastructure Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

MI.25 Private utilities or strata corporation common property utilities are not supported to reduce land speculation and development pressures.

MI.26 Work with privately managed forest land owners and the Province to manage water and water quality issues.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

MI.27 Discourage installation of water and sewer infrastructure outside of the growth containment boundaries.

MI.28 Work with producers to facilitate the development of on-farm water storage opportunities.

SUBURBAN AREAS

MI.29 Encourage access and connection to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.

MI.30 Support existing and new developments to tie into public infrastructure systems.

MI.31 Ensure developments are designed to accommodate curbside solid waste collection systems, including access for curbside solid waste collection trucks.

VILLAGE AREAS

MI.32 Encourage access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.

MI.33 Support existing and new developments to tie into public infrastructure systems.

URBAN AREAS

MI.34 Encourage access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.

MI.35 Ensure development accommodates fire flows that can control fires in multi-unit residential buildings.

MI.36 Support existing and new developments to tie into public infrastructure systems.

MI.37 Ensure developments are designed to accommodate curbside solid waste collection systems, including access for curbside solid waste collection trucks.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

MI.38 Consider access to water, sewer and drainage infrastructure.

MI.39 Encourage connections to high-speed internet.

MI.40 Encourage alignment between high-intensity industrial uses and proximity to infrastructure servicing.

MI.41 Ensure development accommodates fire flows that can control fires in high-risk industrial settings.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



3 Make Distinct, Complete Communities



Image 3.12 Union 22 building

Introduction

This policy 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 objectives and policies align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan to create healthy, livable and efficiently serviced communities and to make available a range of housing options and housing tenures for residents at different income levels and stages of life. We are committed to making distinct, complete communities with a strong social foundation that cherish the diversity and unique characteristics of the region and its landscapes.

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 historic use of lands and water by First Nations has shaped these landscapes, while the ongoing presence of First Nations People continues to enrich our communities.

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 villages, towns and rural crossroads can be showcased and cherished by residents and visitors alike.

Additionally, the Board has adopted an extended service bylaw that establishes services relating to heritage conservation. This land use regulation tool

can be used to allow recognition of the historical value and character of certain sites within the plan area, as seen in Schedule H – Heritage Designations. Heritage buildings or properties have sufficient historical value or character to justify conservation. Heritage designation is a legal protection and is mainly intended to record, recognize and commemorate heritage buildings and properties. Decision-making within the context of this plan and its implementation should include the community in its entirety, recognizing the cultural diversity that exists, and making special efforts to include groups that are not usually recognized.

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

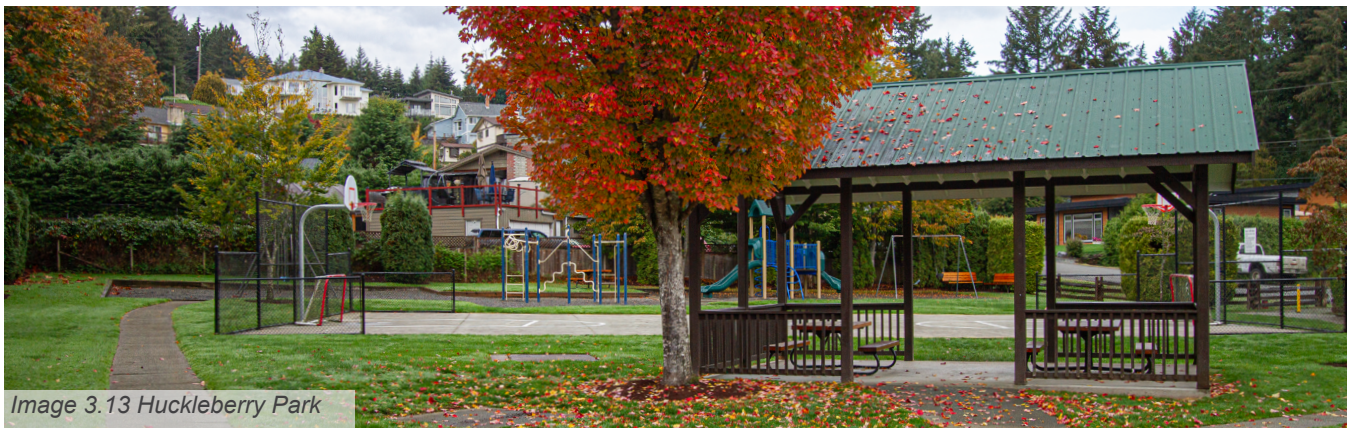


Image 3.13 Huckleberry Park

Challenges to Communities

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

1. Urban & rural sprawl

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. This is exacerbated when there are few safe active transportation routes to connect people's homes with their daily needs. 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, the CVRD is experiencing growth that is primarily linked to residents moving from other areas. New residents are often seeking more affordable homes that can be found in Victoria, Nanaimo or the Lower Mainland. Compared to the rest of BC, housing is generally more affordable for owners, but somewhat less affordable for renters. Since 2016, prices for market ownership homes have increased considerably. This suggests that the region's supply of available residential land has been insufficient to meet growing demand. Other findings from the report include:

- Current housing sizes are unsuitable for many residents.
- An aging population represents a greater need for aging-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.

Relationship to Social Equity

Policies that support the retention of existing affordable housing, as well as the development of new affordable housing, are fundamental to ensuring an equitable community. Implementation of housing policies should consider various housing needs, such as transitional housing, larger homes for multigenerational families, proximity to services and access to green space, including community gardens, which have the co-benefit of improving food security. Moreover, affordable housing should be clustered nearby transit and

services to ensure those who cannot afford a vehicle and/or expensive housing have access to their daily needs. Childcare facilities should be clustered nearby employment centres or co-located with schools. The buffering of land uses is important for affordable housing projects, which are often located in least favourable locations. Policies relating to heritage and culture should have a focus on local Indigenous communities and prioritize the reclamation of places and heritage elements connected to Indigenous history.



Image 3.14 Mixed-use building

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, well-being and inclusivity.

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

- DCO.1** *△ Plan for compact communities that can accommodate population growth and demographic change within the growth containment boundary.
- DCO.2** *△ Build inclusive and attractive communities where daily needs and employment opportunities are close to home.
- DCO.3** Support multi-purpose warehouse/studio space in light industrial designations.
- DCO.4** Support actions to mobilize resources to assist in meeting healthcare and emergency personnel's quality of life needs so our community retains a robust healthcare system.
- DCO.5** Advocate to the provincial government and the Health Authority to support new healthcare facilities and services to support population demographics.

HOUSING

- DCO.6** *○△ Improve, expand and promote the range of housing options that respond to regional needs across the spectrum of affordability, in collaboration with First Nations, community groups, service providers and residents.
- DCO.7** ○ Strengthen partnerships between the CVRD and the affordable housing sector to streamline development processes and support the acquisition of funding and land for affordable housing projects.
- DCO.8** ○△ Support housing that meets the needs of specific populations in core housing need, including Indigenous Peoples, low-income households, single parents, individuals with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ and racialized communities, seniors and youth.
- DCO.9** ○△ Establish as-of-right zoning (whereby a use is allowed in an existing zone, removing the need to rezone a property) for non-profit, below-market housing in areas well-served by transit and amenities.
- DCO.10** ○△ Enhance aging-in-place opportunities and accessibility in housing.
- DCO.11** Support the development of healthcare workforce housing near healthcare facilities to assist in meeting healthcare and emergency personnel's quality of life needs.

CHILD CARE

DCO.12 Enhance and expand child care in the areas consistent with the Cowichan Region Child Care Plan (2020).
OA

DCO.13 Support eligible group, preschool or school age childcare facilities required to relocate so they can quickly resume their services and remain in compliance with licensing requirements under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and childcare licensing regulation.

DCO.14 Ensure childcare locations that are more accessible and affordable for equal opportunity, while serving the entire community.
OA

DCO.15 Develop indicators and targets for the creation and expansion of childcare spaces and programs.

DCO.16 Consider a child care resource position to regularly collect information on diversity within childcare centres and promote diversity best practices in childcare centres.
OA

DCO.17 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 & CULTURE

DCO.18 Protect sites of cultural significance, most notably First Nations' archaeological sites.
OA

DCO.19 Provide a wide range of parks and recreational opportunities aligned with community, tourism and resident needs.

DCO.20 Support artistic and cultural pursuits and activities.

DCO.21 Review the merits of an outdoor recreation park in electoral area F, outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve, along Pacific Marine Road south of Mesachie Lake.
A

EQUITY POLICY

PRIORITIZE



IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

General Policy

HOUSING

DC.1 *○△ Encourage a greater supply of housing units through development approvals with the aim of ensuring

- vacancy rates of rental units are above 3%
- housing supply across the electoral areas addresses the 20-year needs for the following components, according to the latest Housing Needs Report:
 - » Extreme core housing needs: 285 units
 - » Persons experiencing homelessness: 213 units
 - » Suppressed household formation: 1,345 units
 - » Anticipated growth: 4,273 units
 - » Rental vacancy rate adjustment: 34 units

DC.2 ○△ Support transitional housing and temporary modular shelters with wrap-around supports near bus stops along the most frequently serviced bus routes for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

DC.3 ○△ Support affordable, below-market and workforce housing on CVRD-owned land.

DC.4 Follow direction from the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and *Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation* regarding additional residences within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

DC.5 ○△ 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.

DC.6 ○△ Work with residents, community groups, First Nations and developers on community placemaking initiatives to reveal place-based assets and stories as inspiration for building and landscape designs in new projects.

DC.7 Support shared use agreements between the school district, Regional District, community groups and local First Nations to make greater community use of school buildings and lands.

ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

DC.8 △ Continue to protect the three heritage designated sites as shown in Schedule H – Heritage Designation Maps (Kingzett Lake Lime Kiln, South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club and Fairbridge Farm Chapel) for their outstanding merit and representative history and heritage value to the CVRD.

The Kingzett Lake Lime Kiln and Ceramic Well are rare structures to be found on Vancouver Island, and their well-preserved state make this historic site even more valuable. At over 130 years old, the lime kiln and ceramic well are two of the Cowichan Valley's earliest pioneer structures still intact.

The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club has significant heritage value in its continuous community use as a source of recreation and social activities. As it was formed by early settlers, the club represents the social development of the Cowichan Valley, specifically the area of Cowichan Bay.

The Fairbridge Farm Chapel was built in 1939 and opened in 1940. The most defining heritage value comes from the historic integrity of the building, including the Douglas fir floors, Western red cedar shingles and timber frame, as well as the quality of the interior wood. All the original elements are of the Arts and Crafts style.

DC.9 Identify cultural conservation issues and update the Community Heritage Register to protect and enhance landscapes, buildings and features of cultural significance. consult First Nations in the consideration of sites, landscapes and buildings.

DC.10 Support access to cultural, archival and museum collections that facilitate learning about the Cowichan Valley's past and present.

PARKS & RECREATION

DC.11 When acquiring park land through a subdivision application, use the Province's Parkland Acquisition Best Practices Guide (2025) and focus acquiring lands that are suitable for public access and recreational purposes.

DC.12 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.13 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.14 Expand and provide access to the park and trail system, as shown in Schedule P – Terrestrial Parks Maps, while conserving natural areas to encourage healthy living and appreciation for the outdoors.

EQUITY POLICY

PRIORITIZE

**IMPLEMENTATION
CONSIDERATIONS**



Complete Community Policies

(by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

DC.15 Seek opportunities to 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

DC.16 Protect existing small-scale, rural and agricultural-supporting commercial and community uses.

DC.17 Support value-added farm uses and local food production.

DC.18 Support secondary or accessory agricultural activities and services, such as agricultural product processing, farm equipment sales or maintenance, production of soil amendments, vertical farming, dry land farming, slaughterhouses and/or abattoirs, composting and agricultural waste management.

DC.19 Seek opportunities to mitigate safety issues and apply setbacks and vegetated buffers where recreational, industrial, institutional, residential and/or commercial activities are adjacent to agricultural land.

SUBURBAN AREAS

DC.20 Enhance suburban areas by providing employment lands, parks, access to transit and other amenities.

VILLAGE AREAS

DC.21 Support village areas that have a mix of uses.

DC.22 Support live-work building forms and senior facilities.

DC.23 Provide access to transit, active transportation options, parks and shopping.

DC.24 Enhance village areas with arts, culture and community facilities, including community gardens.

URBAN AREAS

DC.25 Support urban areas that have higher residential densities and the greatest mix in uses.

DC.26 Support mixed-use, multi-storey apartment buildings and multi-unit dwellings that reflect local housing needs.

DC.27 Provide a rich number of arts, culture and community facilities, including community gardens.

DC.28 Consider bonus density for adaptable and accessible units, healthcare worker targeted housing and healthcare facility space in the zoning bylaw.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

DC.29 Support accessory retail and office uses in mixed employment and industrial lands.

DC.30 Discourage large malls and other commercial developments that draw from village and urban markets.

DC.31 Provide access to transit.

4 Expand Mobility Options



Image 3.15 Driver helping woman from handiDart

Introduction

This policy chapter addresses the transportation systems that allow residents to move around the Cowichan Valley in a safe, effective and low-impact way. The objectives and policies within align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan to support the development and use of alternative transportation opportunities in the region. We are committed to ensuring that our transportation network in the CVRD offers safe, resilient, affordable, sustainable mobility options for all.

The issue of mobility is central to creating a sustainable OCP. Our daily life demands a wide range of mobility options: roads and street networks (from highways to backcountry service roads), regional transit systems, trails and cycle paths that connect within and beyond the region. See Schedule T – Transportation and Major Roads Maps, which identifies major roads as identified by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

While road systems and infrastructure are under the authority of the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, the CVRD has a role related to transportation planning in partnership with BC Transit to coordinate transit service delivery. 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 GHGs in the unincorporated areas (79% versus 58% provincially, Community Energy and Emissions Inventory, 2010). Further auto dependency results from limited populations in rural areas unable to access transit options.

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



Image 3.16 Crosswalk

Conventional fixed-route I Cowichan Valley Regional Transit Services are offered in partnership with BC Transit, the CVRD and Transdev, the operator. Scheduled local transit service is available throughout the CVRD with the exception of electoral areas G (Saltair) 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. Custom transit (handyDART) service is available to four municipalities and seven electoral areas and within 1.5 kilometres (km) of a fixed bus route.

Nanaimo–Cowichan Express (NCX) A new inter-regional route between Nanaimo and Cowichan Valley was implemented March 28, 2022.

Victoria inter-regional I This comprises two services: the Cowichan–Victoria Express (CVX) and Shawnigan–Lake Victoria Express (SVX). At the time of writing the OCP, inter-regional transit service is available between the Cowichan Valley and Greater Victoria Monday to Saturday (except statutory holidays).

While ridership has grown to approximately 450,000 rides a year for all transit services combined, expanding mobility options also goes hand in hand with effective land use planning. The OCP can enhance means of travel to residents by planning for residents to have access to daily needs within close proximity of where they live through the development of the local area plans (Schedule B in development). Villages and communities that have a greater mix of uses and supportive residential densities nearby are more walkable and transit friendly.



Image 3.17 BC Transit bus stop

Challenges to Local Systems

The following are four main challenges to expanding mobility options in the CVRD.

1. Geography and population density

Linking a region of such vast geographic extent (3,473 km²) 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 rights-of-way. 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. See Schedule T – Transportation and Major Roads Maps, which identifies major roads as identified by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

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. There is an identified need for greater connectivity between communities.

4. Gaps in the (trails) network

At present, trails within the CVRD are primarily managed as assets within the parks (i.e. recreation) portfolio including the Cowichan Valley portion of the Trans Canada Trail, which is considered an active transportation trail. By the end of 2022, there were 210 community parks across the nine electoral areas covering over 1,280 ha of land. As well, there were 51 km of managed community trails in the electoral areas (not including 72 km of the Cowichan Valley Trail). See Schedule P – Terrestrial Parks Maps. The new Regional Active Transportation Plan (2023) sets out a plan to connect trails and should be considered when new development applications are considered.

Relationship to Social Equity

Neighbourhoods with substantial transit access should have affordable housing. Diverse groups who rely on public transit typically take multiple trips at extended hours—clustering services nearby transit routes may help these users with daily needs. Upon implementation, considerations should explore how policies regarding electric modes are accessible to lower-income individuals.

Accessible parking should be prioritized, as it is essential for those who cannot walk, bike or easily take transit. When designing trails and cycling routes, consider how such infrastructure can accommodate the needs of wheelchairs, electric scooters and those with vision or hearing impairments.

Objectives

Key objectives include reducing car dependency through integrating mobility options with land use and increasing active transportation and public transit options.

INTEGRATED MODES

MOO.1 Integrate land use patterns and densities with transportation systems, including the road network mapped in Schedule T – Transportation and Major Roads Maps.

MOO.2 Establish a safe, efficient, equitable and cost-effective integrated multi-modal system.

MOO.3 Support equitable investments in transportation services to improve transportation accessibility to all population segments.

MOO.4 Support necessary infrastructure for ride sharing.

MOO.5 Support the bicycle and car share sector.

MOO.6 Quantify the life cycle cost of transportation infrastructure and consider within the approval process of new development.

MOO.7 Work with the Malahat Nation to advocate for BC Ferries to move the Mill Bay Ferry terminal to a more suitable location with a ramp that accommodates buses.

WALKING, ROLLING & PUBLIC TRANSIT

MOO.8 Increase the proportion of trips made by non-vehicle modes.

MOO.9 Advocate for the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to incorporate pedestrian safety features at intersections where appropriate, such as

- extended curbs to reduce crossing distance
- marked pavement crossings
- enhanced lighting and clear sightlines

MOO.10 Advocate for the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to incorporate, within road allowances, cycling routes or multi-use paths. Advocate for these routes and paths 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.

VEHICLE MODES

MOO.11 Reduce reliance on single-occupant car travel.

MOO.12 Minimize impacts of road and parking infrastructure on the region's rural qualities.

MOO.13 Discourage the number of new roads built through sensitive ecological habitat to protect watersheds.

MOO.14 Advocate for the Province to reduce speed limits to 30 kilometres per hour (km/h) in residential neighbourhoods and implement traffic calming measures to prioritize safety.

MOO.15 Manage truck traffic travelling through village centres by working with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to designate preferable truck routes.

MOO.16 New roads should support the existing road network, as shown in Schedule T – Transportation and Major Roads Maps, and identify gaps in local, collector and arterial roads to support new development, local travel and regional travel.

MOO.17 Encourage through incentives the use of electric vehicles and bicycles and the installation of electric vehicle charging stations in key locations by developers and property owners.

EQUITY POLICY


 **PRIORITIZE**








 **IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

General Policy

INTEGRATED MODES

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

MO.2    Reduce travel distances by planning uses closer together.

MO.3   Support a Vancouver Island Transportation Plan and regional transportation plan to improve intermodal coordination and safety of all travel modes.

MO.4 Improve coordination of transportation infrastructure and services within electoral areas and between adjacent municipalities and jurisdictions.

MO.5 At subdivision, advocate for compact development with smaller block sizes and interconnected street networks.

MO.6 Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to establish 30km/h zones in villages and urban areas.



MO.7 Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit on initiatives to pedestrianize streets within villages.

WALKING & ROLLING

MO.8 Support new development proposals for subdivision that incorporate greenway routes that improve pedestrian and cyclist pathways and connect to arterial roads per cycling and parks plans.

MO.9 Support the development of public beach access points.



PUBLIC TRANSIT

MO.10   Support initiatives to make transit more effective and user-friendly by

- implementing the Transit Future Action Plan (2023) and South Cowichan Local Area Transit Plan to establish short- and medium-term improvements
- installing transit-supportive infrastructure and amenities
- incorporating real time and automatic bus locators
- expanding handyDART and regular service
- finding suitable locations for expanded park and ride facilities along key bus routes including safe bike lockers

MO.11 Encourage non-profit organizations or other service providers to establish alternative transportation services and mobility options not offered by BC Transit.

VEHICLE MODES

MO.12   Ensure adequate parking areas and secure bike parking adjacent to major destinations like parks, trails and beaches.

MO.13 Use design strategies to minimize the visual impacts of vehicle parking on the region's rural landscapes.

MO.14 Conduct ongoing identification of specific community roads and roadside pathways to support multi-modal transportation.

Mobility Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

MO.15 Support the development of regional and Island wide trails that provide safe mobility corridors for outdoor recreational users through resource lands to other areas of crown land.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

MO.16 Support the safe use of roads by agricultural equipment.

SUBURBAN AREAS

MO.17 Support initiatives that shift modal share from vehicles to transit and active transportation modes.

VILLAGE AREAS

MO.18 Support connectivity and transportation initiatives that increase transit and active transportation uses within village areas.

URBAN AREAS

MO.19 Support transportation initiatives that increase transit and active transportation uses within urban areas.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

MO.20 Support transportation initiatives that increase transit and active transportation uses to special districts (schools, universities, hospitals, event grounds and others).

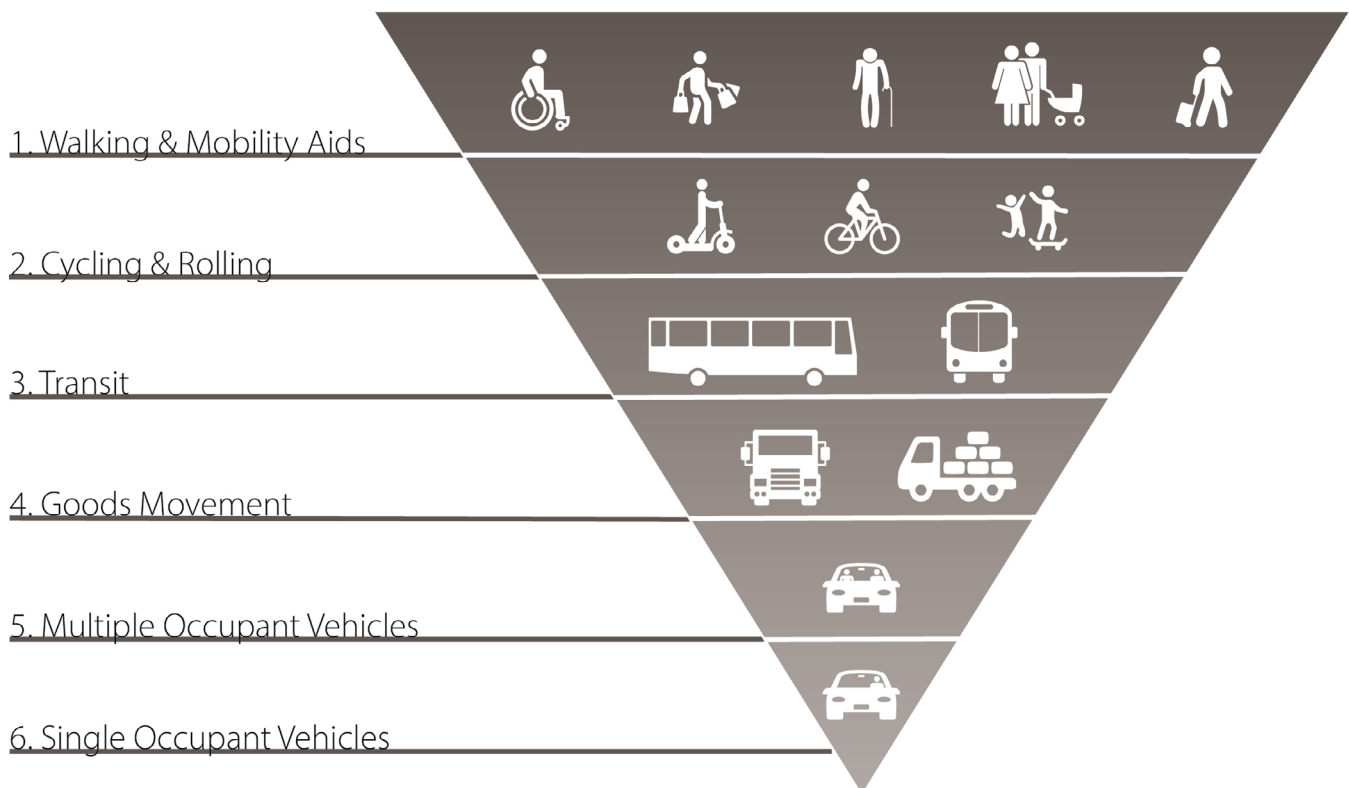


Figure 3.1 Transportation mode hierarchy.



5 Protect & Restore Natural Assets

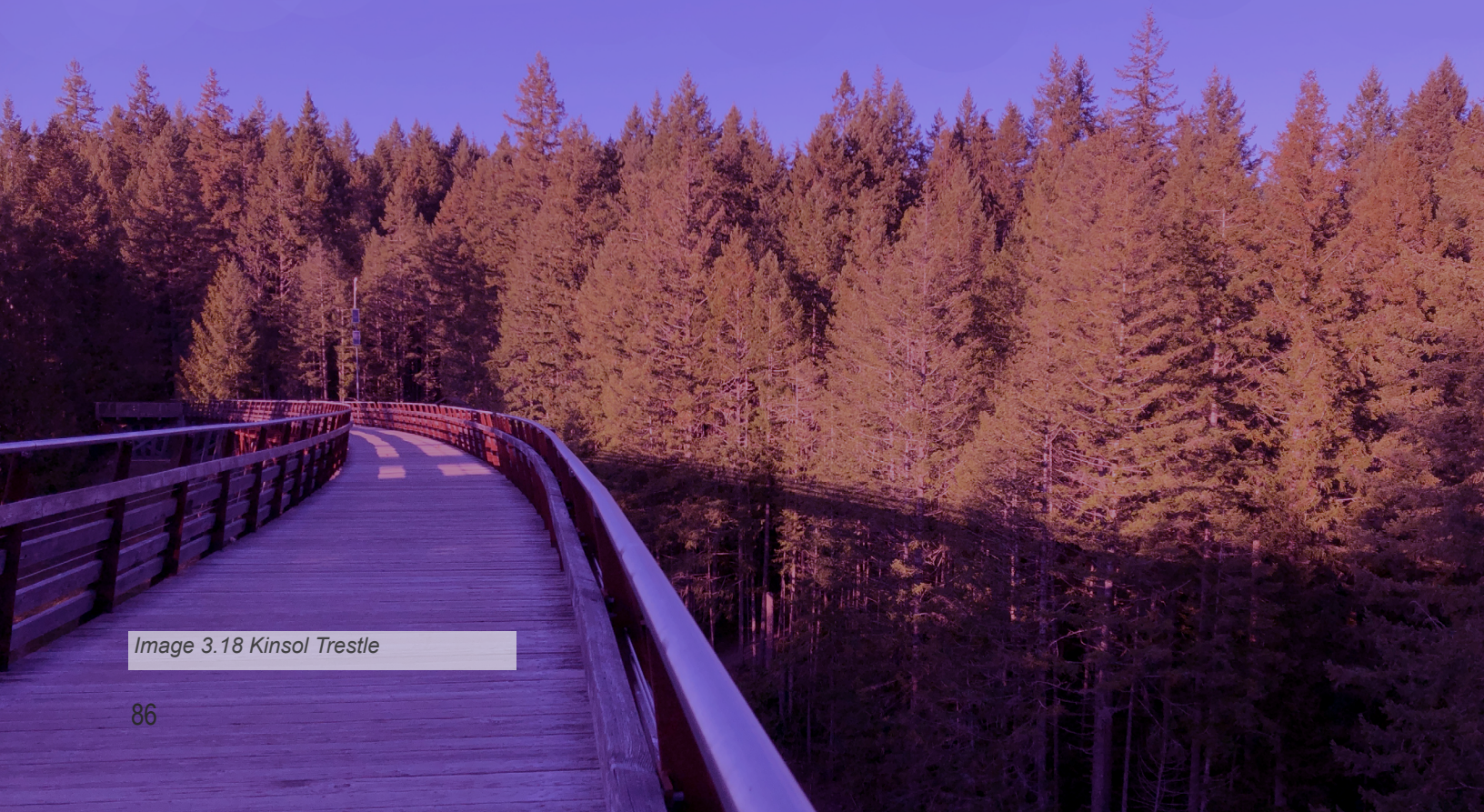


Image 3.18 Kinsol Trestle

Introduction

This policy chapter addresses the region's natural assets and the strategies that will support their protection and restoration. The objectives and policies within align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan to strengthen, in collaboration with our partners, our airshed planning efforts and to support efforts aimed at ecosystem protection and preservation. We are committed to protecting nature for the benefit of nature, for current and future generations of humans, and for the well-being of the entire region.

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 provide a yield of intrinsic and economic benefits to communities and the world around us. They 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:

- Species and ecosystems at risk (particularly in the ecologically rich coastal zone)
- Terrestrial & aquatic ecosystems – sensitive ecosystems, riparian protection, marine uplands and foreshore
- Aquifers and surface water quantity and quality
- Urban forest enhancement and air quality
- Connectivity, biodiversity corridors and conservation targets

The CVRD also considers green infrastructure when appropriate—for example, to protect natural drainage systems.

The OCP sets a clear direction for the prioritization of natural assets within local decision making. By establishing a natural asset management framework, the CVRD is seeking to build resilience, protect ecosystem services, enhance biodiversity and manage infrastructure costs over the long term. By protecting and managing wetlands, forests, streams and riparian areas, the CVRD can tap into the natural benefits they provide, like filtering stormwater, reducing floods, storing carbon and regulating temperatures. 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 when those natural systems are identified in the watershed management plans or are within the CVRD's control and provide or impact critical services.

Challenges to Natural Assets

The following are four main challenges to protecting natural assets in the CVRD.

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 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 and resource extraction—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, air 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, which increases erosion and impacts 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. Pressure on endangered ecosystems is increasing as the climatic conditions under which those ecosystems evolved are changing. Because of the large human footprint and extensive degradation of natural ecosystems, the ecosystems themselves are much less resilient to the added stress of climate change. For example, we are seeing the rapid spread of invasive plants, insects and diseases into the dry Douglas-fir forest ecosystems. Biogeoclimatic zones may migrate with climate change and natural spaces for this migration must be held.

The Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone provides key benefits that sustain human health and well-being, including clean air and water, nutrient cycling, carbon storage, and timber and non-timber resources.

Relationship to Social Equity

The knowledge and inputs of Indigenous groups—who have been stewards of the land for millennia—should be central to all natural asset management policy implementation. The CVRD can partner with local Indigenous groups to help manage natural systems, landforms, airsheds and the marine environment. Some groups are disproportionately impacted by inadequate environmental conditions including air, noise and light pollution. When reducing pollution, polluted areas where these groups live

should be prioritized. Green and environmental improvements tend to increase quality of life and property values, pricing out vulnerable residents and attracting wealthier ones. This contributes to the perpetuation of environmental injustice, which is also seen when hazardous areas are located near low-income neighbourhoods. During implementation of natural asset policies, such as enhanced tree canopy cover and protection of environmental areas, displacement and pricing out of existing residents should be considered.




Image 3.19 Yellow maple leaves over the Cowichan River

Objectives

Key objectives include identifying and protecting natural assets, including sensitive watersheds and ecosystems.

NATURAL ASSET FRAMEWORK


NAO.1  Develop watershed management plans and support the vision of the Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning Agreement (S-xatsthut tst – We Agree) to: improve water quality, protect against contamination of the aquifer, address climate change impacts, restore ecological balance and return to healthy fish populations, increase summer water levels and decrease water flows in winter, in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Environment Canada and the Cowichan Watershed Board and under the *Water Sustainability Act*.


NAO.2 Continue supporting the development of watershed management plans for each of the watershed planning areas as noted in the CVRD's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program, and, where appropriate, integrate into an asset management framework.

NAO.3 Strengthen current regulatory frameworks to ensure avoidance, and, if necessary, mitigation of and compensation for impacts to natural assets. Follow the province's Environmental Mitigation Policy for guidance and use the principle of "no net loss" in the function and quality of the concerned ecosystem.

SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS


NAO.4 Improve and protect connectivity between sensitive ecosystems, parks and protected areas, and allow for the movement of species among them.

NAO.5  Ensure growth and development is consistent with the protection of watercourses, wetlands, riparian areas, aquifers and sensitive ecosystems.

NAO.6  Provide ongoing public education on regional environmental stewardship.

NAO.7 Acknowledge and promote the importance of forested lands as carbon sinks.


NAO.8 Encourage the use of ecosystem-based sustainable forestry practices to preserve and protect the forest, its biodiversity, integrity and ecological service.

NAO.9  Advocate for forest management practices that include cultural and prescribed fires to help reduce the intensity of naturally occurring wildfires.


NAO.10 Reduce and manage invasive species, pests and diseases that affect sensitive ecosystems.

NAO.11 Advocate modifying the Private Managed Forest Land Act to increase protection and management of riparian areas and to consider the long-term sustainability of water supply and quality, maximize carbon sequestration and minimize watershed damage.

WATERSHEDS & AIRSHEDS

NAO.12  Ensure land use and growth consider the limits of water supply.

NAO.13 Ensure that development and land use activities support the natural hydrologic cycle, including groundwater recharge.

NAO.14  Protect the quality and quantity of water and encourage stewardship.

NAO.15 Limit road density to protect watersheds.

MARINE & FORESHORE

NAO.16 Work with the provincial and federal governments to properly dispose of abandoned and derelict vessels.

General Policy


NATURAL ASSET FRAMEWORK

NA.1 Establish a Natural Asset Management Framework that includes


- identification and assessment
- watershed management plans as guiding documents that inventory priority natural assets
- evaluating the condition of identified natural assets
- planning and development permit areas
- priorities defined by risk identification
- scenario exploration
- green infrastructure
- implementation strategies

NA.2 Develop a CVRD Conservation Strategy with targets linked 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 other local governments, 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, commit 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  Protect natural environment areas identified for preservation in the development process through a restrictive covenant, acquisition of park land, conservation land trusts or other means that sufficiently protects the lands. If acquiring park land, consider the province's Parkland Acquisition Best Practices Guide (2025) to ensure consistency and clarity in the approach.

NA.8 Seek to protect species at risk and monitor the scale and change of species listed as at risk in the region.

NA.9 Review the CVRD Invasive Plant Species Strategy.

NA.10  Support retaining areas of mature tree canopy cover and vegetative areas and preserving other natural features in all development, particularly any development in environmentally sensitive areas and areas of steep slopes.

NA.11  Support decreasing the percentage of natural areas impacted by development and logging.

NA.12  Support increasing the canopy cover and encourage the planting of Western red cedar, where appropriate.

NA.13 Develop and maintain a list—and up-to-date mapping, if available—of environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife corridors, older second-growth forest and seasonally flooded agricultural fields.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 METRIC

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

NA.14 Protect migratory routes used by wildlife (e.g. amphibians, elk, bears) in partnership with other levels of government and local governments, by supporting, where possible, infrastructure placement to allow for safe crossings.

NA.15 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.16 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.17 Support community conservation covenants, enabling adjacent landowners to cooperate in the protection of their land.

NA.18 Seek authority from the Province to establish a municipal-type tree cutting bylaw for protection of trees on private property.

AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

NA.19 Discourage development immediately adjacent to wetlands, estuaries and mudflats.

NA.20 Protect and enhance the ecological richness of the Cowichan Estuary, in line with the Cowichan Estuary Management Plan (1987). Consider an update to the management plan in collaboration with the Municipality of North Cowichan and the Cowichan Tribes.

NA.21 Support the rehabilitation of damaged natural aquatic spawning and rearing areas and encourage restorative development in consultation and partnership with First Nations, local and senior levels of government, community groups and property owners.

NA.22 Manage streambank erosion to maintain or enhance fish habitat and other natural resources.

NA.23 Create management plans for both Cowichan and Shawnigan Lakes, while recognizing aquatic habitats and resources as environmentally sensitive sites that are to be protected and restored.

NA.24 Develop and promote “Living by Water” foreshore management education materials to help property owners protect streams and water bodies that cross or are adjacent to their property.

WATERSHEDS & AIRSHEDS

NA.25 Strengthen rainwater management policy as measured against pre- and post-development hydrograph performance (based on monitoring).

NA.26 Review floodplain, dam and erosion hazard maps, as shown in Schedule O – Floodplain and Dam Designation Maps, on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date given changing conditions. Development in these areas may require a qualified environmental professional and/or geotechnical expert to assess and adapt the site to protect people and property against hazards.

NA.27 Protect Cowichan Valley community watersheds as defined under the Forest & Range Practices Act with the intent of

OA

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

NA.28 Support the Cowichan Airshed Roundtable and associated work plan by

OA

- reducing the number of high-polluting wood burning fireplaces and old woodstoves, where appropriate, 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
- supporting the elimination of pollution resulting from commercial shipping anchorages in Cowichan Bay and Saltair

NA.29 Implement air, noise and light pollution reduction measures.

A

NA.30 Explore International Dark Sky Community designation beyond Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay to reduce illumination of the night sky.

MARINE & FORESHORE

NA.31 Consider the creation of an eelgrass protection marine development permit area.

NA.32 Develop a plan for marine areas, as shown in Schedule M – Marine Area Maps that may include use designations as a separate schedule to the OCP.

EQUITY POLICY

○ PRIORITIZE

METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



Image 3.20 Blueberries on the branch

Natural Assets Policy (by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

NA.33 Recognize healthy forests, healthy watersheds and healthy aquifers are foundational to the CVRDs natural assets.

NA.34 Support sustainable resource management and watershed-scale planning initiatives to most effectively manage natural assets.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

NA.35 Recognize agricultural soils, riparian areas and woodlands as foundational to the CVRD's natural assets.

NA.36 Manage and control the impact of development on surface and groundwater resources.

NA.37 Support regenerative agriculture practices within local agricultural planning to support soil and water health.

NA.38 Minimize extension of servicing infrastructure within rural areas.

SUBURBAN AREAS

NA.39 Support low-impact development approaches to clustering of development and retention of functional landscapes.

NA.40 Encourage landscape retention (e.g. contiguous habitat and/or corridors) and native-plant-based landscape design.

NA.41 Support tree retention on private property.

VILLAGE AREAS

NA.42 Support low-impact development approaches and retention of functional landscapes.

NA.43 Support expansion and enhancement of active pedestrian connections (e.g. trails) to natural areas.

NA.44 Support plans and designs that incorporate natural asset management considerations, including but not limited to rainwater management, soil and tree retention, and native plant species in landscape design.

URBAN AREAS

NA.45 Support low-impact development approaches and retention of functional landscapes.

NA.46 Support plans and designs that incorporate natural asset management considerations, including but not limited to rainwater management, light pollution reduction, soil and tree retention and native plant palettes in landscape design.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

NA.47 Require natural asset inventories and management strategies be developed within and specific to special districts.



Image 3.21 Couple and a dog walking on a path



6 Strengthen Local Food & Agriculture



Image 3.22 Red barn

Introduction

This policy chapter addresses the protection of agricultural lands and food systems to ensure community resilience and the celebration of locally grown produce. We are committed to helping our farmers grow more food, to creating affordable food security for everyone, and to building a resilient and sustainable local food system.

Protection of our food system is vital for the sustainability of the Cowichan Valley. More specifically, our agricultural lands and productive soils are defining features of the Cowichan Valley's ambience and beauty, and the food system's 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."¹

Food security is a multi-faceted condition that ensures 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 has supply chain vulnerability with a limited amount of food being grown on the Island. The CVRD's regional agriculture plan will establish clear priorities for strengthening local food and agriculture beyond farmland protection to include the full spectrum of production, processing, storage, distribution, consumption and nutrient cycling/composting. Developing strategic agriculture plans is an action in the CVRD Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan 2023-2026, which will play an important role in detailing opportunities.

Many of the objectives and policies in this chapter are related to agricultural lands in the CVRD. These are mapped in Schedule D – Agricultural Land Maps, which identifies lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve and lands designated for agricultural use.



Image 3.23 Free-range chickens

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2018). *Sustainable Food Systems: Concept and framework*, page i.

Challenges to Local Food & Agriculture

The following are six main factors in the electoral areas that make strengthening local food and agriculture a challenge. It is also noted that the OCP supports enforcement of regulations within the Agricultural Land Reserve as a key pillar of a sustainable agricultural community and provides clarity for investors for economic development purposes.

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, reduce 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 and threatens residents' access to water. 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, impacts will include crop disease and disruptive pest patterns, decreased water availability, flooding events and decreased 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 Agricultural Land Reserve.

5. Rising cost of living and farming

The overall costs of living and farming 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 reduce 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.

Relationship to Social Equity

Local food production should support food security for all. Convenient access to affordable, culturally appropriate food is key, as is supporting culturally diverse food production practices. Additionally, farm workers, who are frequently immigrants, lower-income and/or from racialized communities, often face poor living conditions. COVID-19 highlighted the poor conditions many immigrant farm workers

experience across the country. Supporting their quality of life with safe and secure housing in close proximity to services and amenities is important. Access to agricultural land is becoming increasingly difficult for young farmers. Exploring new affordable models of agricultural land ownership and leasing that encourage a new generation of farmers to launch their careers should be prioritized.



Image 3.24 Child petting a cow

Objectives

Key objectives include protecting the Agricultural Land Reserve and enhancing agricultural productivity.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

FAO.1 * Preserve and protect Agricultural Land Reserve lands and support initiatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to assist farming to be economically viable, while planning for a wide range of agricultural activities in line with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.

FAO.2 * Maintain or increase the amount of land in the Agriculture designation and ensure early consultation with the Agricultural Land Commission with respect to any land use changes that affect the Agricultural Land Reserve.

FAO.3 ○△ Encourage agricultural economic diversity, including connections between agriculture and tourism, local agricultural processing and value-added agriculture.

FAO.4 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.

FAO.5 Protect groundwater as an important resource to support agriculture industries in locations where potential land use conflicts can be mitigated.

FAO.6 Ensure that agricultural economic development strategies align with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.

FAO.7 Ensure that residential uses within the Agricultural Land Reserve align with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.

FAO.8 Review the region's approach to aquaculture.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY & SECURITY

FAO.9 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.

FAO.10 ○△ Enable food production (including community garden plots), processing and distribution that will foster a place-based food economy that increases local food security and opportunities for agricultural production.

FAO.11 *○△ Prioritize food production on agricultural lands and develop access to markets for local foods.

FAO.12 ○△ Encourage residents to grow their own produce.




FAO.13 ○△ Support First Nations food rights.

FAO.14 Explore the creation of an Agricultural Land Trust to support agricultural production, research and innovation.

FAO.15 ○△ Educate non-farming neighbours about the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* and potential nuisance impacts associated with normal farm practices, such as odour, noise, dust and traffic.


General Policy

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

- FA.1** Consider agricultural plans that could address but are not limited to agricultural infrastructure issues, cold storage, abattoirs, secondary processing and site-based retail.
- FA.2** Only support subdivision applications that meet the criteria of the Agricultural Land Commission's Homesite Severance policy.
- FA.3**  Encourage agricultural land leasing and the accommodation of agricultural land lessees. Collaborate with external organizations, such as Young Agrarians, to identify opportunities to increase agricultural opportunities on public lands.
- FA.4** Do not support applications to the Agricultural Land Commission for primary residences larger than 500 m² or for additional residences larger than 90 m² on parcels less than 40 ha and 186m² on parcels more than 40 ha, unless the larger size is necessary for a farm use on land classified as a farm based on the scale and intensity of the farm operation.
- FA.5** After the CVRD has forwarded applications for non-farm use to the Agricultural Land Commission and the Agricultural Land Commission has approved the application, the CVRD may consider the application with the condition that the non-farm use
- provides significant benefits to local agriculture
 - does not require the extension of community water or sewer services
 - will not use productive agricultural lands
 - will not preclude future use of the lands for agriculture
 - will not harm adjacent farm operations
- FA.6**  Discourage non-agricultural development for properties that meet the criteria under s.23(1) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and are exempted from the land use restrictions in the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.
- FA.7** Establish Environmental Farm Plan best management practices to apply more farms within the region to promote sustainable and regenerative agriculture.
- FA.8** Support the number of farms with water storage options to reduce the impacts of agriculture on strained aquifers and watersheds.
- FA.9**  Protect and support the continued designation and use of agricultural land for agricultural purposes regardless of soil types and capabilities. Encourage farmers to locate agricultural structures on land with lower agricultural capability to maximize the agricultural potential of prime soil resources.
- FA.10** 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. Consider the homeplating guidelines as per the provincial Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

 METRIC

FA.11 Promote on agricultural land the use of conservation programs, such as Farmland Advantage, which incentivizes farmers to protect riparian 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
- not unduly restrict agriculture as a priority use on the property

FA.12 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.

FA.13 Encourage partnerships between the agriculture community, senior governments and private enterprise to promote the development of the agriculture sector.

FA.14 Support agri-tourism as defined by the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.

FA.15 Work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to develop an Agricultural Land Use Inventory and associated Agricultural Water Demand Model.

FA.16 Promote the uptake of efficient agricultural water use techniques through the support of regional and provincial programs/initiatives including the CVRD Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program, the BC Climate Agriculture Initiative and the BC Environmental Farm Program.

OA

FA.17 The CVRD supports the parcels indicated in the map below being removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve as supported by Agricultural Land Commission Resolutions #1157/94.

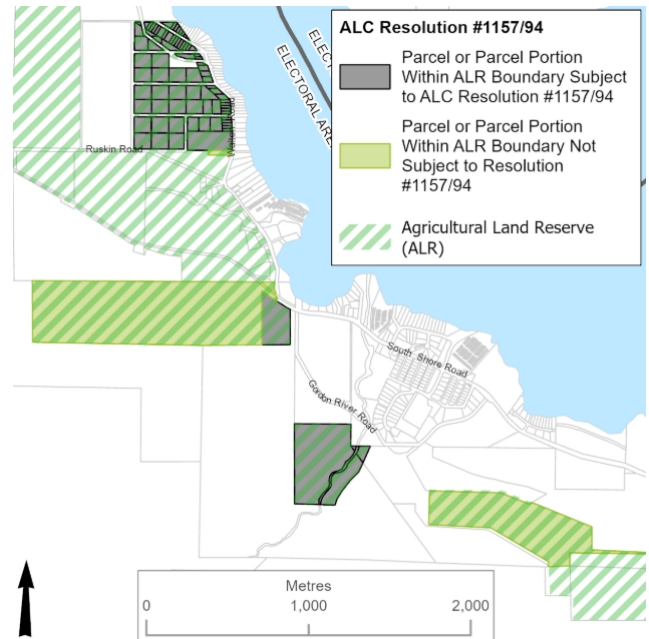


Figure 3.2: Map of parcels in electoral area F Honeymoon Bay/Mesachie Lake that are subject to Agricultural Land Commission resolution #1157/94.

FOOD PRODUCTION

FA.18 On Rural, Suburban and Urban lands, and lands outside the Agricultural Land Reserve, support and encourage a range of small-scale, non-commercial agricultural uses that include, but are not limited to

- agriculture, including hens and beehives, on private lands including front yards and backyards
- agriculture on public land that includes edible landscaping on residential boulevards, park land, backyards and rights-of-way

FA.19 Support a viable and diverse agricultural industry including new food processing, value-added and agritech initiatives.

FA.20 Identify the need for local agricultural strategies and work collaboratively across the region to update the Cowichan Regional Area Agriculture Plan (2010) and update/align with the 2010 Cowichan Food Security Plan.

FA.21 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 and Food in the regional food hub initiatives and Feed BC, Buy BC and Grow BC programs.

FA.22 Ensure lands designated next to Agricultural Land Reserve land are not General Industrial.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

 METRIC



Image 3.25 Red brandy building

Local Food & Agriculture Policy

(by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

FA.23 Support food forest initiatives.



RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

FA.24 Recognize the authority and jurisdiction of the Agricultural Land Commission for Agricultural Land Reserve lands within the bylaw area.

FA.25 Protect lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve for agricultural and related uses.



FA.26 Plan for a longer growing season and different crop potential.

FA.27 Ensure sizing and siting guidelines for all land designated Agriculture outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve is consistent across the agricultural landscape.

SUBURBAN AREAS

FA.28 Support the growing of food in suburban areas.



VILLAGE AREAS

FA.29 Support the growing of food in village areas.



URBAN AREAS

FA.30 Support the growing of food in urban areas.



SPECIAL DISTRICTS

FA.31 Support plans that incorporate local food systems (production, processing, storage, distribution, consumption and/or nutrient cycling/composting) within programming and design of public spaces.

FA.32 Consider waste-to-energy opportunities to support agricultural production.





7 Enhance Regional Prosperity

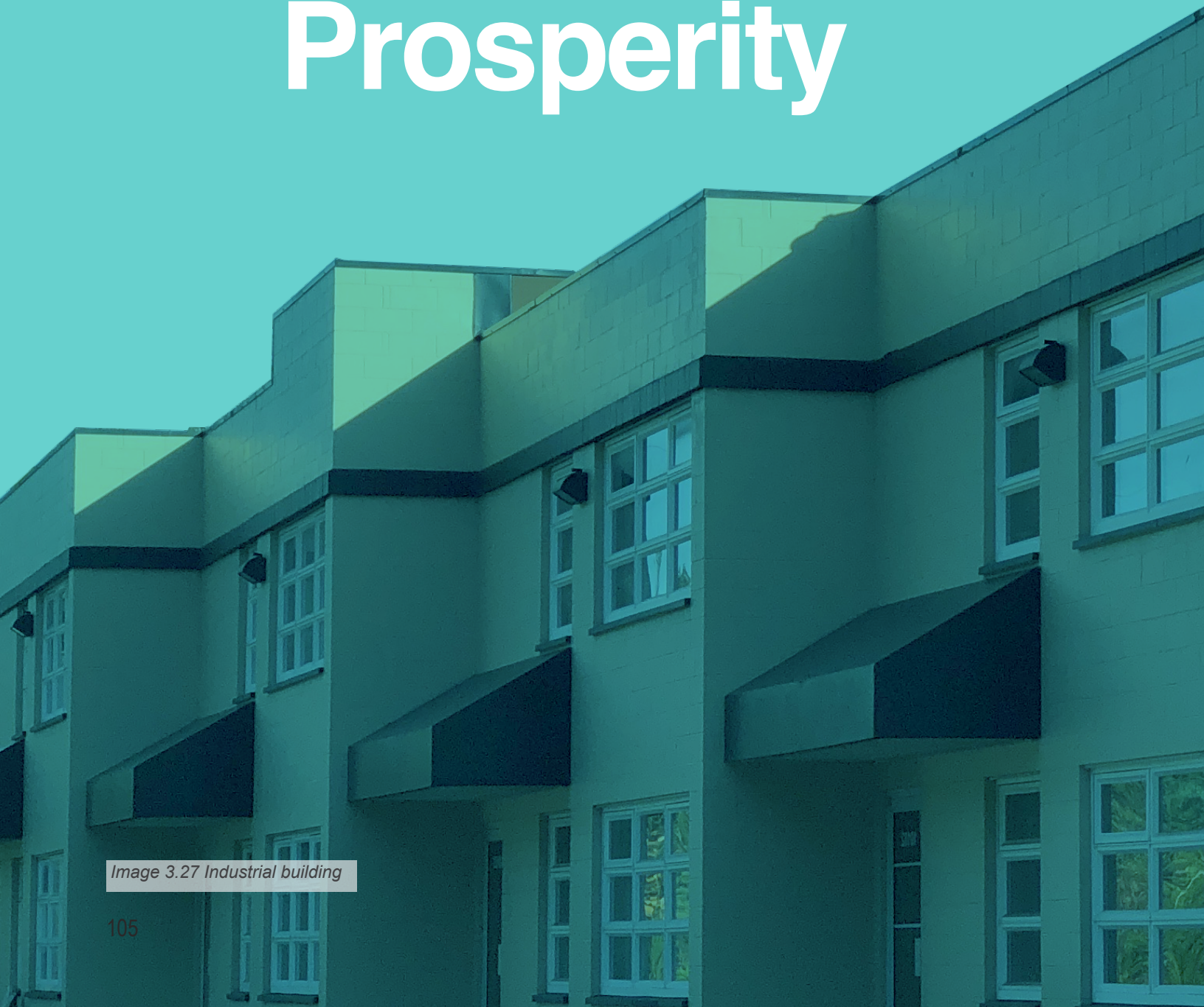


Image 3.27 Industrial building

Introduction

This policy chapter addresses the region's employment activities and resident access to the jobs of the future. The objectives and policies within align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan. We are committed to increasing the levels of economic resilience, security and prosperity for residents of the Cowichan Region.

The region's economy is centred upon traditional resource-based activities and the services sector, including forestry and milling. 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 Forestry and 0.44% is zoned Industrial. However, the suitability of this zoned industrial land is not ideal for industrial purposes. Of the 478 ha 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 (47-94 acres [ac]) by 2026. According to stakeholder consultation conducted by Economic Development Cowichan, most of the demand (75%) is for 0.2-0.8 ha zoned and fully serviced lands near 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 Prosperity

The following are five main factors 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, rising global energy and resource demands are placing increased pressure on local governments—like the CVRD—to use their natural resources more strategically. This challenge requires a shift from a traditional linear economy, which extracts, uses and disposes of resources, to a circular economy that is regenerative by design. A circular approach emphasizes minimizing waste, reusing materials and harnessing renewable local inputs to reduce dependency on finite resources.

2. High impact industrial areas

Certain industrial uses, like advanced manufacturing and food processing, may be more resource intensive than others. They often require significant water flows to support production and wastewater 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 presents challenges and opportunities as residents support local businesses but have longer commuting

distances. Designating employment lands near to where people live and diversifying local economies are essential components to the continued success of the electoral areas' communities.

4. Year-round 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 winters—while still the warmest in Canada—emerge 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.

Relationship to Social Equity

When developing economic policy, it's important to consider how it can better support local initiatives and community-based organizations. Too often, incentives for innovation disproportionately benefit large corporations and higher-income groups. By designing economic innovation policies that foster a more circular economy, we can ensure benefits are more equitably shared across the community. For example, expanding the ability to operate home-based businesses beyond single detached homes can create greater economic opportunities for residents in more affordable housing types.



Image 3.28 People eating in an orchard

Objectives

Key objectives include providing suitable employment lands in line with population growth and promoting a circular economy.

EMPLOYMENT LANDS

RPO.1 * Provide employment lands consistent with community needs and population growth projections.

RPO.2 * Protect existing industrial lands and support the expansion of industrial development that meets the objectives of the OCP and community employment and economic development needs.

RPO.3 *○ Ensure sufficient serviced industrial land in close proximity to distribution routes, access to public transit and workforce housing.

RPO.4 Align high impact industrial lands with servicing infrastructure.

RPO.5 Manage the interface between employment, residential, forestry, and agricultural lands.

RPO.6 ○ Consider establishing living wage employment generation per square foot (ft²) of development targets.

RPO.7 Foster stewardship of the land while encouraging sustainable economic development based on restorative and regenerative uses of the region's natural resources.

RPO.8 Communicate the value of economic activity in the region to the public.

CIRCULAR & INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

RPO.9 * Attract green enterprises and expand renewable energy production to build a circular economy.

RPO.10 Encourage innovation, adaptability and flexibility in commercial development.

RPO.11 * Attract emerging industries to the Cowichan region and support tech networking.

TOURISM

RPO.12 Expand tourism opportunities, including agri-tourism, as defined by the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.

RPO.13 Expand tourism infrastructure and explore the potential of off-season activities and attractions.

EQUITY POLICY

○ PRIORITIZE

* METRIC

△ IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

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 the Trans-Canada Highway.

RP.2 *○△ Encourage clustering and co-location of industries and support the production and retail aspects of a business in the same development, while increasing height and reducing parking requirements when located in proximity to transit, bike lanes and/or densely populated areas.

RP.3 Encourage the use of Eco-Industrial Park and Agri-Industrial Park zones with clear definitions and consider the use of incentives for competitive advantage.

RP.4 Consider the expansion of uses in Industrial zones to include clean technologies like bio-gas.

RP.5 ○△ Encourage out-migration of heavy industry from the Koksilah Village and from areas above the Cassidy aquifer to a less sensitive area (e.g. not adjacent to a residential neighbourhood or on top of a vulnerable aquifer).

RP.6 Explore incentives, either financial or through bonus density, for office space in villages.

RP.7 ○△ Support a diversity of commercial and light industrial uses that generate employment opportunities, provide living wages and contribute to the local economy.

RP.8 ○ Identify existing brownfield or contaminated sites in the region for remediation purposes.

RP.9 Support initiatives aligned with the development of rail & air transportation hubs on the island (e.g. Port Alberni Trans-shipment Hub).

RP.10 ○△ Explore economic development partnerships with local First Nations that are mutually beneficial.

RP.11 Discourage the conversion of Industrial and Commercial lands to Residential to preserve employment lands.

RP.12 Support flexibility and adaptability of uses and forms in existing and new commercial development.

INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

RP.13 Consider the creation of a Cowichan Tech Park where tech businesses can benefit from the advantages of clustering.

RP.14 ○△ Create a Cowichan Internet and Cellular Connectivity Strategy to expand and provide greater access to high-speed internet service, including expansion of fibre optic networks throughout the region.

RP.15 ○△ Establish a connectivity vision for the region around key community objectives to achieve greater economic, environmental and social outcomes.

RP.16 ○△ Encourage service providers to improve connectivity in underserved communities to the national standard (currently 50/10 and LTE).

RP.17 Leverage economic development opportunities associated with a new district hospital.

RP.18 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.19 Encourage businesses and development that attract and maintain a highly skilled workforce.

RP.20 Encourage innovative industries, including developers of green technologies, health science research, agriculture and others to locate within the regional district.

RP.21 Recognize the value of post-secondary institutions as key to innovation and collaborate with Vancouver Island University on economic development initiatives, such as innovation hubs or maker spaces.

RP.22 Explore the potential of a Vancouver Island University satellite campus in the electoral areas in close proximity to transit and a village core.

RP.23 Support community-based economic development efforts and initiatives, including local investment funds, cooperative development and social enterprise development.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

RP.24 Support storage space for deconstruction and material reuse markets.

RP.25 Support the progressive rehabilitation of resource-based activities, such as viable agricultural land or reforestation, that is compatible with the applicable regional OCP land use designation, surrounding environment and existing uses.

RP.26 Heavy and resource-based industries should minimize impacts on surrounding land use, while ensuring and contributing to the quality of life and residents and the natural environment.

TOURISM

RP.27 Encourage the growth of the tourism industry to help the region diversify its economy.

RP.28 Protect scenic landscapes and view corridors along the Malahat Highway and Highway 18 through the zoning bylaw review.

RP.29 Promote outdoor recreational activities as key tourist destinations.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE

 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



Enhance Economic Prosperity Policy

(by transect sub-area)

RESOURCE & NATURAL AREAS

RP.30 Support the sustainable use of natural resources.

RP.31 Support the collection, processing and distribution of raw materials that support a transition to a circular economy.

RP.32 Support the development of local and renewable energy sources to power a circular economy.

RP.33 Support the expansion of regenerative eco-tourism opportunities.

RP.34 Balance outdoor recreational needs with development of resource lands.

RURAL & AGRICULTURAL AREAS

RP.35 Provide small-scale and low-impact tourism, commercial and industrial uses that support the needs of rural and farming communities, consistent with Agricultural Land Reserve policy.

RP.36 Support the development of local and renewable energy sources to power a circular economy.

SUBURBAN AREAS

RP.37 Improve access to local shops and services.

RP.38 Support home-based businesses and light industrial uses (e.g. artisan studios) compatible with residential areas.

VILLAGE AREAS

RP.39 Support small-scale commercial developments with active ground floors that align with the character and identity of a village or settlement node.

RP.40 Support home-based businesses and light industrial uses compatible with a village setting.

RP.41 Support live/work and small-scale mixed-use developments that help diversify the community's economy.

URBAN AREAS

RP.42 Support live/work and mixed-use development with active ground floors.

RP.43 Encourage the development of office space, research facilities and post-secondary institutions.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

RP.44 Provide access to a wide variety of strategic employment lands, including high tech, advanced manufacturing, green enterprise and filming studios.

RP.45 Limit the amount of new development in the shape of big box and power retail shopping centres.



8

Improve Governance & Implementation

Image 3.29 Malahat Nation Carving | Moy Sutherland Jr and John Marston

Introduction

This policy chapter addresses how the vision, objectives and policies of this document will be implemented. The objectives and policies within align with the CVRD's Corporate Strategic Plan to serve, strengthen and connect Cowichan communities through collaborative governance. We are committed to improving our governance and implementation in order to make responsible decisions, be accountable, embrace the future and thrive.

Even the best plans require an implementation strategy. This OCP 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.

To ensure ongoing implementation and applicability, the OCP is intended to be a "living" document that lays out the vision and goals to guide our community's growth and success over the long term. Annual implementation reports and

associated housekeeping amendments may be brought forward as part of the implementation strategy to address changing community needs.

The following chapter provides direction for five key components:

- Relationships
- Development permit areas
- Alignment with other instruments
- Equitable consideration
- Performance metrics

Together, these components will help steer change in the electoral areas toward the common vision outlined in this plan.

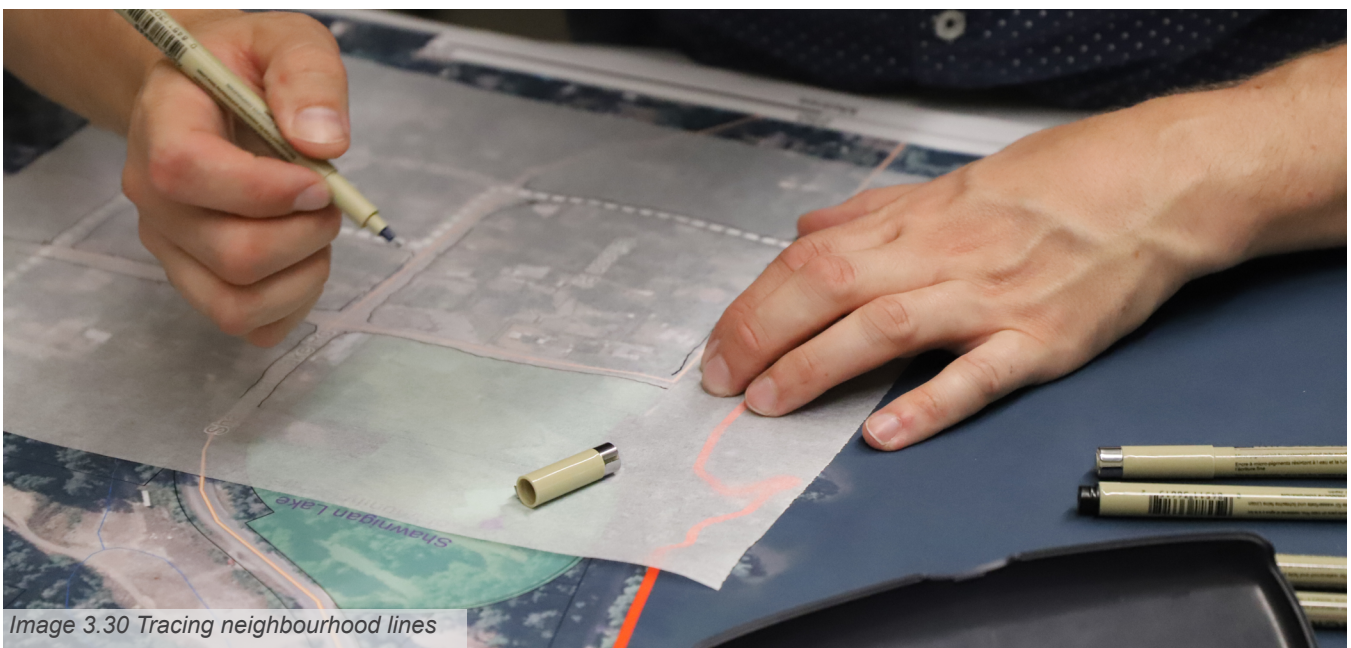


Image 3.30 Tracing neighbourhood lines

Relationships

Relationships are the cornerstone of progressing towards the OCP's goals, objectives and policies. Engagement with First Nations and other levels of government and collaboration with communities is foundational.

FIRST NATIONS

The CVRD commits to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and will aim to engage with First Nations where possible and in accordance with its legislative authority in the *Local Government Act*. The CVRD supports the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognize and uphold Indigenous Self-determination, human rights, cultural, economic and social development, and the right to good-faith engagement and participation in decision making.

Where electoral areas are adjacent to Indian Reserves (as identified by the *Indian Act*), it is important for local governments to engage and communicate in the planning and provision of servicing. Through the development of this OCP, neighbouring First Nations were engaged in a spirit of good relations. Potential collaboration exists in many areas, including infrastructure servicing, emergency preparedness, economic development, housing, health, stewardship, trail planning, marine planning, cultural heritage, arts and culture. Schedule F – First Nations Reserves Maps identifies Indian Reserves within electoral areas.

Eight First Nations are currently negotiating treaties in the region. Addressing unresolved Rights and Title is a responsibility shared between First Nations and the provincial and federal governments. The CVRD will participate where applicable and work co-operatively toward local resolutions. Treaty agreement(s) will impact First Nations and non-Indigenous communities; and therefore, this OCP should be revisited concurrent with treaty implementation.

Incremental Treaty Agreements (ITA) are legally binding pre-treaty agreements between the Province and negotiating First Nation(s) that provide transitional benefits in advance of a final treaty settlement and demonstrate a commitment to concluding the treaty. As of the date of writing this OCP, eight ITAs have been signed in the region: Ditidaht First Nation (2013), Malahat Nation (2013), Pacheedaht First Nation (2013), Halalt First Nation (2020), Penelakut Tribe (2020), Cowichan Tribes (2019) and Ts'uubaa-asatx (2023). The most recent ITA (2024) will transfer 312 ha of land along the Cowichan River to Lyackson First Nation and Cowichan Tribes.¹

¹ Province of BC (2024), *Incremental Treaty Agreements*. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/incremental-treaty-agreements>

Land use management authority remains with the local government until lands are given Reserve status under the *Indian Act* or a final treaty agreement comes into effect, at which point the lands become treaty settlement lands under the land use management authority of the signatory First Nation. In either case, CVRD servicing decisions and programs for adjacent lands may affect the feasibility and cost of extending services benefiting First Nations.

Land use management decisions by the CVRD Board on lands subject to an ITA and in the scope of this OCP will seek to respect the inherent right of First Nations Self-governance.

GI.1 Engage with First Nations in the future direction of the region.

GI.2 Review the principles and processes that guide place naming and evolving practices to foster reconciliation in local processes.

GI.3 Co-create engagement protocols and reconciliation agreements with First Nations.

GI.4 Protect First Nations archaeological, heritage and other cultural interests.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

GI.5 Work with the federal government on matters that are within their jurisdiction to

- protect watercourses and establish modernized policies for marine and foreshore environments
- protect species at risk and enhance natural assets by building on and expanding the federal *Species at Risk Act* safety net

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

GI.6 Work with the Province on matters that are within their jurisdiction:

- analyze and resolve drainage issues and approvals for subdivision.
- reduce auto dependency and provide safe and sustainable transportation options.
- build a wider range of affordable and below-market housing options.
- ensure a thriving agricultural industry.
- support the goals in the *Water Sustainability Act* to ensure a sustainable supply of fresh, clean water that meets the needs of BC residents today and in the future.
- ensure sustainable forest practices that maintain or enhance watershed health and the ability of watersheds to provide water to support environmental and community needs
- protect sensitive ecosystems and species at risk through private land ownership incentives.

INCORPORATED MUNICIPALITIES

GI.7 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 and coordinate technical information, regional plans and strategies to guide sustainable land use into the future.

EQUITY POLICY

 PRIORITIZE



 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Development Permit Areas

The CVRD uses Development Permit Areas (DPA), as permitted by the *Local Government Act*, to support the implementation of this OCP and guide development proposals for the purposes of

- protecting the natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity
- reducing hazard risks
- protecting agricultural lands and farming
- establishing form and character
- promoting energy and water conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

The following DPAs, along with their objectives and rationale, can be found in Schedules C and U of the OCP.

- GI.8** Use Protection of the Natural Environment Development Permit Area 1 and associated guidelines to protect and enhance riparian ecosystems.
- GI.9** Use Protection of the Natural Environment Development Permit Area 2 and associated guidelines to protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas.
- GI.10** Use Protection of the Natural Environment Development Permit Area 3 and associated guidelines to protect and enhance marine uplands and foreshore ecosystems.
- GI.11** Use Protection of the Natural Environment Development Permit Area 4 and associated guidelines to protect and enhance aquifer health.
- GI.12** Use Protection of Development from Hazardous Conditions Development Permit Areas and associated guidelines to protect against wildfire hazards (Development Permit Area 5), floodplain hazards (Development Permit Area 6) and slope instabilities (Development Permit 7).
- GI.13** Use Protection of Farming Development Permit Area 8 and associated guidelines to protect farm activities.
- GI.14** Use Form & Character Development Permit Area 9 (Intensive Residential, Multi-family Residential, Commercial & Mixed-use and Industrial) and associated guidelines to promote livable, healthy, safe and sustainable developments.
- GI.15** Use Development Permit Area 10 for energy and water conservation, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions and associated guidelines to support climate crisis mitigation efforts.

Alignment with other Instruments

The CVRD has many plans and strategies that provide direction for planning and development, the environment, transportation, engineering, 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 approach and outcomes.

* Instruments to Update

There are several instruments that have a direct impact on the growth and development of the electoral areas and that should be updated following adoption of the OCP as part of the implementation strategy. The following list of instruments should undergo a critical review to align with the vision, policies and regulations of this OCP. The list also includes the departments responsible for each instrument.


- Climate Projections for the Cowichan Valley Regional District (Land Use Services/Environment)
- Infrastructure and Servicing Master Plans (Operations)
- Works and Servicing Bylaw (Operations/Land Use Services)

* Instruments to Create & Implement

The following plans and policies are intended to be developed and/or implemented over the next ten years to further support the vision, policies and regulations of this OCP.

- Affordable Housing Plan (Land Use Services)
- Climate Change Mitigation Strategy (Environment)
- Conservation Strategy (Environment)
- Design Charette for Eagle Heights/Koksilah Village (Land Use Services)
- Heritage Strategy (Land Use Services)
- Natural Asset Framework (Corporate Services)
- Watershed Management Plans (Environment)
- Marine Official Community Plan (Land Use Services)
- Regional Agriculture Plan (Land Use Services, Environment)
- Regional Active Transportation Plan (Community Services)
- Stormwater Management/Drainage Bylaw (Land Use Services/Operations)
- Technical Study Slope Stability Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay (Land Use Services/Environment)
- Technical Study Slope Stability Electoral Area G review/addendum (Land Use Services/Environment)
- Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw (Land Use Services)
- Management Plans for Cowichan Lake and Shawnigan Lake (Land Use Services/Environment)

Equitable Consideration

When implementing policy, planners can take deliberate steps to ensure that social equity is embedded in both decision-making and outcomes. The following process offers a flexible framework for considering equity, especially for those policies in the OCP that are marked with the following symbol: 

Step 1 | Begin with Self-Awareness

Start by reflecting on your own social position and lived experience. Factors such as race, gender, age, sexuality, ability, education level, income, and years lived in the community can shape perspectives in subtle and significant ways. Recognizing these influences helps you better understand how your own position may affect the way you interpret data, engage with communities, and make policy choices.

Step 2 | Understand Who Will Be Affected

Use demographic data, ideally broken down by race, gender, and other relevant factors, to identify the people and places that will be impacted. Consider who has historically been left out of decision-making and whose voices need to be included now. Ask yourself: How will this action affect different groups in the short, medium, and long term? Which communities will benefit, and which might be disadvantaged?

Step 3 | Assess the Community Context

Explore the historical and cultural background of the policy area, including the impacts of colonization and the dispossession of traditional territory. Engage with affected communities to learn about their priorities and concerns, making sure communication is culturally appropriate and accessible. Identify who currently benefits from the policy, who is excluded, and whether the benefits can be more equitably shared.

Step 4 | Analyze Options and Make Decisions

Consider how different scenarios might impact community priorities and concerns. Evaluate each alternative to understand who will bear the greatest burden and who will receive the greatest benefits. Whenever possible, choose approaches that address root causes of inequity and that prioritize equitable outcomes.

Step 5 | Implement with Equity in Mind

When moving forward, communicate openly with the various impacted communities, especially those most affected. Look for opportunities to advance equity through hiring, sourcing, and partnerships. Work with affected groups to define measurable outcomes, establish accountability systems, and create mechanisms for course correction if needed.

Step 6 | Commit to Continuous Learning

Monitor whether the policy continues to address community priorities, particularly those of diverse and historically underrepresented populations. Remain open to adjusting approaches as community needs evolve and share progress transparently with all stakeholders and view equity as an ongoing commitment, not a one-time step.

This equity process was adapted from a range of different equity checklists, including the King County Equity Impact Review.

Performance Metrics

Performance metrics have been developed to monitor and assess the effectiveness of policies within this OCP.

They are grouped by the OCP goals and include additional general growth management metrics to better understand where focus may be needed to successfully implement the whole plan. Policies throughout the OCP that are related to a performance metric are identified using the following star symbol: ✨

Performance metrics can be found in Appendix II of the OCP.



Sonnet 1153

“The Colour Blue”

The Steller's jay is dressed in azure clothes
But his patch of blue's an anomaly true
In a world that's monochromatic
Under a fall of powder snow
That's softened every crown of willow
And on the lake has turned grey ice to white
And from cedar branches has stolen begging hands
Till on frozen knees they wait without respite

In summer he'd be nothing new
Among the rhododendrons and bee-loud rosemary
The swallows and the sparrows
And all the other southern immigrants who come
When providence is bountiful in a summer Eden
But when the sky's the colour of smoke and slate
And thick with promise of more snow tonight
His raucous voice is louder still
As if the sleeping farm his shrieks would wake
And the spikes upon his Viking crown
Have more than usual an annoyed and angry look

He waits at every winter dawn inside his hazel tree
Hungry for my silhouette to see and speak intent
For the shower of sunflower seeds I will spill
And with black gold stain his immaculate field below

Because both of us this place need to thrive or no
And without me I wonder what that Steller's jay would do
Or without I see his colour blue I'd be the lesser too

— © 2022 John Edwards, poet laureate (electoral area H)

Image 3.31 Winter landscape



CVRD

APPENDIX I

Process and Planning



List of Figures

Figure 1: Living Tree Diagram

4

Process

The OCP planning process is captured in *Figure 1: Living Tree Diagram*, which shows the OCP's growth and its fundamental roots in community engagement and previous work. Just like a tree, leaves and fruit can only blossom with a strong trunk and solid roots.

The roots show First Nations engagement, technical reports, Advisory Planning Commissions and other groups who have contributed to the OCP's development. From there, the trunk rises with the strength and stability of community engagement and blossoms into the OCP schedules.

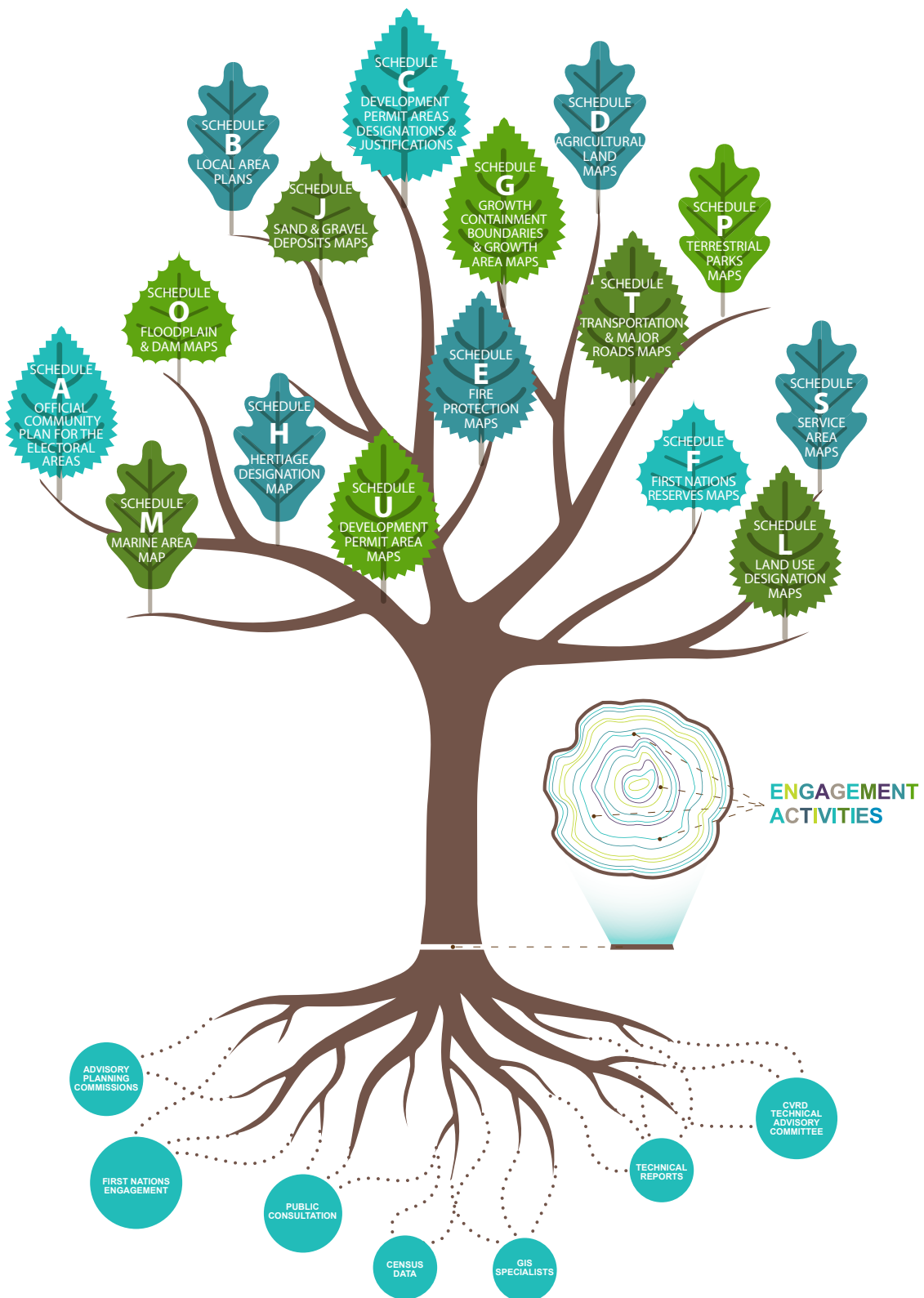


Figure 1: Living Tree Diagram

The Living Tree: A Summary of Consultation and Engagement

FIRST NATIONS

First Nations consultation was ongoing from 2020 to 2025, including meetings, correspondence and referral to Cowichan Tribes, Penelakut Tribe and Ditidaht, Halalt, Lyackson, Malahat, Pacheedaht, Pauquachin, Stz'uminus and Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nations at first reading.

In-depth engagement with Malahat Nation and Ts'uubaa-asatx on local area planning was supported by Complete Communities funding.

ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Experienced volunteers from the nine electoral areas provided review and local area expertise. The APCs reviewed policy goals and objectives, land use designations, growth containment boundaries and all other mapping schedules starting in 2020 with refinements over five years to 2025. All OCP schedules were presented to the APCs in the spring of 2025.

GIS SPECIALISTS

GIS-based analysis of housing, employment and population projections defined growth containment boundaries and land use designations. The interim Housing Needs Report was completed in 2024 and includes projections to 2050.

CVRD TECHNICAL REPORTS

Technical reports, including slope hazard and climate risk assessments, environmentally sensitive areas mapping and wildfire protection plans, formed the basis of development permit area designations.

CVRD TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In 2020, an internal technical committee was established to review policy goals and objectives. Internal referrals to CVRD divisions were ongoing from 2020 to 2025 to utilize policy area expertise and achieve consistency across the organization.

Community Engagement

Community engagement shaped the OCP's vision, goals, policies and local area planning priorities, and was based on the following principles: open, inclusive, prepared, transparent and collaborative. Engagement took place throughout OCP development from 2020 to 2025, including:

OPEN HOUSES (2020)

- Opportunity to prioritize policy goals and vision.

PLANYOURCOWICHAN (2021)

- Project information including videos, draft schedules and the interactive story map were accessible on the engagement platform.

COMMUNITY CIRCLES (2022)

- In-depth discussion of policy goals and objectives.

IDEAS FAIRS (2023)

- Draft policies and objectives, land use designation and growth containment boundaries maps, and local area plan priorities presented for feedback.

CONSULTATION (2024)

- The interim Housing Needs Assessment was informed by equity denied populations.

LOCAL AREA PLAN WORKSHOPS (2024)

- Refined draft visions and descriptions, policies and objectives.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (2025)

- All OCP schedules were presented.

The Ideas Book captures and celebrates the community's contribution to the OCP. It reports back to the community on how their ideas are reflected in the OCP.

The Ideas Book is available at PlanYourCowichan.ca.

APPENDIX II

Performance Metrics



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Introduction

Appendix Two I Performance Metrics includes the dashboard of performance metrics for Bylaw 4373 – Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas (OCP). The structure of the OCP and the dashboard of metrics are linked in a hierarchical relationship that connects the performance metrics to the goals through objectives and policies.

A dashboard of metrics provides many benefits to a community plan including

- providing clarity to qualitative policies by adding a quantitative (measurable) dimension
- providing feedback on the progress of implementing policies and achieving objectives over time

Many policies are important for shaping discussion, choices and decisions, but they may not have aspects that are easily measured.

When selecting metrics that can adequately track the performance of the policy areas, it was important that each metric

- has available and easily accessible data
- is tracked in a consistent manner at regular intervals to have consistency and show change
- falls under the responsibility of a CVRD department or other government organization that would also oversee the mandate to report on it
- is linked directly to the spatial boundaries, jurisdiction and actions of the CVRD

The following dashboard provides several key metrics that will be used to monitor implementation of the policies in each policy area of the OCP.

How to Read this Document

Each of the performance metrics corresponds with a Schedule A policy area.



GOAL #1

Mitigate & Adapt to the Climate Crisis

1. Residential Building Emissions

DESCRIPTION

This indicator measures residential electricity in kilowatt hours (kWh), and natural gas, delivered propane, heating oil and wood consumption in gigajoules (GJ).

RELEVANCE

This metric helps track progress toward reducing climate impacts and becoming a more energy efficient community. Land use changes can influence built form, which affects building energy use and resulting emissions. It is important to keep in mind, however, that a total reduction in energy will not necessarily result in a reduction in emissions, due to the differing carbon content of different fuels¹. It is therefore important to track electricity consumption from each fuel type individually.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.1 Mitigate and Adapt to the Climate Crisis Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

Provincial Community Energy Emissions Inventory (CEEI), BC Hydro and FortisBC. The Provincial CEEI is currently the standard source for community emissions in BC. This dataset provides the most reliable estimates of disaggregate emissions by fuel type in BC current to 2022.

DATA

Residential electric total consumption (kWh) and gas total consumption (GJ).

- 2022 Residential Total Electric Consumption: 291,765,189 kWh; 3,354 TCO₂e
- 2022 Residential Total Gas Consumption: 124,867 GJ; 6,271 TCO₂e
- 2022 Residential Total Delivered Propane Consumption: 12,479 GJ; 761 TCO₂e
- 2022 Residential Total Heating Oil Consumption: 26,779 GJ; 1,842 TCO₂e
- 2022 Residential Wood Consumption: 163,318 GJ; 7,839 TCO₂e
- 2022 Total Emissions: 25,878 TCO₂

DESIRED TREND

Based on the Provincial CEEI, residential buildings in CVRD unincorporated areas had 24,141 tonnes of emissions in 2007. Using the Provincial 2022 Clean BC Roadmap stated target of 50% emissions reductions by 2030 and 100% by 2050, this total should be reduced to 12,071 tonnes and 0 tonnes in 2030 and 2050, respectively.

METHODS

Access the CEEI and update, as required.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This information is available through the provincial emissions tracking program and should be available for inclusion in each reporting cycle with minimal resources.

LIMITATIONS

- Uncertainty in the modelled data: Because of uncertainties in changing consumer behaviour (e.g. during covid-19 people were home and used more energy) and new technologies that increase household efficiency (like heat pumps), it is difficult to predict what will be introduced or the rate of uptake.
- Uncertainty in the CEEI: Hydro currently reports non-building electricity under the building sector, although it is not clear where. This will be disaggregated out in future versions of the CEEI.

¹ For example, because the carbon content in electricity in BC is substantially lower than other fuels, a total net increase in energy will still result in lower emissions if all fossil fuels are replaced with electricity.

2. Light Duty Transportation Emissions

DESCRIPTION

This indicator measures annual carbon emissions resulting from light duty (passenger vehicles) registered to a residence in the CVRD. This includes travel within and outside of the CVRD.

RELEVANCE

Carbon emissions resulting from passenger vehicle use are an effective and meaningful measure of community contributions to climate change and GHG emissions reduction strategies. Land use changes can impact passenger vehicle use habits at the community scale, making vehicle transportation emissions a useful measure of the impacts of OCP land use policies.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.1 Mitigate and Adapt to the Climate Crisis Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

Provincial Community Energy Emissions Inventory (CEEI). The Provincial CEEI is currently the standard source for community emissions in BC. This dataset provides the most reliable estimates of disaggregate emissions by fuel type in BC current to 2022.

DATA

Provincial GHG Emissions Inventory

- 2022 number of registered light duty vehicles in the CRD unincorporated areas: 35,977 vehicles
- 2022 total light duty vehicle kilometres traveled (VKT): 425,167,427 kilometres traveled
- 2022 average light duty VKT per vehicle: 11,817 km/vehicle
- 2022 emissions from light duty vehicles: 122,739 TCO₂e

DESIRED TREND

Based on the Provincial CEEI, light duty vehicles in CVRD unincorporated areas had 110,219 tonnes of emissions in 2007. Using the Provincial 2022 Clean BC Roadmap stated target of 50% emissions reductions by 2030 and 100% by 2050, this total should be reduced to 55,110 tonnes and 0 tonnes in 2030 and 2050, respectively.

METHODS

Access the CEEI and update, as required.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This information is available through the provincial emissions tracking program and should be available for inclusion in each reporting cycle with minimal resources.

LIMITATIONS

Uncertainty with modelled data: Data is created using estimates of annual vehicle kms travelled, which has a low degree of certainty due to disparate or incomplete data sources. Other uncertainties in modelling include potential for incomplete base ICBC data, methodology does not account for idle time and traffic.



GOAL #2

Manage Infrastructure Responsibly

3. Serviced Customers Inside the Growth Containment Boundary for all Community Services

DESCRIPTION

This metric records the number of residential units within the GCB who are serviced by CVRD or community water and sewer services, compared to those within the GCB not connected to CVRD or community water and sewer services.

RELEVANCE

Compact growth should occur in serviced areas, and monitoring growth of these areas provides important information for planning and investment decisions. This metric allows the CVRD to track whether a growing portion of CVRD households within the GCB is being serviced.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.2 Manage Infrastructure Responsibly Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

CVRD utilities, BC Stats.

DATA

Number of assessed units within water service areas by GCB.

- Electoral areas A, B and C: 4,005
- Electoral area D: 1,175
- Electoral area E: 417
- Electoral area F: 301
- Electoral area G: 910
- Electoral area H: 252
- Electoral area I: 778

Number of assessed units within sewer service areas by GCB.

- Electoral areas A, B and C: 2,031
- Electoral area D: 1,081
- Electoral area E: 417
- Electoral area F: 50
- Electoral area G: 0
- Electoral area H: 0
- Electoral area I: 261

Number of assessed units within CVRD-owned water service areas by GCB.

- Electoral areas A, B and C: 1,639
- Electoral area D: 233
- Electoral area E: 0
- Electoral area F: 301
- Electoral area G: 910
- Electoral area H: 0
- Electoral area I: 741

Number of assessed units within CVRD-owned sewer service areas by GCB.

- Electoral areas A, B and C: 1,759
- Electoral area D: 1,081
- Electoral area E: 417
- Electoral area F: 50
- Electoral area G: 0
- Electoral area H: 0
- Electoral area I: 260

INTERPRETATION

- Total number of units in GCB with water servicing: 7,838
- Total number of units in GCB sewer servicing: 3,840
- Total number of units with CVRD-owned water servicing: 3,824
- Total number of units with CVRD-owned sewer servicing: 3,567
- % of CVRD units in GCB with water servicing: 82%
- % of CVRD units in GCB with sewer servicing: 40%
- % of CVRD units in GCB with CVRD-owned water servicing: 40%
- % of CVRD units with CVRD-owned sewer servicing inside GCB: 37%
- Change year over year: N/A

DESIRED TREND

Total population with CVRD managed servicing should go up year over year; proportion of CVRD managed serviced population within the GCB versus without should go up year over year.

METHODS

- Identify service area polygons and GCB polygons.
- Sum GCB number of units in service areas by owner type and GCB number of units outside service areas.
- Report as number and percentage.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

Maps of service areas are continuously being updated. GIS can undertake a population or household count using assessment data within service areas and the GCB to identify the number currently serviced.

LIMITATIONS

- Does not account for non-residential activity.
- Does not account for daytime population.
- Does not account for unified sewer and water service.

4. Fire and Emergency Response Capacity and Coverage

DESCRIPTION

This metric shows the percentage of the community that is covered by emergency services.

RELEVANCE

As the population of the CVRD grows, it is expected and desired that growth should occur in a compact manner, reducing sprawl. This should result in most of the population growth occurring in areas already serviced, reducing the need for emergency services to sprawl further, thus increasing efficiency.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

- Section 3.1 Mitigate and Adapt to the Climate Crises Objectives and Policies
- Section 3.2 Manage Infrastructure Responsibly Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

CVRD emergency services, census population.

DATA

Percentage of population with fire service protection by electoral area:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • Area A: 100% | • Area F: 99.2% |
| • Area B: 100% | • Area G: 100% |
| • Area C: 100% | • Area H: 100% |
| • Area D: 100% | • Area I: 100% |
| • Area E: 99.8% | |

INTERPRETATION

- Area covered: 41,890 hectares (ha)
 - » 60,000 ha including the municipalities—relevant to fire department capacity as the departments serve the municipalities and electoral areas simultaneously.
- Change year over year: N/A
- New population within service areas vs new population outside service areas: N/A

DESIRED TREND

Increase in the percentage of the community covered by fire and emergency services.

METHODS

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Identify service area polygons. | • For each electoral area, divide population serviced by total electoral area population and present as a percentage. |
| • For each electoral area, sum population within polygons. | |

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

The maps of emergency service coverage are available and continually being updated. GIS can take the information and undertake a dwelling unit count to identify what percentage of units in each electoral area are covered. It is expected to take one to two days of GIS time per reporting cycle to update.

LIMITATIONS

- Census data is not updated annually.
- Capacity of improvement districts to expand service area boundaries.



GOAL #3

Make Distinct, Complete Communities

5. Provision of Lands by OCP Land Use Inside and Outside the Growth Containment Boundary

DESCRIPTION

This metric measures the area of land by OCP land use designation in the CVRD both within and outside the growth containment boundary. Fundamentally, this metric provides insight into how much area is programmed for various uses and densities which will shape how the region will change for years to come.

RELEVANCE

Monitoring the composition of land uses in the CVRD - especially within the growth containment boundary (GCB) provides a crucial barometer on land availability and capacity and potential for change. A strong mix of land uses is directly relevant to the sustainable functioning of each of the CVRD electoral areas.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES:

Section 3.3 Make Distinct, Complete Communities Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

CVRD OCP land use designations, CVRD OCP GCBs, CVRD parcels.

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DATA

Area in hectares outside of the growth containment boundary

OCP Land Use Designation	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	CVRD
Large Lot Rural	0.0	333.4	0.0	0.0	577.0	629.5	0.0	194.2	20.2	1,754.3
Small Lot Rural	482.2	1,090.1	66.4	94.0	203.4	343.8	0.0	591.3	0.0	2,871.2
Country Suburban	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.9
Large Lot Suburban	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	4.2	4.7
Medium Lot Suburban	24.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	34.3
Compact Lot Suburban	0.0	13.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	15.0
Village Residential	0.0	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1
Village Core	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mixed Employment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
General Commercial	1.9	2.2	2.5	9.0	4.4	1.3	0.0	6.3	0.0	27.6
Village Commercial	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tourist Commercial	70.5	3.2	2.4	0.0	10.5	26.1	0.0	24.0	0.0	136.7
General Industrial	42.1	52.3	20.7	16.6	36.5	25.7	0.0	15.8	0.0	209.7
Light Industrial	113.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	2.7	0.0	119.8
Forestry & Resources	2,434.1	24,066.6	103.3	0.0	7,270.7	15,607.0	24,591.8	4,621.0	48,891.5	262,586.1
Agriculture	684.6	1,552.9	1,298.4	919.0	3,151.7	1,060.0	180.6	1,930.2	0.0	10,777.4
Infrastructure	10.4	39.6	0.6	0.0	17.4	0.5	4.4	48.5	4.7	126.1
Institutional	9.9	34.2	15.8	1.2	32.1	15.4	0.0	6.3	5.4	120.3
Parks & Open Space	45.6	1,098.6	3.2	4.6	641.4	23,404.2	92.8	377.8	426.4	26,094.6
Water	7.6	677.8	10.6	0.7	8.0	3971.5	63.5	110.0	4,453.5	9,303.2
Total	3,926.9	28,964.1	1,528.2	1045.1	11,962.6	180,090.9	24,933.2	7,928.2	53,807.8	314,187.0

Table 1 Area in hectares outside of the growth containment boundary

Area in hectares inside of the growth containment boundary

OCP Land Use Designation	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	CVRD
Large Lot Rural	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Small Lot Rural	0.0	10.5	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.6
Country Suburban	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.4	0.0	17.2	354.2	0.0	226.4	663.2
Large Lot Suburban	179.4	346.8	307.9	24.6	0.0	85.9	0.0	101.4	104.2	1,150.2
Medium Lot Suburban	336.3	369.6	114.2	73.3	45.8	49.1	1.8	3.8	88.2	1,082.1
Compact Lot Suburban	2.3	7.2	31.2	11.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.6	81.2	153.7
Village Residential	13.7	9.9	14.8	4.7	4.5	49.1	0.0	0.0	13.7	110.4
Village Core	54.4	0.0	0.0	15.6	0.0	146.5	0.0	0.0	18.0	234.5
Mixed Employment	2.3	0.0	31.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
General Commercial	1.8	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.1	2.0	2.1	0.0	2.4	11.7
Village Commercial	6.3	6.4	2.2	12.9	0.0	3.5	6.5	0.0	0.3	38.1
Tourist Commercia	1.5	5.1	0.0	1.0	0.0	22.6	0.4	0.0	78.1	108.7
General Industrial	2.9	0.0	15.7	0.0	44.7	23.6	0.0	0.0	73.4	160.3
Light Industrial	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	7.8	0.0	0.2	11.2	21.6
Forestry & Resources	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	182.6	0.0	0.0	160.7	343.6
Agriculture	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.1	0.0	22.3	0.0	32.4
Infrastructure	0.0	20.1	3.5	0.0	6.8	18.7	12.5	4.5	12.2	78.3
Institutional	41.7	111.6	8.3	2.6	2.5	35.5	2.2	2.1	36.1	242.6
Parks & Open Spa	40.3	34.2	10.3	20.1	2.1	28.7	34.6	29.3	154.7	354.3
Water	0.0	1.7	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4
Total	682.9	923.1	546.7	231.5	106.5	683.0	414.3	184.2	1,060.8	4,833.0

Table 2 Area in hectares inside of the growth containment boundary

INTERPRETATION

- The data tables above can be used to determine the composition of lands both by electoral area and by presence inside the GCB. This table can be used as a sense check on the OCP to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of lands (i.e. by general and specific uses) by electoral area and the GCB.
- Currently, lowest intensity uses (Large Lot Rural, Small Lot Rural, General Commercial, Light Industrial, Forestry & Resource, Agriculture and Water) account for 8.7% of lands inside the GCB and 91.5% outside of the GCB. Conversely, highest intensity uses (Medium Lot Suburban, Compact Lot Suburban, Village Residential, Village Core, Mixed Employment, Village Commercial and Institutional) account for 61.5% of lands within the GCB and 0.07% of the total lands outside of the GCB, which suggests that the land use typologies are appropriately designated in the growth containment boundary.

DESIRED TREND

Generally, the desired trend is for higher intensity land use types to increase in prevalence inside the GCB and for lower intensity land use types to maintain their prevalence outside of the GCB.

- Reduced lower intensity land use types inside the GCB (Large and Small Lot Rural, Agriculture, Light Industrial, Forestry & Resource)
- Reduced higher intensity land use types outside of the GCB (Medium and Compact Lot Suburban, Village Residential, Village Core, Village Commercial, Institutional)

METHODS

Union growth containment boundaries with OCP land use polygons, clip these data to parcels to gain a sense of land areas. Summarize areas by electoral area, presence within the GCB and OCP land use.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

These data can be reported annually or as the OCP is updated.

LIMITATIONS

The methods established to report on areas use parcel areas which are exclusive of rights of way and some natural features. As these parcels are resurveyed or rebaselined, area calculations may shift somewhat in the years ahead.

6. Housing Starts per Year

DESCRIPTION

This metric monitors ongoing supply of housing in the region—it measures the number and composition of new housing units built.

RELEVANCE

Monitoring the supply of housing is necessary as a means of understanding growth in the region. Vital questions this metric answers include:

- Is housing supply keeping up with population growth?
- Is an adequate amount of the housing starts occurring in the GCB (i.e. in compact and serviced areas), thus preserving rural and agricultural areas?

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.3 Make Distinct, Complete Communities Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

BC Gov data on building permits – Single, Row and Apartments datasets.

DATA

Number of housing starts in the CVRD.

- July 2021 - June 2022: 104 single-unit dwellings, 64 apartments, 0 row houses
- July 2022 - June 2023: 115 single-unit dwellings, 56 apartments, 1 row house
- July 2023 - June 2024: 75 single-unit dwellings, 25 apartments, 0 row houses

INTERPRETATION

- Change year over year: N/A
- Unit composition: by bedrooms, if possible—may be available with permit data: N/A
- Progress towards housing needs from updated Housing Needs Report

DESIRED TREND

Increasing or stable number of housing starts, desired dwelling mix is being achieved.

METHODS

For each of the three datasets (Single, Row Dwellings and Apartments), CVRD must be identified. From the Total CVRD value, the municipalities must be subtracted.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

The Province is tracking this data regularly. It is readily available from the Province's website for each reporting cycle.

LIMITATIONS

Without knowing the type of units (i.e. number of bedrooms) or electoral area, this only partially addresses housing needs.

7. Percentage of Households within the Growth Containment Boundary in Proximity to Amenities

DESCRIPTION

This metric monitors the share of residents living within a convenient proximity to key amenities. Key amenities include schools, employment lands, shopping centres, recreation facilities, parks and transit. Convenient proximity is considered a 5- to 10-minute walk or a 5- to 20-minute drive.

RELEVANCE

To promote growth within already compact and serviced areas, it is important to monitor whether the growing population has access to amenities within their community or whether they need to travel a substantial amount to access key resources. This allows us to monitor whether the population growth is spreading out or continuing to cluster in the GCB. Encouraging walkability and short drives also progresses climate crisis mitigation goals.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.3 Make Distinct, Complete Communities Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

Building permit data, CVRD GIS data and census household data.

DATA

Amenity Assessments	Percent meeting target
Percent of households within a 10-minute drive of schools	79%
Percent of households within a 10-minute drive of childcare	96%
Percent of households within a 20-minute drive of employment lands	100%
Percent of households within 1600 m (20 minutes walking) of shopping centres	54%
Percent of households within 800 m (10 minutes walking) of transit stops	70%
Percent of households within a 30-minute drive of recreation facilities and parks	100%

Table 3 Percentage of households with the GCB in proximity to amenities

INTERPRETATION

Rate of growth within x distance of x amenity compared to rate of growth in the rest of the region: N/A

DESIRED TREND

Increase in percent of households in proximity.

METHODS

- Identify all amenities of interest as points: schools, employment lands, shopping centres, transit stops.
- Using the CVRD street network, create a driving network (for use with ArcGIS network analyst).
- Using the amenities as source locations, create drive time polygons per agreed upon drive shed. Carry out the same process for walk sheds.

- Sum households in the GCB within drive sheds, per amenity.
- Present population as percentage of total households within GCB.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This metric will be GIS analysis heavy and may take upwards of two days to complete per reporting period. The methods will consist of gathering point locations of key amenities, creating walking and driving polygons around them based on a road network and summing population at the block level within those polygons.

- Employment lands are defined as clusters of job producing actual use codes greater than 40,000 square feet (ft²).
- Shopping centres are defined as clusters of retail actual use codes greater than 10,000 ft².

LIMITATIONS

- Census data is not updated annually.
- The distances and travel times chosen are a best fit metric but may not accurately measure need for all households, as consumer behaviour is difficult to predict and characterize.
- Employment spaces and grocery store data is difficult to accurately source. Shopping centres are used as a key retail amenity as they best represent a stable, diverse offering of retail opportunities. Access may be greater than modelled by this measure, especially to grocery stores and smaller produce markets. However, an accurate database of stand-alone stores is difficult to achieve due to closures, moves and lack of knowledge of product offerings (for example, a specialty salsa store would be classified as a food store when using business licence data, but certainly does not contribute to a resident's access to grocery stores). While introducing some uncertainty, using shopping complexes offers a more conservative but reliable measure.



GOAL #4

Expand Mobility Options

8. Percentage of Population Within 400m of a Transit Stop

DESCRIPTION

This indicator measures the population that are within a convenient walking distance (400 m or 5–10 minutes) of a public transit stop.

RELEVANCE

Encouraging growth in compact areas and aiming to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips demand that population growth be targeted toward areas with easy transit access. This will provide a higher number of residents with diverse transportation options, will decrease GHG emissions and will increase community interconnectivity.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.4 Expand Mobility Options Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

BC stats population, CVRD GIS, BC transit

DATA

Total population within 400 m walking distance of public transit.

INTERPRETATION

- Change over time: N/A

Amenity Assessment	Percent meeting target
Percent of CVRD population within 400 m (5 minutes walking) of transit stops	18%

Table 4 Percentage of population within 400 m of a transit stop

- The above, as compared to RDN, Alberni-Clayoquot and provincial averages

DESIRED TREND

Increase in percent of population within 400 m of a transit stop.

METHODS

- Identify all bus stops.
- Using the CVRD street network and stops as source locations, create 400 m walk sheds around each stop.
- Sum population within the walk sheds.
- Present as percent of total population by electoral area.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This data is compiled through a combination of census data and updated maps from BC Transit. It will take approximately two days of work for GIS to update this information for every reporting cycle.

LIMITATIONS

Does not consider bus frequency, time of day or reliability of transit service.



GOAL #5

Protect & Restore Natural Assets

9. Percentage of Green Space Protected From Development

DESCRIPTION

This indicator measures the percentage of green space that is reasonably protected from development. Reasonable protection from development may look like restrictions on development or extra studies required pre-development. Green space includes provincial, national and CVRD managed park areas, as well as environmentally sensitive areas. This indicator additionally focuses on parks and protected areas within the GCB, which are areas that will experience increased development pressures during the lifespan of this plan. Maintaining or increasing the quantity of parks within the GCB will therefore be important to protect green space from likely development.

RELEVANCE

Protecting natural areas and green space is key to maintaining the spirit of the CVRD. To maintain the natural appeal of the region while also encouraging increased density in some areas, it is important to monitor the protection of biodiversity and ecological landscape from the pressures of development especially within the GCB.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.5 Protect and Restore Natural Assets Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

CVRD GIS data

DATA

Provincial, national, regional and CVRD managed park area by electoral area; Sensitive ecosystems.

Electoral Area	Area (ha) outside of the GCB	Area (ha) inside of the GCB	Area (ha) total
A	45.6	40.3	85.9
B	1,099.5	34.2	1,133.7
C	3.2	10.3	13.5
D	4.6	20.1	24.7
E	641.4	2.1	643.5
F	23,440.7	28.7	23,469.4
G	92.8	34.6	127.4
H	377.8	29.3	407.1
I	426.4	154.7	581.1
Total	26,132.0	354.3	26,486.3

Table 5 Parks and open space land use designation within and outside of the growth containment boundary.

Park Type	Area (ha) outside of GCB	Area (ha) inside of GCB	Area (ha) total
CVRD parks	1,326.3	194.9	1,521.2
Provincial and ecological reserve	18,691.5		
National park	8,471.8		

Table 6 Park area by park type and presence within the growth containment boundary.. Please note, overlap exists between these subcategories. “CVRD Parks” are parks within the electoral areas, contained in CVRD GIS’ departments Parks layer. .

INTERPRETATION

Park area as a fraction of undeveloped land.

	Area (ha) outside of GCB	Area (ha) inside of GCB	Area (ha) total
OCP Parks and Open Space	26,132.0	354.3	26,486.3
Parks within OCP Parks and Open Space	25,738.1	185.1	25,923.2
% of OCP Parks and Open Space that are park	99%	52%	98%

Table 7 Park area as a fraction of OCP park designated land

DESIRED TREND

Increasing or stable percent of green space protected from development.

METHODS

Sum of all areas by electoral area.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

Reporting on this metric is relatively simple, requiring summing areas.

LIMITATIONS

Need a stronger definition of reasonably protected areas or introduce a continuum of conservation strength to the indicator, which is time consuming.

10. Proportion of Canopy in Intended Development Areas

DESCRIPTION

This indicator measures the current leaf-on canopy that is present on all parcels in the CVRD and is disaggregated by the GCB. Canopy coverage is a key indicator that can proxy for ecosystem health, impervious areas and overall scale of urbanization. Highly treed areas are often cooler in summer, increase stormwater infiltration and generally increase the quality of life of the CVRD's residents. Maintaining or increasing canopy coverage is therefore a high quality goal that can be activated through thoughtful development, tree retention, replanting efforts and conservation of forest lands.

RELEVANCE

Forested areas represent both the pre-European and industrial past of the Cowichan Valley as well as its adaptive future to a changing climate. Enhancing or maintaining the quantity and quality of forested and treed lands should be a priority of the OCP and directly represents OCP policies explored in this plan.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.5 Protect and Restore Natural Assets Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

The canopy height data is derived from the Meta Global Canopy Height Layer at 1 m² spatial resolution. Unlike traditional canopy height models (CHM), the heights and extents of this data are generated through an advanced AI-based process that combines high-resolution optical imagery (Maxar satellite imagery), high resolution aerial lidar datasets, and convolutional neural network trained on Global Ecosystem Dynamics Investigation satellite observations.

DATA

The canopy product maps where each pixel (1m²) is assigned a canopy height estimate. These estimates result from deep learning models (both supervised and unsupervised) that integrate the data sources described above¹. These estimates form the basis for calculating the percentage area covered by tree canopy.

DESIRED TREND

Increasing or stable levels of canopy coverage within the urban containment boundary especially in high growth potential land uses such as Compact lot Suburban, Village Core and Village Residential.

INTERPRETATION

Each row in the table above indicates the percentage of land area within a land use designation that is covered in leaf-on tree canopy for the reporting year. Higher percentages indicate more extensive canopy cover throughout land use designations.

¹ Tolan, J., Yang, H.-I., Nosarzewski, B., Couairon, G., Vo, H. V., Brandt, J., Spore, J., Majumdar, S., Haziza, D., Vamaraju, J., Moutakanni, T., Bojanowski, P., Johns, T., White, B., Tiecke, T., & Couprie, C. (2024). Very high resolution canopy height maps from RGB imagery using self-supervised vision transformer and convolutional decoder trained on aerial lidar. *Remote Sensing of Environment*, 300, 113888. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2023.113888>

Percentage of Land Area that has Tree Canopy

OCP Land Use Designation	Outside GCB	Inside GCB	All Lands in the CVRD
Large Lot Rural	80.2%	N/A	80.2%
Small Lot Rural	73.9%	71.0%	73.9%
Country Suburban	73.8%	64.1%	65.0%
Large Lot Suburban	77.5%	64.5%	65.9%
Medium Lot Suburban	64.7%	59.5%	59.7%
Compact Lot Suburban	43.7%	72.0%	68.4%
Village Residential	38.6%	63.1%	62.2%
Village Core	N/A	84.6%	84.6%
Mixed Employment	N/A	56.2%	56.2%
General Commercial	30.8%	23.3%	28.6%
Village Commercial	N/A	32.4%	32.4%
Tourist Commercial	71.7%	47.5%	61.2%
General Industrial	43.1%	28.4%	36.7%
Light Industrial	66.6%	59.8%	65.6%
Forestry & Resources	82.7%	81.9%	82.7%
Agriculture	51.2%	80.6%	51.3%
Infrastructure	65.2%	73.4%	68.2%
Institutional	62.3%	57.1%	58.9%
Parks & Open Space	95.9%	87.2%	58.9%

Table 8 Percentage of land area that has tree canopy

METHODS

Canopy height data were obtained via Google Earth Engine using the Meta Global Canopy Height Layer (Tolan et al., 2024). This product was originally generated with an advanced methodology that integrates high-resolution satellite imagery, aerial lidar measurements and Global Ecosystem Dynamics Investigation-based correction using self-supervised learning approaches described above. Canopy cover is quantified by converting the continuous canopy height raster to a binary format. A threshold criterion of > 1 m was applied to classify pixels as ‘canopy’ and all values at or below that value as ‘non-canopy.’ This binary conversion facilitates the estimation of the percentage of land area occupied by tree canopy, which serves as an important indicator of ecosystem health and urban sustainability.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

These data can be reported annually with a simple recalculation of the methods described above. The trend can be recorded and traced back to environmental factors (i.e. was it a drought year?) or development-based factors (did significant development occur within a land use designation or within the urban containment boundary that reduced overall canopy cover?)

LIMITATIONS

Data dependency: Any uncertainties or biases inherent in the original pre-processed product are carried forward into our study.

- **Temporal constraints:** The CHM product represents a snapshot or composite from a specific period, which may not fully capture seasonal or recent temporal changes in canopy conditions.
- **Binary classification:** Converting continuous canopy height data into a binary raster using a 1 m threshold simplifies the analysis but also loses detailed information. This approach may not capture subtleties in areas with mixed or marginal canopy cover.
- **Sensor and environmental variability:** The integrated product combines data from multiple sensors with varying conditions (e.g. sun angle, atmospheric differences). Although corrections have been applied, some residual errors may remain, particularly in heterogeneous or dynamic landscapes.
- While canopy data can be used to calculate carbon sequestration, there is some caution against this as carbon sequestration must be calculated using non-anthropogenic (i.e. natural regrowth of undisturbed forest) regrowth instead of anthropogenic (second growth regrowth), which simply returns the forest to its pre-industrial sequestration levels. Given that most forest lands in the CVRD are second growth stands, the sequestration increase from new canopy is expected to be close to zero.



GOAL #6

Strengthen Local Food & Agriculture

11. Land in Food/Crop Production

DESCRIPTION

This indicator measures the percentage of the CVRD's land base that is being actively farmed and what the current use is..

RELEVANCE

This metric will help to track agricultural productivity and inform plans and policies to increase food system productivity.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.6 Strengthen Local Food and Agriculture Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

Agri Census.

DATA

Agricultural land use in the CVRD.

Classified Farm Type – Land Use	Number of Farms
Oilseed and grain farming	2
Vegetable and melon farming	45
Fruit and tree nut farming	56
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	45
Other crop farming	92
Cattle ranching and farming	79
Hog and pig farming	4
Poultry and egg production	67
Sheep and goat farming	38
Other animal production	70
Total number of farms	498

Table 9 Land in food/crop production

DESIRED TREND

Increased or stable amount of land area in food/crop production.

INTERPRETATION

Percentage of ALR land in food/crop production.

ALR Area	18,995 ha
Total Farm Area (census)	10,635 ha
Percent of ALR being Farmed	56%

Table 10 Agricultural Land Reserve land in food/crop production

METHODS

No data processing necessary, just reporting.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This information is available from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and the Ministry of Forests through a special request. It will take approximately one day of time per reporting cycle for GIS to arrange to get this information from the Ministry and spatialize it.

LIMITATIONS

- Active farming does not always mean food production and does not measure what crops are being farmed; thus, it is not a complete measure of agricultural productivity.
- Does not account for changes in food production due to extreme weather events.
- Agricultural census is only every five years.
- As of 2021, the agricultural census does not capture hobby farms, which means hobbyists growing their own food will not be counted. While the OCP objectives could see progress with hobby farms and minor operations, there is currently no way to count them.



GOAL #7

Enhance Regional Prosperity

12. Growth of Business in the Region

DESCRIPTION

This metric shows how the number of businesses in the CVRD is changing.

RELEVANCE

To support population growth in the region, growth of businesses is necessary to support an expanding and prosperous economy providing both jobs and services.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.7 Enhance Regional Prosperity Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

Business Location Counts by Employee Size—BC open data.

DATA

Number of businesses in the CVRD.

Electoral area	Total businesses 2023	Total businesses 2022	Total businesses 2021	Total businesses 2020	Total businesses 2019
A	1,148	1,167	1,020	993	1,005
B	1,834	1,767	2,161	2,143	2,225
C	1,220	1,202	1,030	1,050	1,099
D	846	833	751	745	746
E	1,167	1,145	1,104	1,087	1,094
F	191	199	248	231	223
G	391	410	658	664	685
H	565	577	621	604	633
I	171	156	172	159	161
Total	7,533	7,456	7,765	7,676	7,871

Table 11 Change in number of businesses in the region

INTERPRETATION

Number of new businesses compared to growth in population: N/A

DESIRED TREND

Increase in number of businesses in the region.

METHODS

- Download “Business Locations by Census Subdivision (municipalities and non-incorporated areas) (XLSX)” and select the CVRD electoral area records.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This information is available from the Province and needs to be compiled and presented in table format.

LIMITATIONS

- Unavailability of business licences.
- Inadequate reporting for the number of employees.

13. Industrial, Commercial and Tourism Zoned Land

DESCRIPTION

This indicator monitors the supply of employment zoned land in the region. Zoning is an implementation tool of the OCP; the OCP can enable and encourage rezoning for employment lands.

RELEVANCE

A growing and prospering economy is necessary to support population growth in the CVRD. Maintaining a supply of employment lands ensures preparedness and support for economic growth opportunities.

EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.7 Enhance Regional Prosperity Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

CVRD GIS zoning layers.

DATA

Hectares of zoned employment land by gross category and electoral area.

Electoral Area	Category	Area (ha)
A	Commercial	19.21
A	Tourist Commercial	32.36
A	Industrial	173.51
B	Commercial	13.94
B	Tourist Commercial	5.23
B	Industrial	57.62
C	Commercial	18.11
C	Tourist Commercial	2.93
C	Industrial	65.29
D	Commercial	33.18
D	Industrial	40.54
E	Commercial	4.08
E	Tourist Commercial	15.39
E	Industrial	123.78
F	Commercial	9.91
F	Tourist Commercial	43.49
F	Industrial	64.40
G	Commercial	8.73
G	Tourist Commercial	0.78
H	Commercial	9.23
H	Tourist Commercial	24.91
H	Industrial	65.06

Electoral Area	Category	Area (ha)
I	Commercial	3.94
I	Tourist Commercial	23.00
I	Industrial	77.58

Table 12 Industrial, commercial and tourism zoned land (aka employment lands)

INTERPRETATION

- Area of industrial, commercial and tourism zoned land as a fraction of all employment lands

Categories	Sum of Area (ha)	Percentage of Total
Commercial	121.1	13%
Industrial	667.8	71%
Tourist Commercial	148.1	16%

Table 13 Area of industrial, commercial and tourism zoned land as a fraction of all employment lands

- Area of Industrial, Commercial and Tourism zoned land within Industrial, Commercial and Tourism designated areas.

OCP Designation	Zoning Category	Area (ha)
General and Light Industrial	Industrial	510.23
General and Light Industrial	Commercial	0.79
Tourist Commercial	Commercial, Tourist Commercial	129.28
General and Village Commercial	Commercial, Tourist Commercial	79.92
Mixed Employment	Commercial	3.20
Mixed Employment	Industrial	9.54

Table 14 Area of industrial, commercial and tourism zoned land within industrial, commercial and tourism designated areas

DESIRED TREND

Increase or stable area of employment lands.

METHODS

Select all land zoned industrial and summarize by electoral area

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

This data should be continuously updated as changes occur, and thus can be reported on an annual basis.

LIMITATIONS

- Zoned employment lands may not necessarily actively be used as such.
- OCP policy does not directly equal zoning; rather, it is a desired consequence of the OCP.

GOAL #8



Improve Governance & Implementation

14. Number of Instruments (Plans) Updated or Created as a Result of the OCP

DESCRIPTION

This metric monitors ongoing intra-regional cooperation and collaboration efforts.

RELEVANCE

The OCP is an effort to steer the CVRD toward the vision outlined in the plan. However, the CVRD already has plans and strategies meant to direct planning and development, the environment, transportation, parks and recreation. While some of these may already align with the OCP, it is important that they are reviewed and updated to ensure ongoing alignment with the vision and goals of the OCP. In addition, other plans and policies can be developed to further support the OCP.

EXMAPLES OF RELEVANT OCP POLICIES

Section 3.8 Improve Governance and Implementation Objectives and Policies

DATA SOURCES

None

DATA

Checklist of the plans and strategies outlined in the OCP.

INTERPRETATION

Percent of plans updated.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

Minimal work—this will just be a checklist of all the plans/strategies to be updated and plans/strategies to be created, and those items that have been updated/created will be checked off.

LIMITATIONS

This is a primarily qualitative measure.

APPENDIX III

GROWTH CONTAINMENT BOUNDARIES & GROWTH AREAS METHODOLOGY

List of Tables

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Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas

From 2006 to 2021, approximately 82% of population growth and 79% of dwelling growth in the CVRD occurred outside of the growth containment boundary (GCB). When analyzing all dwellings constructed since 2006, approximately 48% of units were built outside of the GCB. Bylaw 4373 – Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas (OCP) has a new land use strategy that has a goal to reverse this over time to 80% of population growth and dwelling growth inside GCBs. It is designed to focus growth within areas that can be effectively serviced and at densities that make development economically feasible and attractive. Conversely, this land use strategy should also discourage further subdivision of rural lands located outside the GCB.

Delineation of GCBs usually focuses on identifying areas that are generally appropriate for growth or intensification. However, it is not possible within the OCP to establish whether every parcel within the GCB is appropriate for growth. Normal development application procedures associated with zoning, subdivision and development permit decisions will address suitability for development parcel by parcel within the GCB.

Through several workshops, the project team identified areas within each of the electoral areas that are well served for potential growth and allocated land use densities accordingly. The new GCB is meant to achieve several objectives:

- Link servicing corridors with population growth, where investments in water and sewer infrastructure can be supported by future growth.
- Focus growth in strategic locations near village centres, jobs, public transit and other amenities.
- Formalize existing development patterns where growth and subdivision have already occurred outside the former GCB.
- Ensure densities outside the GCB are reflective of rural land use patterns (below one UPH) and densities inside the GCB are reflective of suburban and urban land use patterns (above one UPH).
- Local Government Act obliges the Regional District to enable additional secondary suites and accessory dwelling units on parcels that might be outside the GCB. When calculating capacity for growth the units permitted outside the GCB are counted.

The new GCB is thus a more defensible line, supported by land use designations and future servicing plans.

Schedule G maps the growth containment boundaries and growth areas by

- illustrating the line that separates areas of growth from rural areas
- highlighting areas within the boundary as areas of growth

As noted in Section 1.6 of the OCP, Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas, the growth anticipated within each GCB is shaped by land use designations that fit each electoral area's unique characteristics. For instance, the GCBs in the south Cowichan (electoral areas A, B and C) are characterized by more multi-unit housing options and a greater mix of uses than the GCBs in more rural electoral areas like G and H, where suburban subdivisions replicating existing development patterns will be more common.

Land use and capacity modelling forecasts suggest that, over time and on average, approximately 80% of growth can be accommodated within the growth containment boundaries. As such, the remainder (approximately 20%) of new growth is anticipated to occur outside growth containment boundaries, though this will vary significantly by electoral area. Three electoral areas (E, F and H) fall below the 80% average. This reflects their comparatively more pronounced rural character, where larger rural residential, agricultural and forestry lots make up a significant proportion of the land base.

The following two tables demonstrate the amount of lands in hectares that are designated for residential purposes within the GCB (Table 1) and outside the GCB (Table 2), across all eight residential designations, by electoral area.

2025 - Residentially Designated Area Within the GCB (hectares)							
Electoral Area	Small Lot Rural	Country Suburban	Large Lot Suburban	Medium Lot Suburban	Compact Lot Suburban	Village Residential	Village Core Residential
A	-	-	179.4	336.3	2.3	13.7	54.4
B	10.5	-	346.8	366.9	7.2	9.9	-
C	-	-	307.9	113.6	31.2	14.8	-
D	0.1	65.4	24.6	72.7	11.2	4.7	15.6
E	-	-	-	45.7	-	4.5	-
F	-	17.2	85.9	49.1	-	49.1	146.5
G	-	354.2	-	1.8	-	-	-
H	-	-	101.4	3.5	20.6	-	-
I	-	226.4	104.2	87.8	81.2	13.7	18.0
Total	10.6	663.2	1,150.2	1,077.4	153.7	110.4	234.5

Table 1. Electoral area residential lands within the growth containment boundaries in 2025.

2025 - Residentially Designated Area Outside GCB (hectares)							
Electoral Area	Large Lot Rural	Country Suburban	Large Lot Suburban	Medium Lot Suburban	Small Lot Rural	Compact Lot Suburban	Village Residential
A	-	-	-	24.6	482.2	-	-
B	333.4	-	0.1	-	1,090.1	13.0	-
C	-	-	0.2	-	66.4	-	4.1
D	-	-	-	-	94.0	-	-
E	577.0	-	-	9.3	203.4	-	-
F	629.5	1.8	0.2	0.2	343.8	-	-
G	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-
H	194.2	-	-	-	591.3	-	-
I	20.2	-	4.2	-	-	1.9	-
Total	1754.3	1.9	4.7	34.1	2,871.2	4.1	4.1

Table 2. Electoral area residential lands outside the growth containment boundaries in 2025

These tables illustrate the link between higher density designations (Country Suburban through to Village Residential) being predominantly located within GCBs, and lower density designations (Large Lot Rural and Small Lot Rural) being predominantly located outside GCBs. This is a reflection of the need to focus growth and higher density development within focused areas near village centres and to prevent sprawl while preserving rural landscapes throughout the region.

Growth Containment Boundaries by Electoral Area

Electoral Area A

Mill Bay is the focus of this growth containment boundary. The village is characterized by Brentwood College School and several commercial shopping centres, including key services and amenities. There is significant development pressure in the South Cowichan, and growth in the area is intended to provide more multi-unit housing options near the centre of the village and support the enhancement of servicing corridors, notably between Mill Bay and Shawnigan Lake. On Schedule G – Growth Containment Boundaries and Growth Areas, the areas A, B and C growth containment boundaries are connected with corridors.

Electoral Area B

Shawnigan Lake is the focus of this growth containment boundary. The village is characterized by Shawnigan Lake School and a small commercial core at the intersection of Shawnigan Lake Road and Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road. There is also significant development pressure in the area, and growth in this area is intended to support multi-unit housing options near the centre of the village and the sustainability of servicing in the area, especially between Shawnigan Lake and Mill Bay and Shawnigan Lake and Cobble Hill.

Electoral Area C

Cobble Hill and Arbutus Ridge are the focus of this growth containment boundary. The village is characterized by several small commercial buildings along Fisher Road adjacent to the Cobble Hill Farmers Institute. The growth containment boundary extends out across the western side of the Trans-Canada Highway into parts of the electoral area that have developed with lot sizes consistent with other growth areas across the region. Growth in this area is intended to primarily support a potentially new employment hub near the Trans-Canada Highway and Chapman Road. Note there is a small number of parcels in electoral area A that abut electoral area C and are located within the growth containment boundary that are considered part of the electoral area C local plan area. Local area plans will be explained later in this document.

Electoral Area D

Cowichan Bay is the focus of this growth containment boundary. The village is characterized by an active commercial waterfront along Cowichan Bay Road. The growth containment boundary extends to the Lambourne and Cherry Point neighbourhoods to the east. Very modest growth is expected in electoral area D and is intended to support multi-unit housing options near Wilmot and Pritchard Roads. The Joint Utilities Board (JUB), which includes Duncan, North Cowichan and the Cowichan Tribes, manages sanitary sewer services in Cowichan Bay, and growth may depend on the availability and purchase of additional JUB units.

Electoral Area D/E

Eagle Heights and the Koksilah Village are the focus of this growth containment boundary. The area is characterized by an industrial business park adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway and residential development largely consisting of single-unit homes. Here, modest growth is anticipated and can complement the nearby employment lands, transit access along the Highway, and the City of Duncan. The industrial business park, as land that is serviced and accessible by transit, may be intensified to make more effective use of employment lands, which are rare for the electoral areas. This should be done while ensuring protection of the aquifer and the Cowichan River watershed. The JUB, which includes Duncan, North Cowichan and the Cowichan Tribes, manages sanitary sewer services in Cowichan Bay, and growth may depend on the availability and purchase of additional JUB units.

Electoral Area F

Honeymoon Bay, Mesachie Lake and Paldi are the focus of these growth containment boundaries. Honeymoon Bay and Mesachie Lake are established small villages characterized by their proximity to the Cowichan Lake, while Paldi is an undeveloped greenfield site that has been zoned for future development. Growth in the area is intended to enhance the offerings

of housing options, services and amenities in both Honeymoon Bay and Mesachie Lake, while providing a new, compact neighbourhood in Paldi.

To the northwest of Honeymoon Bay's growth containment boundary, residential properties along South Shore Road, Tamea Road and Walton Road may be appropriate to eventually connect with community services even if they are located outside the growth containment boundary, notwithstanding other policies in this OCP.

Electoral Area G

Saltair is the focus of this growth containment boundary. The area is characterized by suburban subdivisions near and on the seafront, along with a few commercial businesses on Chemainus Road. Modest growth is expected within the growth containment boundary in the form of further subdivision of land at a scale similar to what already exists in the community.

Electoral Area H

The Diamond community is the focus of this growth containment boundary. It is characterized by a small community hall and theatre just north of Ladysmith. Modest growth in the area is intended to introduce some more compact housing options in Diamond, largely as subdivisions of existing parcels.

Electoral Area I

Youbou and Meade Creek are the focus of this growth containment boundary. The village is characterized by its linear shape following the northern shore of Cowichan Lake with a few commercial services and a community bowling alley. The growth containment boundary extends eastward to Laketown Ranch and west to lands adjacent to the historic village, past Arbutus Park, where the Youbou Lands Special Study Area sets the stage for new growth and development on the north shore of Cowichan Lake.

Dwelling Projections

The CVRD completed dwelling projections using the provincially mandated methodology for housing needs assessments and Housing Needs Reports (HNR). These reports are intended to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative information to describe current and forecasted housing needs. A new Housing Needs Report Method was published in 2024 to identify the 5- and 20-year housing need in communities and was developed to standardize the analytical process across municipalities and regional governments.

The HNR Method integrates six components of housing need, which are summed to estimate the total number of housing units needed in a municipality or regional district electoral area. The six components include:

Component A: Supply of units to reduce extreme core housing need (those paying more than 50% of income for housing);

Component B: Supply of units to reduce homelessness;

Component C: Supply of units to address suppressed household formation;

Component D: Supply of units needed to meet household growth over the next 5 or 20 years;

Component E: Supply of units needed to meet at least a 3% vacancy rate; and,

Component F: Supply of units needed to meet local demand (municipalities only).

This information is directly sourced from the HNR Method technical guidance, and can be referred to at planyourcowichan.ca/housing-needs-assessment for further details on each component and how they are summed.

To convert simple dwelling projections (number of units required over 20 years) to a 25-year projection that includes dwelling size (number of bedrooms) and typology (attached versus detached), the following process was followed.

- Through the Provincial HNR Method (detailed in section 1.4 and in the HNR Report), determine net number of units required between baseline and 25-year projection
- Estimate the age demographic groupings of the household heads of these new households, based on 2021 household headship rates (the propensity of a particular age group to “head” a household) by age
- For each potential household, dwelling preferences were determined through structural type of dwelling information sourced from the 2021 Census of population (for instance, 78.9% of households headed by seniors currently reside in single detached dwellings in electoral area A). Dwelling preferences were then accordingly distributed between demographic age groupings.
- Finally, each required dwelling was transformed into room requirements based on building size probabilities sourced from the 2021 Census (for instance, in electoral area A, 4% of single detached dwellings contained one bedroom, 17% contain two bedrooms, 41% contain three bedrooms and 37% contain four or more bedrooms).

To further analyze affordability, benchmarks for a monthly affordable shelter cost are calculated as 30% of annual (pre-tax) household income, per Statistic’s Canada core housing need definition. Under this definition, the monthly shelter cost that would be affordable to the average household can be calculated by multiplying the median household income by 30% and then dividing the total by 12 (to disaggregate to monthly costs). This represents the average monthly total of all shelter expenses paid by households that own or rent their dwelling. Shelter costs for owner households include mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees, along with the costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services. For renter households, shelter costs include rent and the costs of electricity,

heat, water and other municipal services. Age and quantile-based income data was analyzed for each electoral area to determine what income brackets of each age grouping could afford as a monthly shelter cost.

Costs for detached dwellings were estimated by averaging assessed values of existing units of the housing archetype for each electoral area through BC assessment data. These calculations assume present day rates proposed by major banks for a 25-year amortization mortgage with 20% down payments. It should be noted that monthly payments would and do vary across households due to mortgage type, credit scores, fluctuations in markets and Bank of Canada interest rate increases, among others, but these estimated rates are meant to serve as an approximation of affordability. Monthly mortgage costs are the primary component of an owner household's shelter costs, but those costs also include utilities and taxes. Rates for these costs were estimated for each electoral area from 2024 Environics financial data to develop an estimated monthly shelter cost. As detached dwellings are assumed to contain suites, rental income (post-tax) from these secondary units is also considered and subtracted from total monthly costs.

To allow for realistic affordability for incoming/forming households, some demand is shifted from historic ratios between attached and detached to account for gaps in affordability of monthly shelter costs of current detached structures. Where the affordability of the average single detached dwelling did not align with the median income earning household (the fifth decile) in the 35-44 age group (typically first-time homebuyers), the relative percentage gap of demand was shifted from single detached homes to more affordable attached units.



CVRD