



DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS

BYLAW NO. 277

DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN NO. 277, 2007

This Bylaw is consolidated by the Corporate Officer in accordance with Bylaw 301.

Consolidated to December 8, 2025 (Bylaw 469)

Consolidated for convenience only to include Bylaws:

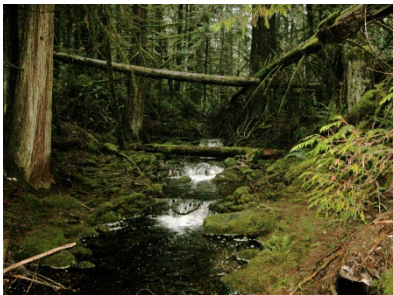
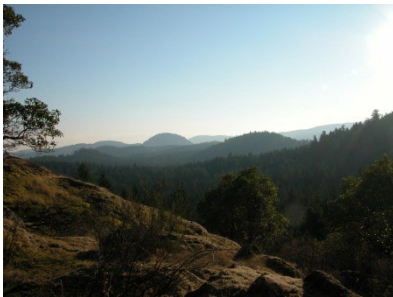
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DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

SCHEDULE A TO BYLAW NO. 277

*Schedule A to Bylaw 277 was replaced by
Bylaw 360 in November, 2013*



District of Highlands Official Community Plan

Schedule A to Bylaw No. 360

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Highlanders are united by the landscape – rocky uplands and dense coastal forest. This shared terrain is not easy to traverse; nor is it easy to develop or farm. The topography has shaped a pattern of roads and land use; it has also shaped a unique rural lifestyle. Homes and buildings, while scattered, have a relatively small footprint on the land. This is unusual in a Regional District where the population exceeds 415,451 (2021 Census).

There has been gradual but steady change in the Highlands over time. Changes included some new residential subdivisions, but in exchange for development, large areas of parkland were established. Public engagement in 2003 through 2004 revealed strong values about protection of natural areas.

In addition to the strong values to protect the Highlands' natural environment, residents looked for an innovative way to approach the challenges of the future. In 2009, Highlands Council established a Sustainability Task Force that delivered its report on actions that the District could implement at the end of that year. Of the report's many recommendations, the question of how to operationalize sustainability and prioritize the actions remained unanswered until 2010, when Council decided to undertake the development of an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) that could also guide the OCP amendment. An assessment of the 2007 OCP indicated that it could be strengthened by the ICSP, but substantial changes were not needed.

1.1 The Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is one of the most important documents for municipalities. It sets out community objectives and broad statements of policy to guide Council decisions about land use, zoning, development and servicing. The OCP also provides residents and prospective investors with a framework for making their own decisions. Most importantly, it is the legal vehicle for setting out the use of other regulatory measures that can be used by the municipality – for example, Development Permit areas, development approval information areas and heritage designations. All bylaws enacted or works undertaken by a council must be consistent with the OCP.

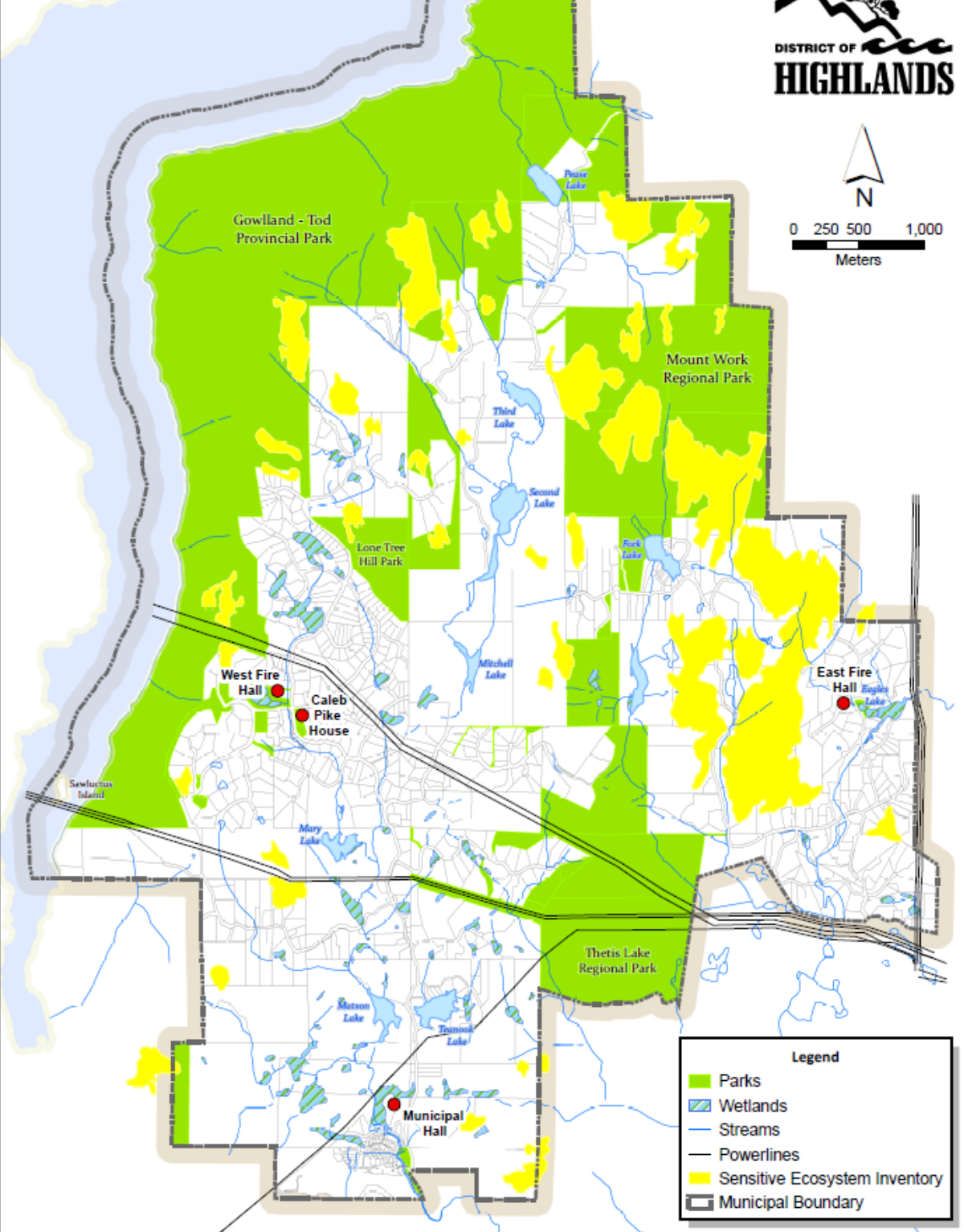
The Local Government Act sets out required and voluntary topics to be included in an OCP and provides a range of 'tools' that allow municipalities to implement their plans. The Act also states that an OCP *should work towards* goals within a regional context. Where a topic is not within the jurisdiction of the local government, an OCP may only state the broad objectives related to that matter.

An OCP is comprehensively updated from time to time, particularly when major changes are anticipated in local circumstances. Amendments and consolidations occur more frequently; any revision to the plan requires a public process.

Some parts of this OCP can be implemented by the District of Highlands acting alone. Often, however, other agencies or levels of government will be involved. Since some lands and services are managed by other agencies, and all lands beyond the Highlands' boundaries are managed by other jurisdictions, the successful implementation of the Highlands' OCP depends on multi-party cooperation.

Map 1.1 shows the area covered by this OCP.

OCP Map 1.1 District of Highlands



1.1.1. Historical Context

The District of Highlands lies within the traditional territories of the Lək'wəŋən, SENĆOTEN and Hul'q'umi'num speaking First Nations whose deep cultural and spiritual ties to the land and surrounding sea span thousands of years.

The Highlands was first surveyed when it was part of the Colony of Vancouver Island, prior to 1864, when the Colony of British Columbia's Gazette referred to the Highland Land District. The land was generally surveyed into 160 acre parcels, although smaller sections were also common. The first pre-emptions in the area now encompassed by the District of Highlands were to John Stewart (Stewart Mountain Road) and John Scafe (Scafe Hill) in 1883. That was also the year that Caleb Pike homesteaded Section 35. The first homesteaders were self-sufficient farmers, who also sold some of their produce in Victoria, a long day's journey there and back by horse and buggy. By the early 1900's, some residents added to their incomes by selling trees for logging.

The Highlands' first formal organization was the formation of a School District, which built a one-room schoolhouse in 1893. That schoolhouse was reconstructed at the Caleb Pike Heritage Park on Millstream Road in 2004. By 1916, most land had been pre-empted by resident settlers when George Corry acquired Sections 58 and 59a. A few sections which had reverted were purchased from the Crown in the 1930's and 1940's. As the early subsistence farmers sold and moved away, the population in the Highlands declined. Some of those who moved away sold to local loggers, resulting in the loss of most of the old-growth trees by the 1950's. While forestry was the main economic activity in the Highlands until the 1950s, other professions, such as farming, were also pursued.

The Highlands District Ratepayers (now Community) Association was incorporated in 1967 to give Highlanders a voice in land use planning. The Province relinquished its planning function for the Highlands when the Capital Regional District (CRD) was established in 1969.

The first plan for the Highlands and Willis Point was adopted by the CRD Board in 1981, following years of input by the residents of the Highlands. The philosophy of that plan, formally adopted in 1981, was to balance future urban development with the protection of major environmental features. The plan identifies a Development Reserve Area of 1,360 hectares in the southwest portion of Highlands in which "to develop a new urban community." It also identified potential major parks and regional open space.

Highlands was incorporated as a District Municipality in 1993. In 1995, a Council Steering Committee conducted a comprehensive survey of Highlands' residents as part of the Highlands "Dreams and Decisions" project. A separate survey of Highlands' youth revealed what this often-overlooked group of residents felt about life in the Highlands. These surveys provided essential information for the development of the 1997 OCP.

The philosophy of the 1997 OCP differed from its predecessor. The plan placed as Goal 1 the protection of the natural environment, and along with other supporting goals has remained a significant part of planning in the Highlands. The main 'tool' has been the use of amenity zoning combined with the zone lot size minimums of 12 hectares (30 acres) for the creation of large parks, protection and conservation areas.

1.1.2 Regional Growth Strategy

The CRD Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted in 2003 and underwent an amendment process in 2008 for an urban containment boundary adjustment requested by the Highlands. This document establishes eight key strategies for managing growth through collective actions of the municipalities and electoral areas within the Capital region. Highlands' Regional Context Statement is the subject of Chapter 10 of this OCP.

As set out in the Regional Growth Strategy, the major roles of the Highlands are:

- To preserve large areas of natural green space.
- To protect elements of the region's ecosystem.
- To provide outdoor recreational opportunities for CRD residents and visitors.

1.1.3 The 2007 OCP

The 2007 OCP had its foundation in the comprehensive 1997 plan. For the most part, the principles, goals and policies remain unchanged for this 2012 update of the 2007 plan. This content has been informed by Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2001), the Trails Master Plan (2002), policy work in 2002 and involvement of task groups on 2003 – 2004. Additionally, the plan draws on material from the work of the 1999 Housing Task Force.

1.2 A Long-Term Vision

This OCP owes much to the dedicated volunteers who donated a great deal of time in 2003-2004 and in 2010-2012 to the ICSP and the OCP update. Appendix B provides a record of the planning processes for the ICSP development and OCP update.

At the end of 2009, Council received the report of the Sustainability Task Force. Among the report's 42 recommendations was one that the District of Highlands develop a comprehensive community sustainability plan that would help define actions and include indicators for reporting on the sustainability of the community. The Whistler Centre for Sustainability was retained to help develop an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The plan was adopted in February 2012 and forms a vision for the District and all its initiatives in partnership with community organizations in the Highlands.

1.2.1 Sustainable Highlands: An Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

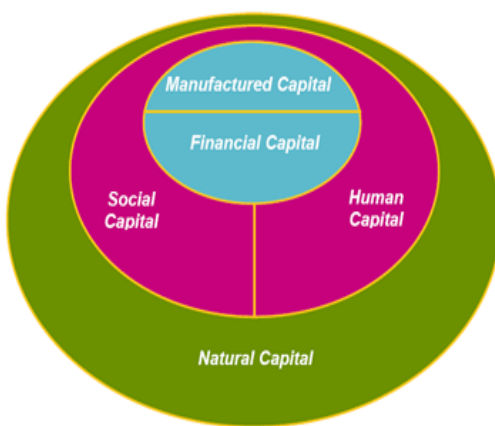
Sustainable Highlands is the ICSP for the Highlands. An Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) is a document that helps guide the community toward its shared vision of a successful and sustainable future. The ICSP describes the interdependent systems in the community and what a successful community would be in each of those community systems. An ICSP is the community's highest level policy document that is meant to guide all existing plans and policies, give direction to all future initiatives and provides a high-level comprehensive framework for community decision-making. The ICSP includes: a long-term vision within nine strategy areas, actions for implementation, progress monitoring, and an annual process to ensure ongoing progress.

1.2.2 Sustainable Highlands' Approach

The definition of sustainability in the ICSP was a primary guiding principle for development of the plan:

Sustainability, in the context of the Highlands municipality and community, is defined as meeting the needs of the present community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet the same needs, and without degrading the functioning of local to global ecosystems as a result of resource use within the Highlands.

The 2009 Sustainability Task Force began setting the vision for the plan by looking at different perspectives to help define and clarify sustainability. Two primary guiding models were the Five Capitals model and The Natural Step. The Five Capitals model emphasizes that manufactured and financial forms of capital exist within social and human capital and in turn all exist within natural capital. Without a healthy natural environment, other systems will not be viable.



The Natural Step, developed in Sweden in the 1980s, defines the global systems and conditions required for sustainability. It provides a framework for working toward a sustainable future. Derived from the Natural Step Framework, the four sustainability objectives that were used to guide how the future is described in the plan and as guidance for decision-making are:

1. **We will reduce our dependence on the use of materials extracted from the Earth's Crust and the creation of associated wastes.** We will work toward the use of renewable low-impact resources, such as solar energy, and not depend on limited resources taken from the earth.
2. **We will reduce our contribution to the progressive build-up of synthetic materials produced by society.** We will create or use manufactured products that can be easily absorbed in an environmentally benign way, such as packaging made out of compostable materials.
3. **We will reduce our contribution to the ongoing physical degradation of nature.** We will use resources only from well-managed eco-systems, pursuing the most productive and efficient use of those resources. We will exercise caution when modifying the natural environment.
4. **We will reduce our contribution to conditions that undermine people's ability to meet their basic needs.** We will support and maintain socio-cultural and economic systems that promote a quality of life for people that include food security, affordable housing, and a living wage.

1.2.3 How the OCP aligns with Sustainable Highlands

An ICSP is a vision and plan that is developed by the community and accomplishing it will depend on partnerships developed with organizations outside local government. Whereas an OCP is oriented to the land use and related policy decisions within the powers of a local government, the ICSP provides broader directions integrating economic, social or environmental actions that often take a combined effort to achieve. A number of indicators were also developed during the ICSP process for monitoring and reporting progress toward the shared vision on an annual basis.

This OCP amendment incorporates and reflects the sustainability objectives and Descriptions of Success articulated in the ICSP. The result is clear direction toward sustainability that fits within the 2007 vision statement.

HIGHLANDS VISION

The Highlands is a primarily residential community, rural in nature, and blessed with an exceptional abundance of scenic beauty, native plant and animal life, and public parkland. Those of us who live here place high value on the natural environment and our rural lifestyle. Highlanders are actively involved in the community, which fosters a spirit that is both self-reliant and cooperative.

The Highlands will strive to diversify its economy while preserving our natural systems, including the aquifers on which we depend so heavily. Land use decisions will be guided by a community plan, with the ongoing involvement of residents.

As stewards of our unique natural environment, we will protect its integrity. We will retain sufficient lands in their natural state to permit a diversity of plant and animal life to flourish and to ensure that the rural lifestyle we enjoy today can be experienced by future generations. We believe in the value of open and green space, trail systems, and outdoor recreational opportunities, both to enhance life in the Highlands and to contribute to the well-being of southern Vancouver Island as a whole.

We will provide for an adequate tax base, including light industrial, related commercial and nature-related recreational uses in some areas of the Highlands, in order to support basic, affordable municipal services and facilities. We will encourage alternative transportation choices, housing choices, and a community hall.

New development in the Highlands will be in keeping with the rural character of the community and carefully designed to protect sensitive environmental conditions. The pace of change should be gradual and the type of development should leave a small footprint on the land.

1.3 A Look at Ourselves

The Highlands is located in one of the most spectacular physical settings in Canada and occupies an area of 3,801 hectares (2021 Highlands Census Profile) within BC's Capital Regional District. Environmental features such as watercourses, lakes, wetlands, steep hillsides, rocky outcroppings, wooded areas and marine shorelands have remained relatively undisturbed by urban and suburban development. As shown on Map 1.2, the Highlands is one of four West Shore communities.

The Highlands is distinct from other municipalities given the extent of its undisturbed natural areas and the proximity of diverse and attractive environmental features in proximity to places where people live and work. The rugged topography and relative isolation from major growth centers in the region contribute to the Highlands' green and rural character. The three largest parks – Gowlland Tod, Mt. Work, and Thetis Lake – encompass 1,100 hectares. Considering regional and municipal parks, the total area of parkland in 2025 was 1,561 hectares, which accounts for approximately 41% of the District's land base. In 1993, at incorporation, this figure was approximately 10%.



The Highlands is predominantly rural and residential. Figure 1 shows population estimates and projections from BC Stats. Because it is not clear if those estimates and projections accounted for the provincial Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing legislation, Figure 2 includes buildout population projections relative to the projected dwelling unit buildout discussed in Chapter 2.



Figure 1: BC Stats' Population Estimates and Projections

Age	2021 Estimates	2031 Projections	2046 Projections
0-19	549	512	551
20-39	539	561	672
40-59	786	876	1,019
60-79	647	618	680
80-89	50	110	161
90+	14	15	45
ALL	2,585	2,692	3,128

Figure 2: District of Highlands' Population Projections Based on December 2024 Zoning Potential Buildout and BC Stats' 2046 Age Cohort Share of Total Population

Age	Buildout Population Projections
0-19	818
20-39	998
40-59	1,514
60-79	1,010
80-89	239
90+	67
ALL	4,646

Chapter 2 – Land Use

The opportunity to live near to nature and enjoy a rural lifestyle is highly valued in the Highlands. The large lots, natural vegetation, and agricultural and forestry uses typical of a rural area must be balanced with: the expectations of all residents; the municipality's need to create an efficient pattern of land use; and the inherent connection to water, especially groundwater.

One of the main purposes of an OCP is to identify the intended primary use of lands within the municipality and to set out general statements related to these uses. The land uses designated in this chapter are compatible with the rural character of the Highlands and provide for a variety of rural densities and uses that include residential, employment, food production, tourism and recreation. Protection, conservation and restoration of natural areas are a priority and land uses need to provide the best possible opportunities for physical and ecological connections to help ensure ecological health.

This chapter sets out the following land use designations, along with the objectives and policies for each designation:

- Rural Land Use
- Rural Residential Land Use
- Intensive Residential Land Use
- Regenerative Development
- Institutional Land Use
- Public Parks
- Managed Forest
- Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development Area
- Amenity Areas
- Rural Assembly
- Special Plan Areas

The text of this chapter should be read in conjunction with **Map 2.1**. Boundaries of the land use designations on Map 2.1 are approximate, and minor adjustments may be made without plan amendment on the basis of new or site-specific information, provided that such amendments do not affect the intent of the designations.

2.1 Water, Water Everywhere...

It is in the lakes and the streams, under the ground, in the homes and businesses, and falls from the sky. All water sources are inherently interconnected and interdependent, especially in communities dependent on groundwater for their potable water. All land use and human activity are water dependent. Groundwater availability will be one of the major factors that will determine future land use development in the District of Highlands. This section of the OCP deliberately heads the Land Use chapter, indicating that all land use decisions must consider water.

Each Highlands resident has control over water protection through stewardship and conservation activities. Stewardship and conservation are roles every Highlander can take ownership of. A comprehensive groundwater monitoring program supports these efforts. Such a program should consider surface water uses as well.

Map 2.2 is to be used for general information purposes only. Map 2.2 shows lineaments and lineament cross points in relation to wells. A lineament is a linear feature on the land visible from air photos that may represent locations of underground breaks in the rock formations. Lineaments can provide clues to the locations of major water-bearing fractures.

Water – Objectives

- To ensure an adequate long term supply of potable water.
- To consider water in all its forms in all land use decisions.
- To protect watersheds, natural drainages and wetlands.
- To promote stewardship and conservation activities with respect to water and energy.

Water – Policies

1. The District will develop a thorough understanding of groundwater conditions in the Highlands.
2. The District will follow the recommendations of the 3-phase Comprehensive Groundwater Study, authored by Golder and Associates.
3. The District will partner with and support organizations such as the Highlands Stewardship Foundation in their water and energy stewardship and conservation activities.

2.2 Land Use – General

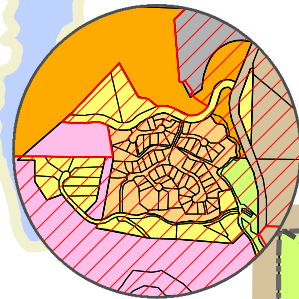
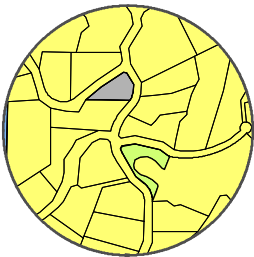
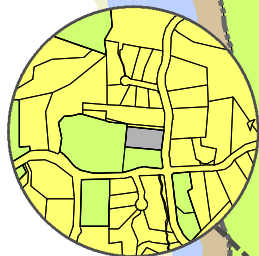
Engagement of Highlands' residents over the past decades strongly demonstrates that people have chosen a rural lifestyle and wish to see this choice available to future residents. Further conversion of undeveloped land (beyond that already zoned) into typical suburban land patterns is inappropriate and is discouraged through the policies of this plan. Highlands is a signatory to the Capital Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy, which foresees Highlands as a rural community with no role as an area for urban development in the long term.

Since 2001, the District has grown by approximately 15 houses per year. The projected buildout of the Highlands as of December 2024 is approximately 2,102 total principle and accessory dwelling units. Of that, 1,223 potential dwelling units are not yet realized and available through the OCP and Zoning Bylaw. The District's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report, which used 2021 data, indicates that 719 additional dwelling units are required to meet the District's housing needs to 2041. This means that Highlands meets its anticipated housing needs for at least 20 years. Achieving success under the Sustainable Highlands ICSP also means increased diversity of choice for better social and economic balance. Public input has emphasized commitment to the buildout limit and slow growth.

This plan takes the view that both conservation and other land activities are appropriate in the Highlands. Individual land owners have the ultimate responsibility to be good stewards of their lands, guided municipal bylaws. There is a responsibility to protect potable water sources and address housing needs within a sustainable rural context. The challenge for Highlands is to be creative in achieving this balance.



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Meters



Legend

- Rural
- Rural Residential
- Intensive Residential
- Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development
- Parks
- Managed Forest
- Institutional
- Regenerative Development
- Amenity 1
- Amenity 2 - East West Connector
- Amenity 3 - 1150 Bear Mountain Pkwy
- Rural Assembly
- Special Plan Areas
- Highlands Servicing Area

Land Use General - Objectives

- To encourage land uses, land subdivision, road patterns, servicing, housing types and landscaping that: are consistent with the community's rural character; respect the natural environment; and make efficient use of land and resources.
- To ensure that aquifers are not overdrawn.
- To provide a variety of land uses to serve the residential, employment and recreational needs of existing and future residents.
- To encourage agriculture and food growing on private properties in an environmentally sustainable manner that does no harm to local ecosystems.

Land Use General - Policies

1. Highlands Council will employ the Five Capitals model when making land use decisions. The *Sustainable Highlands* ICSP will guide these considerations.
2. As part of the development process, developers will be encouraged to contact residents to discuss proposed changes in land use, prior to the submission of rezoning applications and prior to public hearings.
3. Encourage all new buildings and renovations to be built with energy and water efficient standards and technologies representing best practices.
4. The District encourages the use of innovative energy technology in site development in addition to energy efficient buildings.
5. District energy systems may be considered within the Highlands Servicing Area.
6. Proposals for new development or significant redevelopment should be required to quantify the net increase in GHG emissions resulting from loss of habitat, construction of the site and buildings, and the operation of the buildings and site relative to the property's use, including transportation.
7. The District encourages development applicants to explore various means and measures to subdivide land or design buildings that leave a small footprint on the landscape, minimize impacts on the natural environment, and protect the privacy of residents. This might involve clustering of lots, lot size averaging or other site planning that minimize impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and improve the efficiency of public goods, such as roads.
8. The District encourages opportunities to be found for incorporating agriculture, including community gardens, as part of the land uses in site planning.
9. Where lot averaging has been used, covenants restricting further subdivision will be placed on the larger remaining parcels. This is clearly described in the Zoning Bylaw policy 4.3(2).
10. With the exception of lands in the Highlands Servicing Area, all land uses will derive their water from ground or surface sources and/or rainwater. Septic systems or alternative innovative methods may be approved.
11. The District encourages future development to locate away from areas that: are environmentally sensitive; have the potential for surface erosion or slope instability; and are archaeological and historic sites.
12. To avoid wildlife/human conflicts, the District recommends that consideration be given to areas of high use by predators/wildlife when development occurs.
13. Housing for people with special needs by reason of age, income or disability is encouraged to meet the community's anticipated needs.
14. In the spirit of enhancing family/social capital and being responsible land use stewards, the District will maintain a register of successful zoning amendments where family situations were taken into account. The purpose of this registry is to provide successive Councils with direction for decision-making.
15. Land uses and activities that are deemed to adversely affect the safety, health, or livability of a residential neighbourhood are not acceptable.

16. The District will seek to protect existing viewscales and enhance landscapes of value during the development process and in conducting economic activities.
17. Viewscales of value will include natural areas on or near hilltops and ridges, as well as landscapes of natural areas of value. These will be maintained through careful site planning, building design, and controls on vegetation removal. Lands adjacent to parks and road right-of-ways should remain naturally vegetated buffer zones.
18. The District will seek to restore viewscales and landscapes of value.
19. Expansions of pre-existing uses that are not in conformance with this plan are not considered to be acceptable.
20. Public amenities (as listed in Appendix A) may be offered through rezoning to justify an increase in density. Such amenities must be beneficial to the wider community, as well as the proposed development, and may be offered in recognition of the increased value of land resulting from rezoning.
21. For the purposes of the Regional Growth Strategy, the District of Highlands intends to grow slowly.
22. All land use and design decisions will seek to prevent unplanned growth.
23. Where appropriate, resolved by Council and agreed to by the land owner, covenants with an appropriate conservation agency may be used to protect environmentally significant features and areas for future generations. Implementation and maintenance costs should be shared by all signatories to the covenant.
24. Council may support applications for properties within the Highlands Servicing Area that require development variance permits to allow the residential density permitted through the Zoning Bylaw.
25. The District of Highlands acknowledges the important role that large lot property owners play in the municipality. Council will work with owners of large properties to help identify key values and objectives, and to seek prospects for mutual benefit. As each situation is unique, the primary tool for owners of large properties to engage with the municipality is through the rezoning process, which gives an opportunity for dialog to reach net benefit to the community and the owner.
26. The District supports the concept of a country market in the municipality, provided that the establishment complements the character of the surrounding neighbourhood and has minimal negative social or environmental impacts. This small scale establishment would primarily serve Highlands residents. No area is designated for this purpose. If a landowner were interested in this possibility, a rezoning would be required.
27. Child day care centres and/or adult day programs are acceptable uses in residential areas. A seniors' program could also be provided as part of a small-scale cluster housing project or at a community hall. Any proposal must consider transportation issues (transit, volunteer driver services, etc.).
28. When properties develop, the full cost of extending services shall be borne by the development. Where the services are primarily for the direct benefit of the property being developed, the ongoing costs to operate and maintain those services should be borne by the land owners through the establishment of local service areas.
29. All new development permit applications should adhere to Best Management Practices for invasive species. Landscaping with locally-sourced and native species will be encouraged.
30. Roads and pathways should be constructed to minimize width of cleared areas and hard surfaces. Council may wish to consider an amendment to the Subdivision Bylaw.
31. Where appropriate, community gardens are encouraged.

Map 3: District of Highlands wells, springs, surface water points of diversion, lineaments, lineament cross-points, and geology field survey locations

Legend

- District of Highlands Municipal Boundary - EBM Water Polygon Features, 1:20K - River, Stream, Lake, Coastline - FRM Waterland Polygon Features, 1:20K - Flooded Land - Inundated - Marsh - Green - TRIM, Contours, 1:20K - Contour - Index (100 m Interval) - Contour - Intermediate (20 m Interval)	- TRIM, Water Linear Features, 1:20K - River/Stream - Definite - River/Stream - Intermittent - Flooded Land - Inundated - Lake - Definite - Lake - Intermittent - Marsh - Swamp - Island - Definite - Coastline - Definite	- NTS, Transportation - Lines - Road - Road - Road - Electrical Transmission Line - Surface water licence point of diversion (excluding seepage) - Structural/geology field survey location - Well	- Spring - Lineament - Lineament Cross-Point
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Scale: 1:30,000
1 0 1 Kilometers

Map design & layout: S. Kenny, 2004
(Compiled well data, field survey locations & springs: S. Kenny, 2004, CMB, TRIM, NTS data and various PODs, ©2004, B.C. Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, ©2004, M. Journeay, Natural Resources Canada.)

2.3 Rural Land Use

The essential character of the Highlands comes from its large land holdings, where many homes are set well back from the road, often hidden from view, and have a small 'footprint' on the land. This pattern of land ownership and use also allows for the retention of large tracts of natural landscape, sustaining a diversity of wildlife and vegetation. Some holdings are agricultural in nature, supporting livestock, small crops and orchards.

The rural area designation will provide people with choices of living environments that are still compatible with sustainable farming and forestry management. Nature-related tourism is also a desirable use within the designation. The rural land use designation is intended to preserve historic and cultural structures and landscapes, retain open spaces, protect environmentally sensitive areas and minimize service demands and costs on the municipality.

Rural Land Use – Objectives

- To provide for a range of land uses that support the retention of the large lot character of areas that are largely undisturbed, protecting them from encroachment by more intensive forms of development.
- To allow rural property owners reasonable economic opportunities for the use of their land, ensuring that uses are consistent with the rural character of the Highlands and compatible with the protection of natural areas.
- To ensure ongoing opportunities for sustainable agriculture and forestry in rural areas.
- To ensure that land use controls are in keeping with the rural character of the community; and
- To ensure that sufficient land use controls are in place to protect unique and sensitive environmental features for future generations.
- To maintain and protect ecological services and aquifer/watershed health.

Rural Land Use – Policies

1. Land uses in rural areas that are related to sustainable farming, forestry, rural residential uses, tourism, outdoor recreation, and other open space activities are preferred.
2. The primary land uses on the lands designated "Rural" on Map 2.1 may be residential, agriculture and home-based businesses that do not significantly change or impact neighbourhood character. Nature-related tourism activities are considered to be appropriate land uses. Nature-related tourism includes nature-related tourist accommodation.
3. Tourist accommodation will be limited to one tourist accommodation unit per two hectares to a maximum of 6 accommodation units, providing there is no negative impact to neighbouring wells. The building types will be in the form of bed and breakfast, cabins, or small lodge. Food will only be served to registered guests. The number of tourist accommodation units will be relative to the size of property. Tourist accommodation in the Rural Land Use designation will be guided by the home-based business section of the Zoning Bylaw.
4. New uses proposed in this designation must have access through suitable country roads, and have limited impact on environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural operations, forestry activities, historic landscapes and scenic values.
5. Prior to subdivision, information will be required through a Development Approval Information Area or a Development Permit so the District will ensure at the time of



subdivision that the road and lot layout is designed to protect environmental values, accommodate the potential for establishing municipal trails, and foster the sustainability of natural resources.

2.4 Rural Residential Land Use

Rural Residential Land Use – Objectives

- To provide housing in a rural setting without compromising Highlanders' values of privacy, peace and tranquility.
- To ensure that land use controls are in keeping with the rural character of the community.
- To ensure that sufficient land use controls are in place to protect unique and sensitive environmental features for future generations.
- To maintain opportunities for agriculture within this area.

Rural Residential Land Use – Policies

1. The primary land uses in the area designated as "Rural Residential" on Map 2.1 may be residential and home-based businesses that do not significantly change or impact neighbourhood character. Small scale agriculture is encouraged.
2. Any new uses in these areas must have access through suitable country roads, and have limited impact on environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural operations, forestry activities, historic landscapes and scenic values.
3. Prior to subdivision, information will be required through a Development Approval Information Area or a Development Permit so the District will ensure at the time of subdivision that the road and lot layout is designed to protect environmental values, accommodate the potential for establishing municipal trails, and foster the sustainability of natural resources. Where appropriate, road and lot layout should also consider road standards for bus service (such as turn-arounds or loops), and either direct or trail access to transit service.
4. When the opportunity arises, alternative uses that are more consistent with the character of the Highlands will be considered to replace the nonconforming industrial use in the East Highlands.

2.5 Intensive Residential Land Use

One area of the southwest Highlands is designated as Intensive Residential Land Use, in accordance with a 2003 zoning amendment.

Intensive Residential Land Use – Objective

- To create an area for intensive residential development while protecting the integrity and ecological value of natural areas and promoting the rural quality of the Highlands.

Intensive Residential Land Use – Policies

1. The primary land uses may be single family and attached housing. Clustering of housing is encouraged.
2. Attached housing or both single family dwelling units and attached housing may be considered in new development.
3. New development must address the housing policies of the Official Community Plan.
4. Development will incorporate natural features. All site conditions will be carefully examined before determining building locations, access and open green space areas. Wherever feasible, existing features and habitat will be retained, and where appropriate enhanced.

5. All designs should support public transit with facilities for pedestrians and other human powered transportation.

2.6 Regenerative Development Land Use

Lands in the Regenerative Development Land Use Designation are inside the Urban Containment Boundary of the Regional Growth Strategy and the Highlands Servicing Area as shown on Map 2.1.

Lands in the Regenerative Development Land Use Designation are also designated within Development Permit Area 4 – Regenerative Development. There should not be any additional access routes into this area from Millstream Road other than the existing Industrial Way. Preference is for an internal service road parallel to Millstream Road.

This area does not contain gravel deposits that may be suitable for future extraction.

The Regenerative Development Land Use objectives and policies are set out in section 3.4.1 RD – Regenerative Development in Appendix C – South Highlands Local Area Plan.

2.7 Institutional Land Use

Most institutional facilities – Health, education, libraries, religious and major recreation – are available in neighbouring municipalities. Institutional uses in the Highlands include: public institutions (municipal hall, east and west fire halls), not for profit institutions, and utilities (radio tower and telecommunications sites).

Institutional Land Use – Objective

- To ensure there is sufficient land for institutional uses to meet the local needs of Highlanders.

Institutional Land Use – Policies

1. Lands that are utilized for institutional uses are identified on Map 2.1.
2. To maintain land in the ownership of the District for fire protection and administration.
3. To maintain land in private ownership for not-for-profit institutions and utilities.
4. To support the building of a community hall in an appropriate location.
5. Consider incorporating sustainable energy technologies on institutional lands.
6. A caretaker suite may be a permitted use in an institutional building.

2.8 Public Parks

Public parks are public lands used for natural area or heritage site protection or outdoor recreation and are managed by the Province, the Capital Regional District, or the District of Highlands. Uses may include limited recreation and community gardens. Many parks in the Highlands have significant ecological and trail values. (Refer to Chapter 4 for additional policies related to parks and trails.) Some parks are designed as playing fields and for other active outdoor recreational uses.

Public Parks - Objectives

- To ensure there are sufficient park lands and trails to meet the local needs of Highlanders.
- To protect and conserve sensitive and local ecosystems.
- To fulfill Highlands' role in the CRD as the "lungs of the region".

Public Parks - Policies

1. Lands and water that are in public ownership and dedicated as parkland are identified on Map 4.1.
2. New development should include neighbourhood parks to meet the social needs of local residents.
3. The primary use of these lands and waters is for conservation and outdoor recreation. Buildings that are ancillary and related to these uses are acceptable, provided they are sited to ensure that uses or other land alteration do not harm ecosystem function or eliminate the potential for public access and environmental protection.

2.9 Managed Forest

Forestry was a significant contributor to the economy of the Highlands for several decades. At present, there are two large areas that are being used for forestry and are designated "Managed Forest." "Managed Forest" is the land use designation term used in this plan and is also a property assessment class designated by BC Assessment Authority.

The Provincial Government has an interest in the forestry practices on private lands. Managed Forest owners engage in forest management activities that are consistent with provincial legislation.

Managed Forest Land Use - Objectives

- To maintain small scale forestry as an economic activity in the Highlands.
- To encourage sustainable forest management practices, including the use of non-timber forest resources (e.g. mushrooms, salal).

Managed Forest Land Use - Policies

1. Lands that are in private ownership and are used for managed forestry are identified on Map 2.1. While the intended primary uses of these lands are managed timber production and harvesting, the following uses are also acceptable:
 - a. Forage production and grazing by livestock.
 - b. Wilderness – oriented recreation.
 - c. Conservation of ecosystems, and fish and wildlife habitat.
 - d. Sustainable non-timber forest resource harvesting.
 - e. Agriculture.
2. The District will seek to ensure long term protection of lands designated Managed Forest.

2.10 Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development

Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development designated lands are lands to be used for mixed development, including single family and multi-family residential units, a recreational golf course with associated hotel and resort units, and commercial development. The retention of open spaces and wildlife corridors, and the use of buffers, barriers or screens between the various uses within the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development area are emphasized to encourage intact ecosystem units (such as forest and wetland areas).

Development of land under this designation is guided by zoning and a development agreement.

Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development Land Use – Policies

1. Those lands in the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development identified as private open space, will be protected by covenants to the mutual satisfaction of the District and the landowners.
2. A separate schedule, known as the Bear Mountain Road Standards, will be developed and added to the District of Highlands Subdivision or Development of Land Bylaw, for design

criteria for the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development, which will require all services to be underground, employ maximum opportunity to return storm water to the forest floor, and utilize flat curbs wherever possible.

2.11 Amenity Areas

OCP policy 2.2.20 states: “Public amenities may be offered through rezoning to justify an increase in density. Such amenities must be beneficial to the wider community, as well as the proposed development, and may be offered in recognition of the increased value of land resulting from rezoning.” Appendix A describes public amenities.

Amenity Areas – Objectives

- To provide appropriate amenities that offset negative impacts of developments.
- To further municipal policies as described in the OCP.
- To assist integrating any new development into the community.

Specific Amenity Areas

Amenity 1 – Community Centre/Hall: In keeping with the long term vision of the OCP and the *Sustainable Highlands* ICSP, Appendix A – Public Amenities, and to accomplish OCP community hall-related policies including 2.9.4, and 8.5.1, Amenity 1 has been specifically designated as a site for a mixture of residential and institutional uses. The institutional use is primarily for a community centre/hall. In order to achieve this community goal, the District may consider increasing the permitted residential density on a portion of Amenity 1 land in exchange for the donation of a portion of Amenity 1 land to use as a location for a community centre/hall.

Amenity 2 – East West Trail Connector: Following guidance from the District’s Trails Master Plan and the CRD’s Trails Master Plan, land within Amenity 2 has been specifically designated as an area in which to build a trail that realizes the visions in those plans. In order to achieve this mutual municipal and regional goal, the District may consider increasing the permitted residential density on a portion of Amenity 2 land in exchange for the donation of a portion of Amenity 2 land for use as trail intended to connect the east and west areas of the District and the CRD.



Amenity 3 – 1150 Bear Mountain Parkway

Land under this designation comprises one split-zoned property. Of the property’s 22 hectares, the easterly 18 hectares is zoned Conservation 1. It has a three-party conservation covenant on it held jointly by the land owner, the District, and TLC –The Land Conservancy. The covenant shows the commitment that this section of the property is intended to remain a natural forested and riparian ecosystem community with proper functioning condition (PFC).

The four hectares on the west portion of the property has access via Bear Mountain Parkway in the City of Langford. This section of the property has been disturbed, is within the Highlands Servicing Area, and is appropriate for development. While commercial uses are preferred in order to diversify the District’s tax base, residential uses are also appropriate. Due to the property’s unique yet isolated location and characteristics from the rest of the Highlands, any development or increase in density of this 4-hectare area needs to demonstrate to Council’s satisfaction how it

would integrate the development into the community, how it would offset any negative impact(s), and how the proposal furthers other municipal OCP policies. Sewer service would be provided through the establishment of a local area service and an intermunicipal agreement.

2.12 Rural Assembly

Rural Assembly Land Use – Objectives

- To provide for a range of land uses that support the retention of the large lot character of areas that are largely undisturbed, protecting them from encroachment by more intensive forms of development.
- To allow rural property owners reasonable opportunities for the use of their land, ensuring that uses are consistent with the rural character of the Highlands and compatible with the protection of natural areas.
- To ensure ongoing opportunities for sustainable agriculture and forestry in rural areas.
- To ensure that land use controls are in keeping with the rural character of the community.
- To ensure that sufficient land use controls are in place to protect unique and sensitive environmental features for future generations.
- To maintain and protect ecological services and aquifer/watershed health.

Rural Assembly Land Use – Policies

1. Primary land uses on lands designated “Rural Assembly” on Map 2.1 may be nature-related assembly-type or tourism-type uses, with or without associated accommodation for guests. Land uses should not significantly change or impact neighbourhood character. Land uses including but not limited to residential, agriculture, and forestry are also appropriate.
2. New uses proposed in this designation must have access through suitable country roads, and have limited impact on environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural operations, forestry activities, historic landscapes and scenic values.
3. Prior to subdivision, information will be required through a Development Approval Information Area or a Development Permit to ensure that the road and lot layout is designed to protect environmental values, accommodate the potential for establishing municipal trails, and foster the sustainability of natural resources.

2.13 Special Plan Areas

The Special Plan Areas land use objectives and policies are set out in section 3.4.2 SPA – Special Plan Area in Appendix C – South Highlands Local Area Plan.

Chapter 3 – Environment and Resources

The Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone dominates Highlands' landscape. This is one of the smallest biogeoclimatic zones in BC, occurring only in southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and portions of the coastal mainland. It is a region of high biodiversity. About 100 species of trees, shrubs, vines, herbs and mosses are indigenous to these forests. Logging, agriculture, housing and recreational uses have brought considerable change to the Coastal Douglas Fir zone by interrupting pre-existing processes (such as periodic wildfires), affecting ground water re-charge, and introducing non-native species.

There are three principal watersheds within the Highlands – Pease, Craigflower and Millstream. The Pease watershed occurs in the north Highlands and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. The Craigflower watershed extends from Mount Work south to Portage Inlet in the town of View Royal. The Millstream watershed extends from the Gowlland Range south to Esquimalt Harbour in View Royal.

The Federal/Provincial Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) has mapped sensitive ecosystems on east Vancouver Island at a 1:20,000 scale; areas of 0.5 ha or larger are included. This inventory was used as one basis for the CRD's 1997 Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy. The SEI maps eight sensitive ecosystems types on Vancouver Island:

1. Older forests (coniferous, average tree age > 100 years)
2. Older second growth forests (coniferous, average tree age between 60 and 100 years)
3. Woodlands (deciduous and mixed)
4. Terrestrial herbaceous (rocky outcrops and natural meadows)
5. Coastal bluffs (coastal cliffs and bluffs)
6. Sparsely vegetated (dunes, spits, inland cliffs)
7. Wetlands (swamps, fens, marshes)
8. Riparian (streamside vegetation)

The emphasis of this chapter is to define the appropriate sustainable activities that are compatible with the rural character of the Highlands. Protection, conservation and restoration of natural areas are a priority, and opportunities need to be found for physical and ecological connections to help ensure ecological health.

3.1 General Environment and Resources

There are many natural areas within the Highlands that merit protection from development and human activity in order to sustain native plants and animals and their habitats, and to maintain the overall green and treed quality of the community.

Large areas of the Highlands are protected from development through provincial, regional and municipal parks. Conservation easements are increasingly playing a role in the protection of the natural landscape. Approximately 38% of the Highlands is publicly owned and designated as park. Both public and private landowners need to be knowledgeable of the ecosystems and serve as stewards. This OCP, however, and its associated land use regulatory tools (Development Permitting process; Development Approval Information process) have a role to play in protecting sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity of the Highlands.

General Environment and Resources – Objectives

- To protect the environment and our resources, especially potable water sources (ground and surface).
- To be environmentally responsible in our decisions and actions.
- To consider the effects of climate change and to work toward a strategy to contribute, to the fullest extent possible, to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

- To use provisions of federal and provincial legislation and regulations, including best management practices, to protect environmentally sensitive areas and biologically diverse ecosystems.
- To enhance environmental awareness and promote activities that protect and restore the natural environment.
- To protect healthy ecosystems and restore damaged ecosystems.
- To acquire appropriate environmental information, especially when development is proposed.
- To continue to update Maps 11.1 and 11.2 to more accurately reflect actual circumstances.
- To encourage residents to avoid unnecessary and unpleasant noise.
- To ensure personal safety and protect property from wildfires.

General Environment and Resources – Policies

1. The District will use its authority through the Local Government Act to protect Highlands' natural landscapes and ecosystems. This may be accomplished in a number of ways including:
 1. Land acquisition
 2. Conservation covenants with willing landowners
 3. Negotiation at the time of subdivision
 4. Negotiation at the time of rezoning
 5. Development Permits in Development Permit Areas
 6. Other regulatory bylaws such as the Tree Management Bylaw
2. The District will provide environmental information to residents and businesses and will encourage the involvement of non-government environmental organizations in this activity.
3. Residents and landowners are encouraged to participate in land stewardship by taking responsibility for the well-being of the natural environment and making an effort to restore and protect that well-being.
4. The District will develop an integrated pest management plan, including minimal use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, for public lands. This should include education for private land owners.
5. Should any application for changes to land within Highlands fall within the parameters of the BC Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR), an applicant will be required to furnish, at their expense, an Assessment Report certified by a Qualified Professional as defined by and meeting the intent of the RAR. All applications falling under the RAR will still be subject to Council review.
6. The District may seek to establish a database, correlated to maps, that provides information on watercourse widths with the goal of establishing buffers based on Highlands' regulations and provincial regulations.
7. The District will support the removal of invasive species throughout the Highlands.
8. The District will support conservation efforts.
9. The District should develop a community water and energy conservation program in partnership with local stewardship agencies.
10. The District will work with government agencies and non-government organizations and professional biologists to review, refine and update the environmentally sensitive areas shown on Maps 11.1 and 11.2.
11. The District will use its regulatory authority to establish and enforce noise matters.
12. The District will discourage the erection of power transmission and communications towers on hilltops.

13. The District will study ways and means to protect life and property from wildfires. This study will also examine planning for recovery in the event of a wildfire.

3.2 Natural Hazard Conditions

Natural hazard areas are lands that are susceptible to wildfire, flooding, erosion, land slip, rockfall or that pose a threat to surrounding lands should their natural conditions be altered.

Many of the undisturbed lands in the Highlands are on steep slopes and hillsides. These lands present special challenges for potential development in terms of erosion problems, stormwater drainage, groundwater management, and other environmental and visual impacts. Typically, land development on steep slopes is disruptive and retaining vegetation is challenging.

Natural Hazard Conditions - Objectives

- To protect human life and property from natural and human-made hazards.
- To ensure that human activities do not contribute to flooding, increased water run-off, soil erosion, or slope instability.
- To protect steep slopes from inappropriate disturbance or development.

Natural Hazard Conditions - Policies

1. Hazardous lands include slopes over 30%, areas of erodible soils or unstable slopes, and floodplains as generally shown on Map 11.1.
2. The District discourages filling and development in floodplains due to the cumulative impact of these activities on their capacity to withstand flood events.
3. Lands subject to flooding should be left in their natural state, dedicated as parks or used for agriculture, providing best management practices are used.

Steep Slopes - Policies

4. Steep slopes include land generally exceeding 30% in slope. Steep slopes are designated as a Development Permit Area (Refer to Chapter 11). The requirement for a Development Permit on steep slopes will help protect the impacts of development and human activity. Generally, this will include:
 - a. Minimizing disturbance of vegetation and movement of soil or rock.
 - b. Using lot configurations and building designs that incorporate the topography rather than relying on creating large, flat lots.
 - c. Using building heights and roof forms that minimize visual impact.
 - d. Retaining special natural features such as rock outcroppings, significant trees and plant communities, watercourses and ridge lines.
 - e. Incorporating controls on erosion during the construction phase, and measures to mitigate erosion on the finished development.
 - f. Balancing the desire for views with the need to maintain vegetation.
 - g. Vegetating and landscaping with native plant material or other suitable plants that will stabilize slopes but not place native species and ecosystems at risk.

3.3 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) are shown on Maps 11.1 and 11.2. These are based on research by the Provincial Government and supplemented by professional biologists based on detailed knowledge of local conditions. As more detailed information on ESAs is generated, the boundaries shown on the maps may be revised.

Environmentally sensitive areas provide productive fish or wildlife habitat; contain rare or depleted ecosystems and landforms; and represent sites of natural diversity that are in danger of disappearing. They include:

- Lakes, watercourses, or wetlands, (seasonal or year-round) and their associated aquatic habitats.
- Riparian areas (land and vegetation within 30 m of a lake, watercourse or wetland).
- Essential habitat areas containing rare, threatened, endangered or otherwise significant plant or animal species.
- An area of exceptional aesthetic value to the community.

Environmentally sensitive areas are susceptible to disturbance by human activity and the impacts of development. Responsibilities for managing these areas are shared among landowners and governments. Subject to relevant regulations, land owners determine the kinds of activities conducted on a property and the degree of environmental stewardship exercised. The Province of British Columbia has authority over use, allocation, and management of surface water and wildlife. The Provincial and Federal Governments share jurisdiction over fisheries. The District of Highlands has authority to regulate land use, development, storm drainage, tree cutting, and placement or removal of soil. Commitment, cooperation, and coordination among these parties are needed to protect the character and ecological function of ESAs.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas - Objectives

- To identify and protect sensitive plant, wildlife and fish habitats, as well as lands that include distinctive geologic features as environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs).
- To ensure that land uses and activities are compatible with the ecosystem functions and other important environmental characteristics of the land and water.
- To avoid the disturbance of ESAs; where disturbance is necessary, mitigations should be identified and carried out.
- To encourage public awareness of the ecological importance of ESAs.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas - Policies

Sensitive Vegetation

Sensitive vegetation areas have been identified by the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (prepared by the Provincial and Federal Governments) and are generally shown on Map 9.2. These are remaining native vegetation communities meeting specific size and conservation criteria. Sensitive vegetation areas will be protected from the impacts of development or other human activity by the following policies.

1. The preservation of native plant communities and intact stands of trees is encouraged.
2. Sensitive vegetation areas will be designated as Development Permit Areas (Refer to Chapter 11).
3. The District will identify significant trees, wildlife trees, and treed areas. Protection of these trees and treed areas will be considered through the adoption and enforcement of a Tree Protection Bylaw and, where applicable, through a Development Permit designation.

Water Features and Riparian Areas

4. Water features include lakes, watercourses, and wetlands, whether seasonal or year-round. The location of most water features and their riparian areas are generally shown on Map 3; however, all such features and areas in the Highlands will be protected from the impacts of development or other human activity by:
 - a. Preventing the removal of gravel, sand, soil or peat from the water features and ensuring that there is no modification of channels, banks, or shores that could cause environmental harm.
 - b. Protecting native vegetation cover near stream banks or lake shores.
 - c. Prohibiting draining, dredging, infilling, piping or dumping of materials in water features.
 - d. Discouraging alteration or removal of natural wetland vegetation.
 - e. Prohibiting the construction of habitable buildings or septic tank fields within at least 30 metres horizontal distance from the high water mark of water features or within 15 metres of any flood hazard area.
 - f. Preventing pollutants, including pesticides and fertilizers, from entering water features by requiring the control of surface water drainage.
 - g. Requiring all new developments or modifications of existing developments to cause no increase in peak surface water runoff compared to existing conditions of the site.
 - h. Requiring new developments or modifications of existing developments to provide for on-site retention and infiltration of surface water runoff from the development as needed.
 - i. Requiring control of the quality and quantity of surface water runoff or liquid waste from a development or activity in a way that protects water features or groundwater.
 - j. Prohibiting motorized craft on lakes.
 - k. Designating, and regulating through Development Permits, a buffer zone within which uses and activities will be limited to protect the water feature.
 - l. Ensuring that all new developments or modifications of existing developments create no net loss of fish habitat during the development process.
 - m. Ensuring that watercourses will be left open and natural to protect habitat.
 - n. Retaining, enhancing or restoring native vegetation coverage to protect habitat, reduce water use, and reduce use of pesticides and fertilizers within Highlands.
5. Notwithstanding “Environmentally Sensitive Areas: Policies - Water Features and Riparian Areas” (section 3.3(1a-n)), exceptions may be made by relevant agencies, where appropriate to create water ponds for firefighting purposes, where emergency vehicle access and pond construction minimize environmental impacts and modification of natural water flows.
6. Notwithstanding “Environmentally Sensitive Areas: Policies - Water Features and Riparian Areas” (section 3.3(1a-n)), the development of a Golf Course and road and infrastructure network will permit (subject to necessary permits from Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments) construction of such improvements up to and through water and riparian areas, providing there is no “Net Loss” of water and riparian areas within the proposed development. The policy applies only to the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development Zone.
7. The District will work with appropriate agencies and adjacent municipalities in order to implement the recommendations of the Craigflower and Millstream Watershed Management Plans.

Marine Waters and Shorelands

8. The District will protect the ecosystem along Finlayson Arm, including foreshore and backshore areas. Where these lands and waters are in a provincial park, the District will work cooperatively with the provincial agency that is responsible.

3.4 Biodiversity

Discussion during the planning process reaffirmed recognition of the importance and need to sustain biodiversity. Wetlands received particular attention as they are productive ecosystems that support a large number of species.

Biodiversity - Objectives

- To maintain sufficient lands and waters in their natural state in order to sustain the rich biodiversity of the Highlands
- To preserve aquatic habitat and the basic ecological functions of watersheds so they can continue to support biodiversity.
- To maintain and restore connectivity between natural areas where possible.

Biodiversity – Policies

1. The District may establish a plan to conduct a detailed bio-inventory and water course inventory of the Highlands. These efforts may be used to help direct priorities for park acquisition, preferably at the regional, provincial or federal levels, and to guide development applications when applying the Riparian Areas Regulation.

3.5 Watershed and Groundwater Management

Please also refer to section 2.1, which lists all OCP sections that discuss and provide policy direction regarding water, and section 7.2, which discusses Water Supply and Well Protection.

Highlands is home to the headwaters of more than one watershed. This means significant responsibility for the District for maintaining downstream watershed and groundwater health.

Watershed and Groundwater Management – Objectives

- To protect, sustain, and enhance aquatic habitat, acknowledging that all water sources are inherently linked.
- To manage water flows in order to optimize groundwater recharge and summer flows, and to minimize flood damage while maintaining the natural integrity of watercourses.
- To protect surface and groundwater from human impacts.
- To protect and restore native flora and fauna throughout the watershed, wherever feasible.

Watershed and Groundwater Management – Policies

In addition to those policies for Environmentally Sensitive Areas – Water and Riparian Areas and those found in Section 7.2:

1. The District will seek, in cooperation with stewardship organizations and other partners, to educate landowners, residents, community groups and businesses about watershed stewardship.

3.6 Invasive Species

The natural environment contributes to the character of the District of Highlands and is highly valued by its residents. The threat of invasive species and their potentially adverse effects therefore poses a

significant risk to these values. Potential adverse effects include negatively impacting natural species biodiversity, property values, recreation opportunities, agriculture, and human health, as well as increasing fire hazard. The District recognizes the importance of controlling invasive species within its jurisdiction. Appendix B outlines a more detailed policy for Invasive Species. Disturbed, non-vegetated sites are especially vulnerable to invasive species.

Invasive Species – Objectives

- To prevent the introduction and spread of new invasive species.
- To encourage and enable the removal of invasive species on public and private lands.
- To promote the use of native plant species.

Invasive Species – Policies

The District will reduce the adverse effects of invasive species by the following approach to invasive plant species:

1. Implement and encourage use of Best Practices for preventing the introduction of invasive species.
2. Support the removal and control of invasive species on District-owned lands and encourage appropriate government agencies and utility companies to remove invasive species from other public and private lands. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) efforts will be encouraged.
3. Require training for staff and contractors for identification and removal of invasive species using Best Management Practices.
4. Support a public education program.
5. Encourage the revegetation of disturbed areas with the use of locally sourced, non-invasive, and native plants.

3.7 Air Quality

The air quality in the Highlands is generally very high. This is due to an abundance of publicly and privately-owned natural areas, and the lack of major industry and heavily traveled roads.

Air Quality – Objective

- To maintain a high standard of air quality.

Air Quality – Policies

1. The District will discourage new commercial and industrial development and activities that have an appreciable negative impact on the air quality in the Highlands.
2. The District will regulate outdoor burning to maintain high air quality levels.
3. The open burning of land clearing debris is not desirable.

3.8 Outdoor Lighting

The natural night sky environment is an important feature of the Highlands. While some outdoor lighting is needed for safety and security, poorly designed or improperly aimed lights wash out the stars, reduce privacy, are environmentally harmful, and waste energy.

Light Sources – Objective

- To preserve the natural night sky environment.

Light Sources – Policies

1. Where external lighting is required, the District encourages use of
 - a. “Full-Cut Off” fixtures that are properly mounted to prevent light trespass to adjoining properties and into areas that are environmentally sensitive,
 - b. Luminaires that have minimal emission in the blue part of the spectrum,
 - c. Luminaires that are no brighter than needed,
 - d. The least number of external fixtures possible, and
 - e. Motion sensors or timers.
2. The District encourages the use of reflectors in place of lights, where appropriate

3.9 Soil and Water Pollution

Soil and water quality within the District is generally high with the exception of lands where previous industrial activities or liquid waste disposal activities have resulted in contamination of soil and groundwater. The contamination of groundwater from septic systems is possible if not managed properly. It is important that residents and all decision-makers are aware of the delicate balance between wells and septic systems.

Soil and Water Pollution – Objectives

- To prevent pollution of soil and water at its source.
- To identify, clean up, and restore contaminated sites.

Soil and Water Pollution – Policies

1. The District will not issue a Development Permit for activities that result in air, water, or noise pollution or contamination of soils.
2. The District will not re-issue a license to a business that is actively engaged in contamination of soil or water.
3. At the time of redevelopment of contaminated areas, the applicant will comply with the Government of British Columbia pollution control regulations in order to ensure that these areas are remediated to a level that minimizes risk to humans and wild species.
4. The District will request that appropriate government agencies remediate contaminated public lands in the Highlands.

3.10 Treed Character

Highlands' steep and forested hillsides are an essential component of the community's rural and natural character. Throughout the planning process, residents reinforced their concerns that the plan addresses the significance of retaining the treed character of the Highlands.

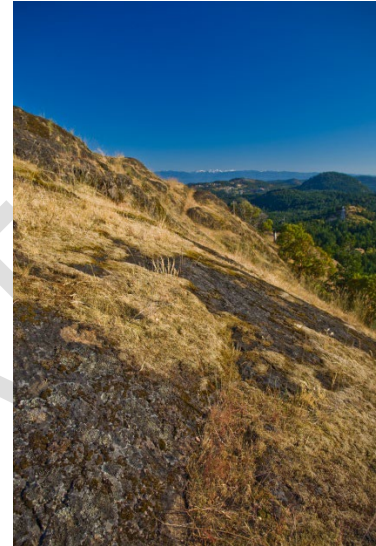
Treed Character – Objectives

- To maintain the treed character of the Highlands.
- To promote planting of native trees on public and private lands.
- To protect the natural treed character of hillsides, thereby preserving and enhancing their visual and natural quality.

Treed Character – Policies

1. The District, without infringing on the safety of Highlands' residents, will discourage tree cutting or removal of natural vegetation. Selective limbing is encouraged over tree removal.
2. Removal of trees purely for view enhancement is discouraged.

3. Large scale clearing of land is discouraged, except for agricultural and forestry purposes.
4. Logging of trees or clearing of land that is not for agricultural purposes should be conducted only when no reasonable alternative exists. Where logging and clearing of land takes place, the following should be taken into account:
 - a. Avoiding erosion and sedimentation.
 - b. Protecting habitat and rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species.
 - c. Retaining natural vegetation near lakes, streams, and riparian areas.
 - d. Encouraging the re-establishment of trees and a healthy forest ecosystem.
 - e. Avoiding clear-cutting large areas.
 - f. Maintaining the ecological productivity of the land and its ability to support native vegetation.
5. The District will use and enforce its Tree Management Bylaw to protect significant trees, heritage trees, wildlife trees, and treed areas.
6. The use of native tree species will be encouraged in landscaping on public and private lands.



3.11 Erosion Control and Remediation

Much of the upland area of the Highlands has thin soil over bedrock. These areas are subject to soil erosion, particularly at the time of development and construction. Soil that is eroded may be washed or blown into nearby watercourses and neighbouring properties. And, after development, the area's ability to absorb and retain surface runoff may be reduced, increasing the erosion potential both on-site and downstream, and increasing peak flows.

Erosion Control and Remediation – Objectives

- To control erosion during the development process.
- To restore eroded areas to their natural condition.

Erosion Control and Remediation – Policies

1. The District will develop standards and procedures to address potential erosion control during and after construction. The District will be guided by best management practices in the preparation of these standards and procedures.
2. The District will require land owners to prepare erosion and silt control plans as part of a condition of subdivision, Development Permit or building permit, as well as permits issued under the Soil Removal and Soil Deposit Regulation Bylaws and Tree Management Bylaw.

Chapter 4 – Parks and Trails

Highlands has an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities, with a number of dedicated parks, and a network of public trails, including roadside trails. Hiking, horseback riding, biking and nature appreciation are all popular activities. While there are many lakes throughout the Highlands, there are few public accesses to swimming areas. Twinflower Park, next to the West Fire Hall, offers a variety of recreational facilities. Recreation and leisure activities should have little impact on the Highlands' native ecosystems. Ongoing environmental education could encourage stewardship of ecosystems, and include heritage values, green building facilities, forest management and food production.

Highlands contributes financially and through leadership to the operation of the Juan de Fuca Recreation Commission. These facilities provide recreation opportunities for residents of the Westshore Communities and for all residents of the Capital Region for some specialized facilities. Highlands residents enjoy these out-of-District facilities. Efforts to establish recreation facilities within easy access of residents, especially Highlands youth, are encouraged.

The BC Government and the Capital Region own and manage large parks within the Highlands. These parks are enjoyed by Highlanders and thousands of visitors each year. They play a significant role in attracting people from outside the region, and they generate income and employment throughout the region. In 1993, approximately 10% of the Highlands land base was natural park. In 2025, parks represented approximately 41% (1,561 hectares) of the District's land base.

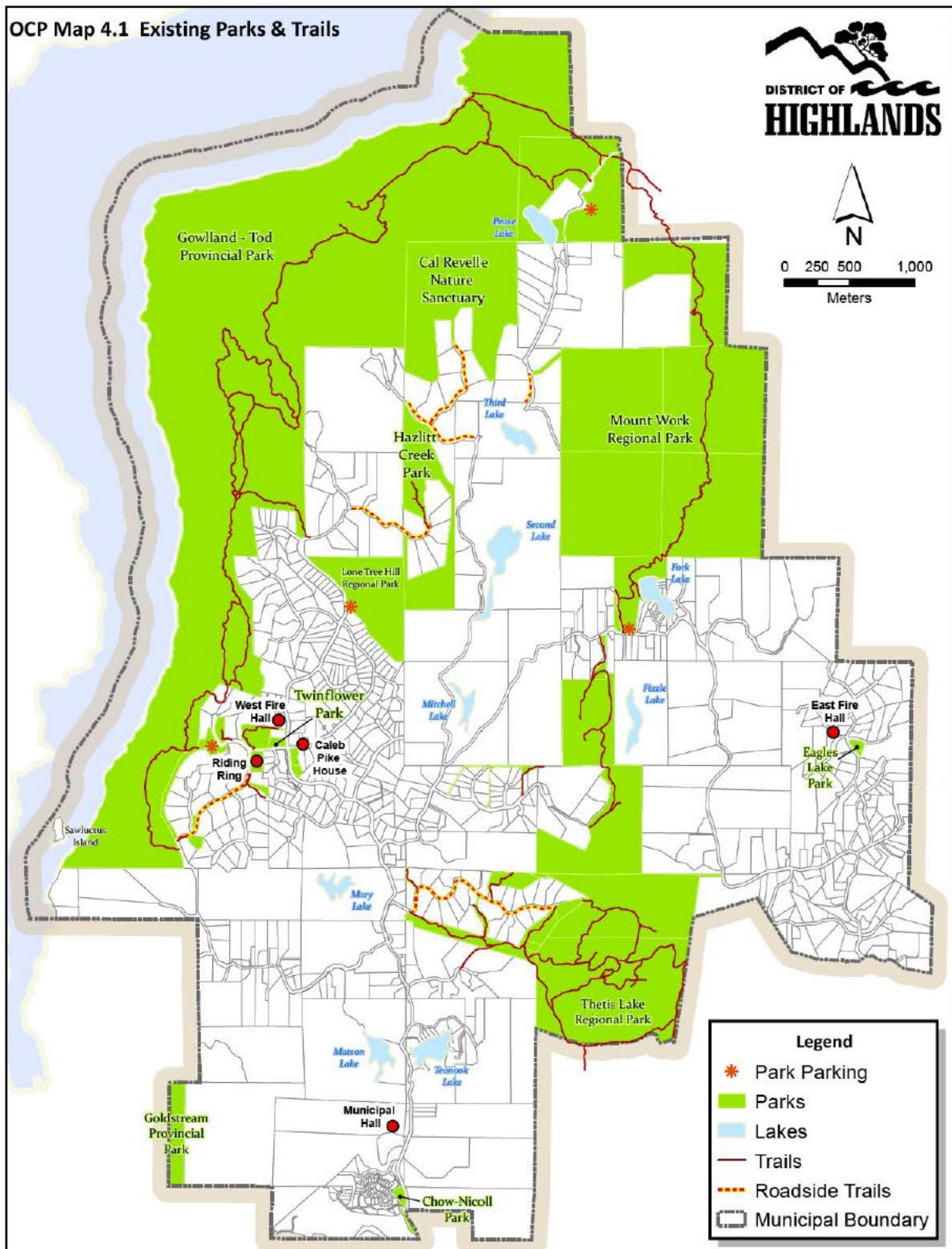


Gowlland Tod Provincial Park occupies 716 hectares. It is a park that is managed primarily for conservation goals, and secondarily for recreational opportunities. Management focuses on protection of natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and archaeological and cultural values.

Regional parks accounted for 683 hectares in 2025. Thetis Lake, Mount Work and Long Tree Hill Regional Parks are well used by hikers.

The Highlands Parks and Recreation Master Plan was adopted by Council in 2001. It is a strategic document that reflects the then-current needs and desires of Highlands' residents. A Trails Master Plan was completed in 2002 and revised in 2010 with details regarding roadside trails. These master plans should be updated on a regular basis. Both plans form an integral link with this OCP, and should be consulted in conjunction with it.

In addition to publicly owned parks, there are natural areas and wildlife corridors that are privately owned. Some of these areas are sensitive and rarely traversed or disturbed. Privately owned natural areas help protect ecosystems, maintain viewscales, and reinforce the rural ambience of the community.



4.1 Parks and Trails Objectives

- To continue to place a high priority on the conservation of the natural ecosystems of the Highlands through parks and other conservation mechanisms.
- To ensure that the parks systems in the Highlands (provincial, regional and municipal) includes a variety of ecosystems and recreational opportunities.
- To integrate park and trail initiatives in the District with regional and provincial park and trail initiatives.
- To continue and enhance Highlands' role of providing opportunities for nature study and appreciation as well as outdoor recreation for residents and visitors in the Capital Region.
- To provide for a basic level of recreational opportunities beyond those based on the natural environment, particularly those addressing the needs of young people in the municipality.
- To develop and maintain a trail network that links important nodes and neighbourhoods in the community, and links Highlands to neighbouring municipalities. This should be done in consultation with the community.
- To minimize the impact of a trail network on wildlife, riparian and other sensitive ecosystem areas, and reduce trespassing on private property.
- To acquire land desirable for District parks in order to meet present and future needs of Highland residents.
- To maintain District parks and trails in a manner suited to their intended use.
- To enhance neighbourhood identity and self-sufficiency through the creation of playfields, trails, tot lots, and neighbourhood parks.
- To cooperate with the Capital Region, the BC Government and other parties to protect ecological features and ecosystem functions.
- To encourage best practices stewardship of publicly and privately owned lands and trails.
- To protect natural ecosystems from the impacts of development or other human activity through stewardship, conservation and restoration activities.

4.2 General Parks and Trails Policy

1. Decisions regarding parks, trails and recreation should be guided, along with other relevant information, by the Highlands Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the 2010 Trails Master Plan. The CRD Parks Master Plan and BC Parks should also be consulted, as well as affected landowners.

4.3 District Parks Policies

District Parks and Trails are shown on Map 4.1.

1. The District may acquire additional park land in areas where Council considers it desirable and beneficial. The public will be consulted regarding proposed new parks.
2. The District will develop an overall plan for Highlands park acquisition, development and maintenance, including a budget and statement of priorities. The biophysical inventory referred to in Section 3.4 should be used to help set priorities.
3. Park and recreation facility designs and operational standards will be environmentally sound and consistent with the rural character of the Highlands. Disturbance of the natural landscape will be minimized in lands designated for parks.
4. The District will prepare a park management plan for each park. Some portions of District parks should be designed for people with disabilities.
5. Activities that could damage soil or plants will be limited in areas to be designated by the District or other park management agencies, and will be restricted in wildflower communities and other sensitive vegetation areas.

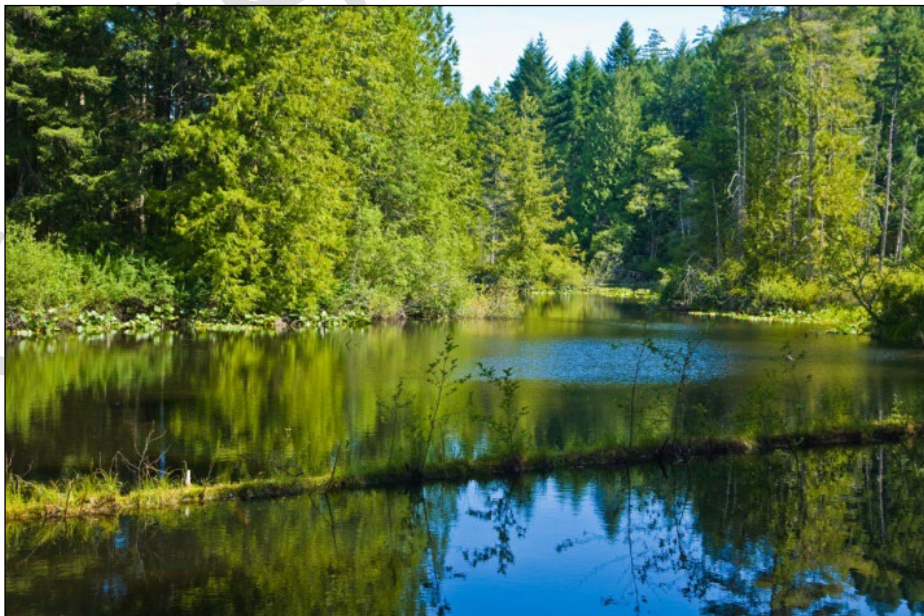
6. A consistent identity will be created for Highlands' parks through signs and public information.
7. District Parks are not currently designed for overnight camping, however this could be re-examined.

4.4 Recreational/Multi-Use Trails Policies

1. The District of Highlands will create a network of recreational trails that will be publicly accessible for designated non-motorized modes of travel. The public will be consulted regarding proposed new trails.
2. At the time of subdivision or rezoning, where appropriate, the District may acquire, or use other means of protecting land for recreational trails, in order to provide public access to recreational areas, and other destinations.
3. The District will develop an overall plan for Highlands trail acquisition, development and maintenance, including a budget and a statement of priorities.
4. Where appropriate, CRD and District trails may be used as emergency access routes and park agencies are encouraged to incorporate these into their park management programs.
5. A consistent trail system identity will be created through trail signs, maps, brochures, and other public information.
6. Trails will be located, built, and maintained in ways that require only basic levels of landscape disturbance and that preserve the natural character of an area while ensuring longevity of trails and minimizing the need for ongoing maintenance.
7. The District will organize a community-based maintenance and stewardship program (e.g., trail section sponsorship) as a means of minimizing the municipal resources necessary to maintain the trail system.
8. Motorized vehicles will be prohibited from recreational trails, except for emergency or maintenance purposes.

4.5 Lake Access Policy

1. In general, the District should not seek public access to private lakes.



4.6 Provincial and Regional Parks and Trails Policies

1. All new developments adjacent to provincial and regional parks will provide: a naturally vegetated buffer between the development and the park; signs delineating park boundaries; and fencing where appropriate to prevent trespass for all parties concerned.
2. Proposed or potential parks and trails over private lands should not be identified on public maps produced by provincial, regional and municipal authorities.
3. Trespass on private property and unauthorized access into provincial and regional parks should not occur. The District could work with park agencies to display appropriate signage.
4. The District will cooperate with provincial and regional parks agencies and with adjacent municipalities to develop compatible standards for the management of parks and trails.
5. The District may participate in the creation of regional trails through:
 - a. Coordination of the acquisition of regional trail corridors through Highlands development approval processes.
 - b. The creation and management of local trail connections to regional trails at appropriate locations.

Chapter 5 – Energy, Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change

Adaptation

5.1 Sustainable Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Since the start of the industrial era, burning of fossil fuels has greatly increased the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It continues to do so at a rapid rate. Driven by increasing global temperatures and associated effects on weather and water balance, the future environmental, social and economic consequences of GHG emissions are likely to be widespread and serious. Predicted impacts include sea-level rise, and more frequent and extreme weather events that will severely affect food production, transportation and infrastructure.

Some adverse effects are almost certainly already locked in by ongoing impacts of past and present emissions. However, many of the future consequences will almost certainly be much more severe unless current GHG emissions are rapidly and steeply reduced. The task for the Highlands is therefore two-fold: to do our part to radically reduce global GHG emissions (mitigation) and to build a local community better able to cope with what the future will bring (adaptation).

The reduction targets in this chapter only include “operation” emissions, and not “consumption” emissions (for example, consumer/material goods). It is estimated that operations account for only 50% of our total Highlands greenhouse gas emissions, and yet these are the only emissions counted in our targets.

Since a large portion of the Highlands is permanently protected in forested park areas and protected private forested lands, the Highlands contributes significantly to the rest of the Capital Region in terms of sequestering carbon in forest lands, thereby mitigating the impacts of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

5.1.1 Overall Objectives

- To foster the level of knowledge within the community needed to understand energy systems, the principles of conservation, the importance of renewable energy and how to make lifestyle choices that positively affect the local and global environment.
- To substantially reduce GHG emissions by reducing consumption of material goods (manufacture, packaging, and transportation of consumer goods).
- To substantially reduce GHG emissions through improved solid waste management practices.
- To substantially reduce GHG emissions from buildings and solid waste through energy efficiency and conservation, and by shifting to less carbon intensive energy systems.
- To substantially reduce GHG emissions from mobile/transportation sources through energy efficiency, reducing energy use, and shifting to less carbon intensive energy sources.
- To consider the effect of climate change related impacts on the District of Highlands at the local scale in order to inform the planning of future infrastructure and adaptation measures.

5.1.2 General Policy Orientation

The policies in this chapter are intended to promote greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, energy efficiency, renewable energy production, water conservation, waste reduction, and use or reuse of waste as a resource. Additional OCP policies that support this intention are under the topics of: land use (chapter 2), transportation (chapter 6), services and utilities (chapter 7), and economic diversification (chapter 9). Specific direction for action is included in Development Permit Area #6.

5.2 Sustainable Energy

5.2.1 Objectives

- Reduce overall energy consumption
- Increase the efficiency of energy use.
- Increase the proportion of sustainable energy sources used in the Highlands

5.2.2 Energy Policies

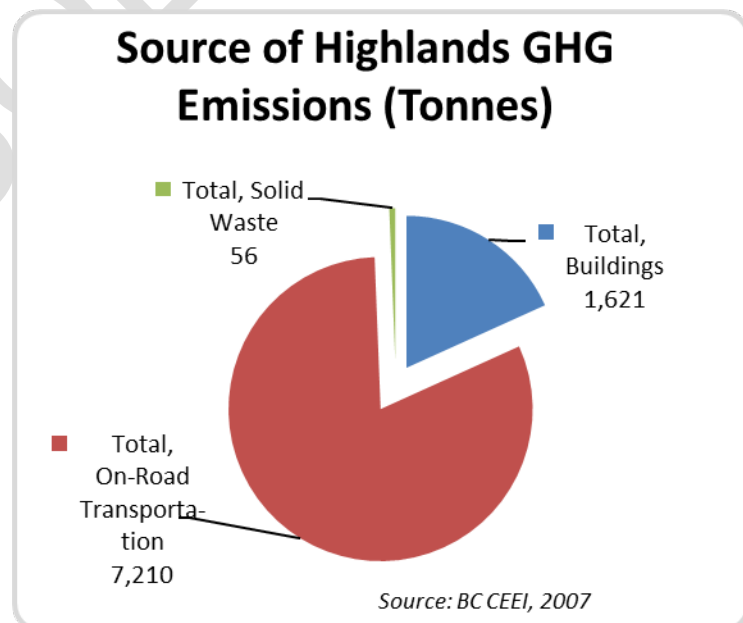
1. The District will work with community partners to promote awareness of, and share information about, energy efficiency and sustainable energy sources.
2. New building proposals should demonstrate energy efficiency above minimum Building Code requirements.
3. The District will develop policies to encourage new buildings to be designed to incorporate technologies, including passive solar design, that lead towards substantial reductions in energy, water and waste.
4. The District will explore all opportunities to incorporate low impact, sustainable energy.
5. Where appropriate, opportunities for district or community energy systems using low impact, sustainable energy sources will be explored.
6. The District will explore pilot projects that demonstrate the benefit of sustainable energy systems.
7. New or upgraded District facilities and other assets will consider ways to save energy and use low impact, renewable energy sources.

5.3 Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction

The Local Government Act requires local governments to establish policies, targets and actions for GHG reduction. The six main GHGs directly resulting from human activity are: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). For simplicity, the term for all greenhouse gases considered together is carbon dioxide equivalents, usually measured in tonnes (t CO₂e). Transportation is the source for the overwhelming majority of GHGs emitted in the Highlands.

5.3.1 Emission Reduction Targets

In 2010, Highlands set per capita, or tonnes per person GHG targets. These are different from the 'absolute' or total tonnes of GHG targets set by the Province. Per capita targets are useful for tracking changes in growing areas or translating the reductions into more personal terms; however, per capita targets may not acknowledge that total emissions need to drop as well. The recommended 2012 reduction strategy for Highlands includes additional total emission reduction targets for 2030 in keeping with the ICSP timeline as well as a long-term sustainability target (2050 or 2060) of approximately 20% of total emissions (i.e.



80% reduction) compared with 2007. Setting an ultimate target will set clear direction for the community, and will help the community to make better decisions today.

The following table indicates the GHG emission reduction targets in comparison with the Province, previous OCP targets (2010 Amendment) and revised 2012 OCP targets.

Jurisdiction	Type	Reduction Targets % Emission Reduction over 2007 Emissions by Year...				
		...2012	...2016	...2020	...2030	...2050
Province of BC	Total	6%	18%	33%		80%
Highlands	Previous OCP	Per Capita		20%		60%
		Total		9%		40%
	Current OCP	Per Capita		20%	35%	82%
		Total		9%	26%	80%

5.3.2 Emission Reduction Policies

Stationary Emission Source Policies

1. Establish the entire municipality as a Development Permit Area (Chapter 11) for the purposes of promoting energy and water conservation as well as the reduction of GHG emissions.
2. Encourage increased uptake of building retrofit programs (provincial, federal and utility-based) that address energy efficiency, water conservation and renewable energy.
3. Explore and remove any barriers to higher building envelope insulation standards from local regulations and standards.
4. Create an incentive structure to encourage energy-efficient, low-carbon construction and development practices.
 - a) Create and deploy incentives to facilitate upgrades of existing infrastructure and buildings that improve energy efficiency.
 - b) Work to structure municipal fees and charges on development to encourage energy efficiency and lower environmental-impact development.
 - c) Work to structure permitting practices that prioritize development that includes energy efficiency and lower environmental-impact development.
5. Create a 'Smart Zone.' The goal of such a zone would be buildings and sites with net zero consumption of energy, water and waste.
6. Support provincial building code building efficiency extensions and other tools that maximize the extent to which local building regulation can require or support renewable energy systems in local development and construction.
7. Support and encourage on-site, local and regional low-carbon energy production that includes a careful assessment of potential negative impacts on ecosystem function, air quality, community character and visual aesthetics.
8. Work with utility partners to conduct a feasibility study of potential current or future areas within the Highlands Servicing Area that are suitable for district energy systems. In those areas identified as suitable for district energy, consider the development of an energy utility and Development Permit guidelines to develop this resource.

Mobile Emission Sources Policies

9. Focus new development in the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area.

10. Proposals for new development or significant redevelopment should be required to quantify future GHG emissions and energy consumption, and should incorporate measures to minimize and/or mitigate projected increases.
11. Investigate opportunities to improve live-work use designations within existing zones where this inclusion would not have adverse impacts on the Highlands rural character.
12. Encourage the development of locally based economies, jobs and workspaces in order to reduce the number of work-related commuting trips to other communities.
13. Investigate opportunities to create a multimodal transportation hub with connections to the region, that supports the use of the most efficient and renewable fuel transportation options.
14. Reduce regional transportation emissions by supporting appropriate opportunities for increasing local food production.
15. Work to integrate more efficient and low-impact renewable powered vehicle technologies for the community through increasing access to the infrastructure (e.g. electric charging station stations) and fuels to support them (e.g. electricity, biodiesel).
16. Encourage residents to utilize low or zero-emission vehicles as their principle vehicle.
17. Encourage residents to utilize low or zero-emissions land and yard maintenance devices.

5.3.3 Corporate Actions

1. Apply the principles of avoiding emissions, reducing emissions, replacing and offsetting emissions when considering GHG reductions in corporate operations.
2. Create a carpooling and park-n-ride strategy¹.
3. Implement the 2010 Master Trail Plan roadside trails and cycling lanes.
4. Task an advisory committee to provide annual recommendations to Council on strategies to reduce car use in Highlands.
5. Increase the efficiency of fleet vehicles and proportion of renewable energy used for the vehicles, taking into consideration all-season safety and fuel availability and cost.
6. Reduce emissions by using low impact, sustainable or renewable energy sources in new or upgraded District facilities and other assets.
7. Support community education and outreach programs that raise awareness of the benefits of reducing personal energy use and decreasing our collective GHG emissions.
8. Assemble and maintain community inventories (e.g. CEEI) on energy and emissions and reduction opportunities (e.g. LiveSmart BC) in a central location and through easily navigated links on the District web site.
9. Task an advisory committee of key community stakeholders and interested individuals to review emission reduction progress and to develop action planning for the future.

¹ Sustainable Highlands ICSP 2012 short-term actions

Chapter 6 – Transportation

The narrow, winding roads are an important part of the rural character and heritage of the Highlands. Pedestrian, cycling and equestrian trails are also important links within the community. Map 6.1 shows Highlands' road system.

A significant part of a more sustainable transportation system in the Highlands is increased transportation options to reduce car trips. Half the community's energy use is from residential vehicles, so an important challenge is to reduce this source of GHGs and collaborate on more efficient options. The ease and safety for pedestrian and cyclist transport must be increased while protecting the environment adjacent to roads and trails through best practices in design, construction and maintenance.

BC Transit provides handyDART service to residents in portions of Highlands. This service is critical for enabling seniors and persons with disabilities to access services and programs both within and outside the District. The one current "paratransit" service, established in 2003, is a morning and evening peak hour commuter route provided between Treanor Avenue at Millstream Road in Langford and Martlett Drive at Millstream Road. BC Transit's Transit Future Plan (2011) for the Capital Region includes the paratransit service and extending regular service to Hanington and Millstream Roads for direct connection to rapid transit.

6.1 Transportation - General

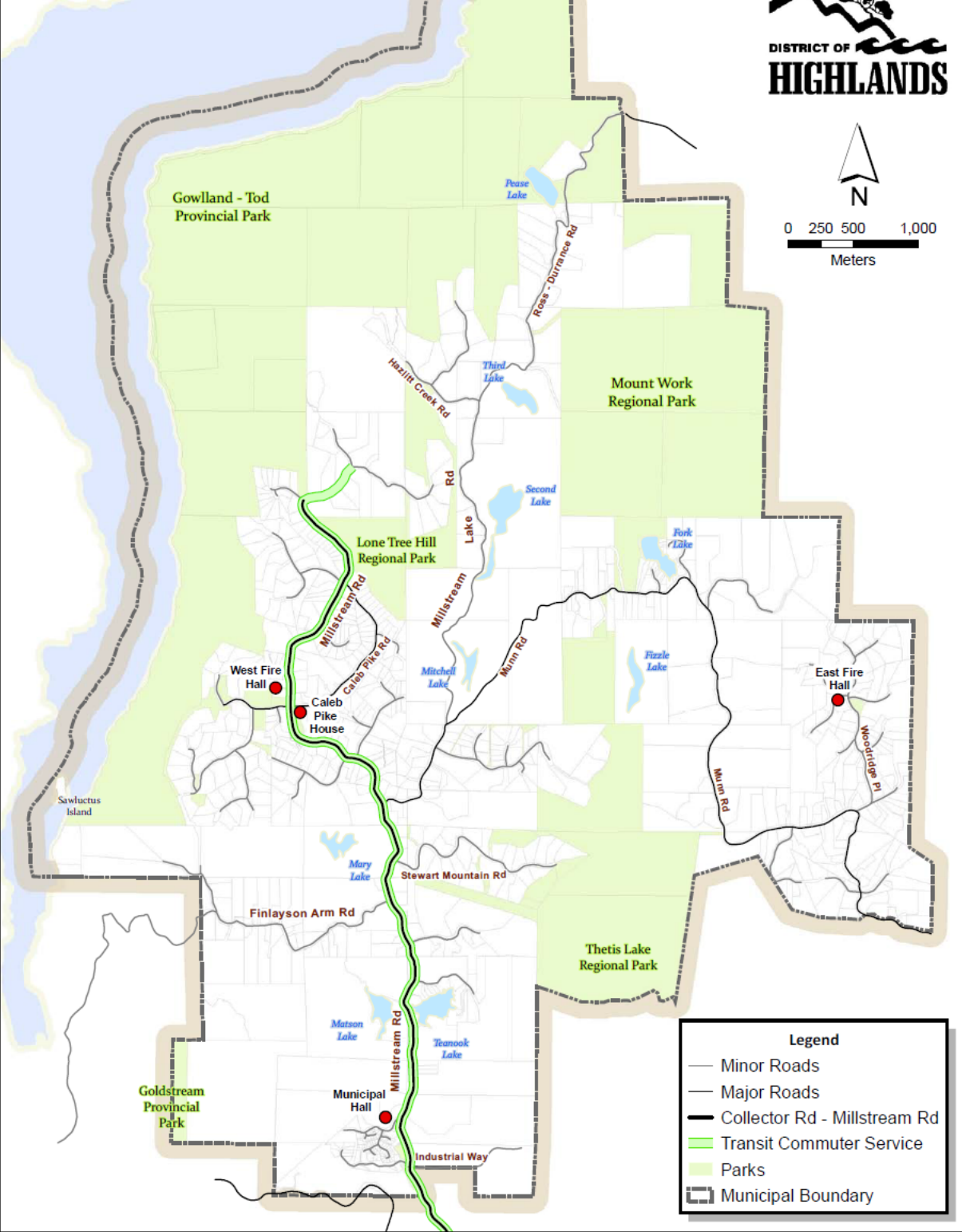
General Objective

- To reduce the number and distance of vehicle trips.
- To provide energy efficient and accessible transportation alternatives.
- To increase the energy efficiency of existing transportation options.
- To create a network of trails to support non-motorized transportation.

General Policies

1. Encourage residents to shift from personal motor vehicles toward active modes of transportation, car sharing and transit through supportive land use, education and awareness.
2. Work with regional passenger carriers and provincial regulatory bodies to encourage greater frequency and more affordable choices for regional mass transportation.
3. Highlands will seek partnerships with neighbouring municipalities, the CRD, the province and private landowners to increase the connectivity of local transportation connections, particularly walking, cycling and transit networks.
4. The District will explore opportunities to support energy efficient transportation options, including cycling facilities, transit shelters, electric vehicle charging and hydrogen fuel stations.
5. The District will explore opportunities to support alternative transportation options that reduce car trips, including carsharing, vanpooling and programs to increase accessibility for those with mobility challenges.
6. Highlands will coordinate transport options such as transit with changing land uses, such as the location of additional housing as suggested in housing policy.

OCP Map 6.1 Road System



6.2 Road System

Roads – Objective

- To provide a safe system of local and collector roads suitable for the volume of local and visitor traffic that reflects the rural character of the Highlands.

Roads – Policies

1. Roads and pathways should be constructed to minimize width of cleared areas and hard surfaces. Council may wish to consider an amendment to the Subdivision Bylaw.
2. Map 6.1 sets out the road system for the District.
 - a. Collector roads provide service for average daily traffic of 2,000 to 10,000 trips. Millstream Road from the Langford boundary in the south to its intersection with Emma Dixon Road in the north is designated as a collector road.
 - b. Collector roads are an appropriate road type for bike lanes.
 - c. Local roads provide service for average daily traffic of 2,000 trips or less.
 - d. Local roads will be built and maintained to rural standards, and all roads shall be built with long-term durability in mind consistent with safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and emergency vehicles.
 - e. Each element in the road system will be designed, constructed, and maintained with consideration given to the function of the road, safety, volume of traffic, the nature of the terrain, and the land use through which the road passes, as well as to appropriate engineering and safety standards.
 - f. Road safety, long term durability, environmental protection, and minimization of the area of land devoted to motor vehicles will guide decisions regarding road design, construction and maintenance.
 - g. Local roads and parking lots for public and private facilities and major parks will be designed and located to discourage movement of external traffic through neighbourhoods.
 - h. Local road standards will minimize paving and right-of way requirements.
 - i. The amount of impervious surface should be minimized. In addition to level of service and vehicular safety, design standards for local roads will include impacts to rural residents and community character.
3. With regard to roadway design and construction, taking climate change adaptation into consideration, the District will ensure that:
 - a. Only the minimum number of stream crossings necessary are constructed;
 - b. Stream crossings are located in order to minimize disturbance of water feature banks, channels, shores, and vegetation cover;
 - c. Bridges are used instead of culverts for crossings of fish-bearing streams, wherever possible;
 - d. Where culverts are used, their size will be large enough to accommodate 1 in 100 year flood conditions, and will be designed to allow unrestricted movement of fish in both directions;
 - e. Where appropriate, culverts are designed to maintain low flows and encourage instream storage of water;
 - f. All works comply with provisions of the Water Act;
 - g. The location of the stream crossing minimizes the length of the structure; and
 - h. The channel be confined (as opposed to having flood channels).

4. Road safety will be improved by better signage and road painting, improved sight lines by cutting back vegetation at blind corners and use of traffic calming measures where required.
5. Plans for development should take into account the present and future traffic on adjoining roads and should incorporate provision for setbacks or screening of residential areas against the adverse impacts of traffic, particularly from collector roads.
6. If off-site road improvements are required to service a new development, such improvements should not impose financial costs on the District.

6.3 Roadside Trails

Roadside Trails – Objective

- To develop and maintain a network of roadside trails, as outlined in the 2010 Trails Master Plan, for a variety of non-motorized modes of travel that is consistent with the character and activities of the Highlands.

Roadside Trails – Policies

1. The District may acquire and develop appropriate roadside trails to promote safe, pleasant, efficient, non-motorized travel throughout the community. Priority for trail development and maintenance should be on permanent trails along main roads.
2. At the time of subdivision or rezoning, the District may acquire land for roadside trails.
3. Roadside trails will be designed and built to accommodate a range of means of non-motorized transportation, including bicycles, horses, and pedestrians, unless separation is needed for safety or environmental reasons.
4. Opportunities will be sought to create roadside trails where appropriate when road maintenance, upgrading, or development is being planned or undertaken.
5. A regular roadside trail maintenance program will be prepared and implemented and will be linked to the District's road maintenance program.
6. Where possible and where safety is not adversely affected, existing trees and other significant vegetation within roadside trail corridors will be retained in their natural state.
7. Motorized vehicles will be prohibited from roadside trails, except for emergency or maintenance purposes.

6.4 Parking

Parking – Objective

- To provide sufficient public and private parking in an environmentally responsible manner.

Parking – Policies

1. Parking lots for public and private facilities and major parks should be located and designed to minimize adverse effects on the natural landscape and neighbouring residents.
2. Encourage electric vehicle charging station installation in concert with general transportation and GHG emission reduction policies.
3. Parking areas should be landscaped, screened and signed in ways that harmonize with the natural landscape as much as possible.
4. Impervious surfaces for parking areas will be used only where pervious is not adequate for site conditions or proposed use, and where runoff quality and quantity can be controlled.
5. Oil interceptors should be installed in parking areas open to the public.

6. In cooperation with the District and BC Transit and where appropriate, consideration may be given to the replacement of parking stalls with the provision of transit passes.

6.5 Public Transit

Public Transit - Objectives

- To increase accessibility to and frequency of public transit services.
- To encourage more Highlands residents to use public transit.

Public Transit - Policies

1. The District supports the provision of public transit service in the municipality at a reasonable level of service in consultation with BC Transit.
2. The District will strive to improve access to transit stops for those with special needs and make stops compatible with easy access to transit vehicles.
3. The District should explore an arrangement with a private provider (e.g. a taxi company) in order to provide additional transportation options for Highlanders.
4. Transit stops should be located a five minute walk (200-500 m) from special needs housing, community services, and commercial uses.
5. Road and lot layouts should support the future provision of transit service.
6. Park and ride facilities should be located in the District to support transit and reduce reliance on automobiles. Such a service could include bike lock-up facilities.
7. The District may undertake a survey of residents on a regular basis to determine the community's desires in connection with transit options to meet the community's needs.
8. The District will investigate the feasibility of increased frequency of transit service with BC Transit.

Chapter 7 – Services and Utilities

***replaced by bylaw No. 325, 2010*

The Highlands is a rural, self-reliant community and, in order to retain that rural character, help sustain the community and to keep costs under control, services provided by the District and other agencies must address the needs of residents and landowners while remaining at modest levels. Highlanders are aware of their dependence on potable well water and on-site septic systems. They have an intimate reliance on, and need to maintain, a healthy watershed. Water conservation, decreased disposal of waste (used water and other resources) and elimination of toxic substances are needed to achieve sustainable systems regardless of the provision of piped services.

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted in August 2003. The RGS establishes a “Regional Urban Containment Boundary and Service Policy Area” (RUCSPA). This has significance for development in the Highlands. Map 3 in the RGS shows the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area. The strategy proposes no extension of urban-standard sanitary sewerage and water services beyond the boundary of this policy area “except to address pressing public health and environmental issues, to provide fire suppression or to service agriculture”. Map 2.1 shows Highlands Servicing Area, which is consistent with the RUCSPA.

There is a limited amount of information on the aquifers that supply groundwater to residents and businesses, although it is known that recharge is primarily through fractures and breaks in the bedrock, leading to outflow in wetlands and streams that eventually drain to the ocean. During the planning process there were concerns regarding the Highlands’ aquifers. These included concerns related to the impacts of additional development, inappropriate land use practices, inadequate waste treatment, and improperly constructed or abandoned wells. There were also concerns related to the quantity of available water, the cumulative impact of exceptionally dry seasons, and the long term impacts of global warming and climate change.

7.1 General Objectives

- To ensure that District and other public services demonstrate and encourage the conservation of resources and the control of pollution through public education, development controls, and cooperation with other government agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- To protect the quality and quantity of surface and ground water
- To reduce the consumption of goods and the generation of waste.

7.2 Water Supply and Well Protection (also refer to section 3.5)

Water Supply and Well Protection – Objectives

- To protect the aquifers underlying the District of Highlands.
- To maintain an adequate long term supply of potable water.
- To protect wells.

Water Supply and Well Protection – Policies

1. The primary sources of water for the majority of Highlanders are groundwater and surface water.
2. Land uses or activities that could damage aquifers or reduce groundwater quantity or quality are not acceptable. This includes improperly managed septic systems.
3. In considering land use activity or change, the District of Highlands will consider the ability of surface water and groundwater to support human use without damaging ecosystems and aquifers. The Subdivision Bylaw provides direction for determining levels of water supply.

4. The District will support water conservation initiatives that promote water conserving technology, water reuse (including grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting systems) and low water use landscaping.
5. In landscaping of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities, the use of drought-resistant native plant species will be encouraged to reduce demand for irrigation, as well as to control introduction of potentially invasive species and to retain the character of the landscape.
6. The District will support landowners to identify sources of groundwater contamination and request the appropriate government agencies to ensure that contaminated sites are remediated.
7. The following activities should be discouraged within 30m of a water well:
 - a. Storage of potential contaminants (e.g. pesticides, fertilizers, fuel, lubricants, paints, and solvents).
 - b. Application of fertilizers and pesticides.
 - c. Disposal and incineration of waste.
 - d. Storage of manure and compost.
 - e. Keeping of livestock.
 - f. Installation of septic fields and tanks.
 - g. Parking and storage of vehicles.
8. To help prevent contamination of aquifers, all well heads should be kept in a sanitary condition. This includes maintaining the well seal in a proper condition and by directing runoff away from the well head.
9. The District will seek opportunities to institute programs to educate domestic well owners about well head and aquifer protection, as well as water conservation.
10. The District will make every effort to budget annually for groundwater related items, which could include a comprehensive groundwater monitoring program.
11. Map 2.1 shows Highlands' Servicing Area, which is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy's Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area.
12. The cost of extending piped services would be the financial responsibility of the developers, and the ongoing costs of maintaining these services would be borne by subsequent owners of these lands.
13. Other than lands within the Highlands Servicing Area, use of a centralized infrastructure for water supply is not acceptable.

7.3 Liquid Waste Management

Liquid Waste Management – Objective

- To encourage Highlands residents and businesses to use responsible methods for efficient and environmentally acceptable, on-site liquid waste disposal.

Liquid Waste Management – Policies

1. On-site liquid waste disposal systems are preferred to treat and dispose of effluent in all areas of the Highlands except for the lands within the Highlands Servicing Area as shown on Map 2.1 where effluent should either be piped to the regional sanitary sewer system or treated on-site through means other than a septic system.
2. The use of alternative sewage disposal methods instead of individual septic tank systems will be supported if environmentally and technically acceptable, and if the municipality is not responsible for installing, operating, or maintaining such systems.

3. Septic tank and ground disposal facilities will be sited to minimize pollution of surface and groundwater, and will have appropriate setbacks from watercourses, lakes, water wells, and marine shores.
4. The District may approve the use of community sewage disposal systems if long-term responsibilities for operating and maintaining the facilities are established to the satisfaction of the Approving Officer and others as necessary and if the municipality is not responsible for installing, operating, or maintaining such systems.
5. The District is not responsible for the failing of on-site septic treatment systems. Any knowledge of the failure of an individual septic treatment system will be referred to the Health Protection and Environmental Services of Vancouver Island Health Authority in order to avoid unhealthy conditions.
6. A requirement of the development of a Golf Course in the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development is the use of treated septage as a source of irrigation for the Golf Course. The approval of all federal, provincial, regional, and municipal authorities having jurisdiction must be obtained. The Municipality must not be responsible for the installation, operation or maintenance of the system and must be provided with adequate assurances regarding the maintenance of the system.

7.4 Solid Waste Management

Solid Waste Management – Objectives

- To encourage Highlands residents and businesses to use responsible methods for efficient and environmentally acceptable solid waste management practices.
- To encourage reduction of consumption and generation of waste.

Solid Waste Management – Policies

1. Work with regional partners to develop, expand and promote programs and infrastructure that increase local recycling and reduce consumption.
2. Encourage on-site organic composting systems that reduce the attraction of animals.
3. Promote purchasing habits that prioritize the least GHG intensive products and services (e.g. could be reduced packaging, minimal use of fossil fuel fertilizers for food, and local based business services).
4. Efficient and environmentally acceptable solid waste management practices are encouraged and supported, especially reduction of waste, reuse of materials, recycling, and backyard composting.
5. All non-recyclable solid waste generated by Highlands residents and businesses will be disposed of at Hartland Landfill or other approved facilities. Garbage shall not be buried, burned, or stored long-term on land in the Highlands.
6. The District will restrict its plastic bag use and discourage the use of non-recyclable packaging in businesses it deals with.
7. The District will actively pursue ways to allow for the conversion, and rehabilitation of existing landfill, waste burning and demolition/disposal sites. While the sites are in operation, the District will encourage monitoring of their environmental impact and the reduction of any deleterious effects on the air, land or water.

7.5 Surface Water Drainage

Surface Water Drainage – Objectives

- To maintain the quality of aquatic systems in the Highlands and downstream areas.

- To maintain natural drainage and the natural functioning of watercourses.

Surface Water Drainage – Policies

1. Through the Model Stormwater Bylaw process, also taking climate change adaptation into consideration, the District will collaborate with the CRD, adjacent municipalities, and the BC government to develop consistent approaches to stormwater management in a watershed context and to maintain the quality of aquatic systems in the Highlands and adjacent areas.
2. Wherever possible, natural drainage systems shall be maintained and enhanced to protect water quality, reduce public costs, and prevent environmental degradation. Storm drainage will be handled in open swales, ditches, and streams, to maximize infiltration and to retain the natural functioning of watercourses, except where environmental or public safety concerns would be better served by other designs.
3. Developments adjacent to streams, lakes, and other water features will be required to provide storm drainage controls and filtration provisions, preferably on-site, to protect water quality and prevent increases in peak flow in any stream.
4. The stormwater holding capacity of wetlands and other natural storage areas will be retained.
5. When new roads are constructed or existing ones modified, optimal methods for stormwater drainage will be assessed and implemented.
6. The District will seek to ensure that the value of watercourses as habitat for aquatic life and terrestrial wildlife is not compromised by their use for storm drainage, recreation, or agriculture.
7. All developments should follow the guidelines in the Water Balance Model, to which the District of Highlands is a partner.
8. The District will adopt the Riparian Areas Regulation, and future development will be subject to the Regulation's requirements. All applications falling under the RAR will still be subject to Council review.

7.6 Protective Services

The objectives and policies contained in this section are intended to complement the detailed Emergency Preparedness Plan being prepared by the District of Highlands. The Western Communities Detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police provides police protection. The District operates a Volunteer Fire Department to protect residents and property against fire and other emergencies, and cooperates with the Ministry of Forests for forest fire prevention and suppression.

Protective Services – Objective

- To provide adequate levels of emergency services to allow Highlands residents to lead safe and secure lives.

Protective Services – Policies

Police Protection

1. The District of Highlands urges the RCMP to support the objectives of the OCP as follows:
 - a. The Ministry of the Attorney General is requested by the District of Highlands to provide levels of protection that allow residents to lead safe and secure lives.
 - b. The RCMP Western Communities Detachment is encouraged to maintain or to increase "proactive policing" throughout the community by:
 - a. Maintaining school education programs for crime prevention.
 - b. Assisting residents to organize crime prevention programs.
 - c. Maintaining a police profile and presence adequate to deter criminal activity, vandalism and vehicle speeding.



Fire Protection

2. The District will cooperate with the Ministry of Forests for forest fire prevention and suppression, and with fire departments of adjacent municipalities to improve levels of fire protection by:
 - a. Adequate fire protection infrastructure, including any necessary emergency access routes, will be provided by a developer at the time of development of a property.
 - b. Development proposals will incorporate designs that reduce forest fire risks for homes within and at the edge of forested lands.
 - c. One-lane, limited access routes to provide improved access to neighbourhoods by emergency vehicles will be identified and provided. These road connections will be for the sole use of emergency vehicles, although they may also be used for evacuation of residents at risk and, during non-emergency periods, may be used as trails by non-motorized traffic.
 - d. Fire safety education and training, as appropriate, will be provided to residents. This will include the distribution of information to all residents and an annual meeting on fire issues in this community.
3. a. The District will create a wildland urban interface policy that will encourage residents to consider the policies of the Fire Smart Program for wildland urban interface areas and mapping of fire hazard areas. This policy will involve the Fire Chief, District staff, and residents.

- b. Wildland urban interface assessments should become a priority during new development approvals.
 - c. The District will consider the establishment of a Development Permit Area for Interface Fire Hazards.
4. The District will consider the establishment of paid firefighting position(s).

7.7 Private Utilities (gas, telephone, cable, electricity)

Utilities – Objectives

- To encourage the use of shared utility corridors.
- To encourage utility providers to design and construct their services using environmentally acceptable best practices.

Utilities – Policies

1. The District requests BC Hydro and other service providers to ensure that all electricity transmission and distribution rights-of-way are managed in an environmentally responsible manner. In particular, improved management of invasive species (such as broom) is requested.
2. Support the use of existing utility corridors for renewable energy facilities.
3. Where appropriate and where there is no cost to the municipality, the District of Highlands encourages shared utility corridors and the placement of new and existing telephone and electrical distribution lines underground or off-roadways where it would reduce incidences of power disruptions from tree contact and retain vegetation and viewsapes along roadways.
4. The District will support servicing the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development and Industrial Lands south of the north property line of Section 15, Range 3 West, Highland District with Natural Gas from a private utility supplier.

7.8 Cell Phone Towers/Radio Towers

Cell Phone Towers/Radio Towers – Objective

- To discourage the construction of towers that could have a negative impact on Highlands' hills and ridges, and could detract from viewsapes.

Cell Phone Towers/Radio Towers – Policies

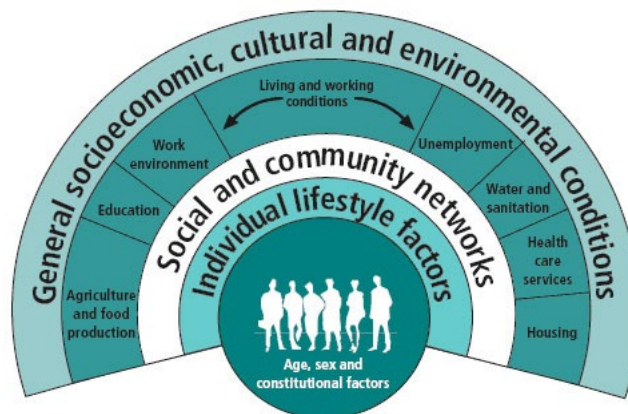
1. The District will only consider approval of transmission towers following consultation with the community.
2. Support co-location of facilities on towers to include renewable energy sources.

Chapter 8 – Social Wellbeing

The word “rural” has different connotations among Highlands’ residents. There is a widespread view, however, that it is the ‘rural lifestyle’ that draws people to the Highlands and the reason why they stay. What Highlanders have in common is the value they place on the ‘rural lifestyle’. This lifestyle involves a connection to the land, whether as a working landscape or in its natural form.

A healthy and more sustainable community includes an engaged community where residents have the ability to participate in volunteer, celebratory (e.g. of history, arts, environment), decision-making and other daily activities in an atmosphere of belonging and respect for different viewpoints. Highlanders intend to remain part of a small rural community that helps individuals be healthy through some diversity in housing choice and access to local healthy food. The District of Highlands is a member of the British Columbia Healthy Communities Network. The Federal, Provincial, Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health (1999) identified the following determinants and prerequisites for health:

- The socio-economic environment including social support, addressing violence in the home and community, and participating in civic activities.
- Healthy child development.
- The physical environment including protecting the natural environment and addressing transportation, housing, personal health practices.
- Health services.



Social Determinants of Health, source: BC Healthy Communities

The topics covered in this chapter are those that relate directly to the social wellbeing of the Highlands. Elsewhere in the plan, there are other statements that have a bearing on the social wellbeing of the community.

8.1 Housing

The objectives and policies of this section of the plan are derived from the 1999 Highlands Housing Task force and the work of the Social Topic Group.

Housing - Objectives

- To encourage a range of economical, attractive, affordable and accessible housing opportunities, which are compatible with Highlands’ rural character.
- To increase energy efficiency and use of renewable energy in residential buildings.

Housing - Policies

1. Encourage all new residential buildings and renovations to be built with energy efficient and low carbon standards and technologies representing best practices in concert with land use (chapter 2) and energy and GHG reduction (chapter 5) policies.
2. The District should encourage a range of housing forms in order to increase affordable housing. In a rural context, this could include cluster housing and accessory dwelling units.
3. The District should consider land donation for affordable housing as an amenity and encourage 'sweat equity' housing programs such as Habitat for Humanity.
4. As an inclusive community, Highlands' residents should foster housing options that would allow persons with special needs to remain in the community. This might include small-scale housing forms such as seniors group housing (e.g. Abbeyfield) and co-housing. Such housing options should include transportation services as part of an overall development plan.

8.2 Public Safety

In addition to public protective services (police, fire, emergency), a healthy community addresses issues related to personal safety and security.

Public Safety - Objective

- To promote a community where there is respect for people's property and personal security.

Public Safety - Policies

1. The District will encourage programs such as Neighbourhood Watch that help educate and support residents.
2. The District will complete and implement emergency preparedness, including preparation of action plans in co-operation with neighbouring municipalities and the CRD.
3. The District will support public education on urban/wildfire interface issues and engage in a full consultation with the community around regulation and the degree of tolerable risk. The objective will be to find a balance between public safety and preservation of the natural environment.

8.3 Local Food

Local Food - Objectives

- To support local food production and consumption.
- To reduce dependency on food transported from greater distances.

Local Food - Policies

1. Food-based agriculture should be ecologically sustainable, appropriately-scaled, and consistent with community values.
2. The District will support community food gardens in new and existing developments, and in areas where lands are underutilized or residents do not have space on their own properties for gardens.
3. The District will support sharing of information on the benefits of, and methods for, growing healthy food.
4. The District encourages food production on private properties in an environmentally sustainable manner that does no harm to local ecosystems.

5. Highlands will support the maintenance of a strong and sustainable regional agricultural and food distribution system.
6. The District of Highlands may undertake an Agriculture and Local Food planning process to support and guide future agriculture activities, and to evaluate whether specific land use regulations may be necessary to help balance the full range of values expected by the community.
7. Highlands will promote food production processes that reduce the use of chemicals, conserve water and uses sustainable transportation systems.
8. Highlands supports genetic diversity in food crops through seed saving, seed sharing, use of heritage varieties, etc.

8.4 Public Facilities and Services

During the planning process it was recognized that there is a need for Highlanders to come together for social, recreational, civic, cultural and/or economic activities.

Public Facilities and Services - Objectives

- To ensure that Highlanders have access to services and facilities to which they financially contribute through property taxes.
- To provide venues for Highlands residents to meet for social, cultural and civic activities.

Public Facilities and Services - Policies

1. The District and Highlands residents will explore ways and means to build a modest, multi-purpose community hall. In particular, a meeting place for youth is required. A community hall site could also provide modest recreational facilities such as a playfield, or basketball court, and appropriate commercial, residential and food system-related uses that would support 'building community'.
2. The District, in cooperation with local school Districts, may consider assembling land in order to centralize a community hall, playfields, and school.
3. Highlands contributes significantly to the region through provision of parkland and open space, and in return, Highlanders will continue to rely on the region to provide institutional and major recreational, commercial and other services.
4. The District will continue to support participation in the Juan de Fuca Recreation Commission.
5. There is a need for an ongoing dialogue and cooperation with the school Districts, regional health authority and other agencies in order to ensure that appropriate services are available to Highlands.
6. Services should be available in the Highlands that support a diverse community, fit with the rural character and at a scale relative to the area's likely population growth. This might include development of recreational activities for youth that engage the attributes of the natural environment (e.g. biking, horse riding facilities). Youth should be consulted to assist in assessing and addressing their needs. Such housing options should include transportation services as part of an overall development plan.

8.5 Heritage

The Highlands community's vision of heritage is rooted in people's shared experience of a sense of place. It is dynamic and includes tangible and intangible elements of the past and the present. It is how the community identifies itself. The heritage vision recognizes examples of community history and the desire of residents to feel connected to nature. It celebrates the aesthetic and innovative and honours the uniqueness of the Highlands community social fabric.

Heritage and archaeological sites are protected by provincial legislation (the *Heritage Conservation Act*). Protection means that these sites cannot be altered without a heritage permit. Developments are reviewed by local governments to determine conflicts between protected archaeological sites and proposed development through the use of the Remote Access to Archaeological Data website. If a conflict is identified, the project proponent will be required to hire a professional consulting archaeologist for direction on how to proceed.

Heritage - Objective

- To promote the Highlands heritage vision and values

Heritage – Policies

1. Create a Community Heritage Registry to list the property, buildings and other areas of the municipality recommended by the Highlands Heritage Task Force Committee.
2. Support community involvement in Highlands heritage activities through the establishment of a Heritage Committee, a public archives, document the oral history of Highlands elders, and supporting opportunities for the celebration of Highlands' heritage.
3. Develop incentives for the owners of heritage resources on private property that should be given heritage conservation status.
4. Providing landowner consent is given, all attempts should be made to identify, map, and conserve sites, structures, and landscapes of historical significance.
5. The District supports initiatives of Highlanders to collect, preserve and present the history of the community.
6. Prior to the approval of any development on land that could have heritage, or cultural heritage, values, the District may require an assessment pursuant to the Heritage Conservation Act.
7. Providing landowner consent is given, all attempts should be made to identify, map, and conserve sites, structures, and landscapes of historical significance.

8.6 Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are an important expression of the diverse values, heritage and creative interests of Highlands residents. Artistic and cultural activities bring the community together and energize it socially and economically.

Highlands provides financial and leadership support to the Greater Victoria Public Library, and shares ownership of the Juan de Fuca Branch with other West Shore Communities. Highlands also provides financial and leadership support to the CRD Arts Committee.

Arts and Culture - Objective

- To encourage residents to become involved in arts and cultural activities suited to the rural character of the community.
- To provide venues for Highlands artists and artisans to demonstrate their talents.
- To support arts and culture as part of the local economy.

Arts and Culture - Policies

1. At the time a community hall is being designed, consideration should be given to providing space for musical and dramatic productions.
2. A variety of environments should be considered to support artisans and provide the public with greater access to their work. These might include community markets, artists' studios and galleries on private property, and display spaces in existing public buildings or a new community hall.

3. Participation of youth in planning for arts and culture events and facilities is encouraged.

8.7 Building Community

A healthy community is one where all residents and businesspeople have ways to 'build community,' through volunteerism and participation in community life. Volunteerism is a cornerstone of a healthy rural community, and Highlands is proof of this. Volunteers provide many of the services that otherwise would not be available in a rural community. Through their involvement in many planning processes, it is evident that Highlanders place high value on participation in local government affairs, community gatherings and celebrations.

The Highlands has a long history of public involvement and concern about the quality of life, governance, environmental protection, and other planning matters. This section of the plan formalizes guidelines for fostering strong public roles in planning decisions.

Building Community - Objective

- To welcome people of different ages, backgrounds, family structures, abilities and incomes.
- To strengthen volunteerism, including community stewardship, and encourage residents to take active roles in caring for and enriching the community.
- To provide opportunities for Highlanders to participate in community advisory processes.
- To achieve effective communication between Highlands residents and council, its committees and staff on matters of community-wide interest.
- To encourage land owners and developers to involve Highlands residents at an early stage in the review of development designs and applications.
- To support the creation of an informed citizenry that is motivated and capable of providing community guidance and input on civic matters.

Building Community - Policies

1. The District supports a volunteer coordinator position.
2. The District accepts that it has a responsibility to foster communication among Highlanders and to provide community education on topics important to residents. The District newsletter, public forums, community associations and participatory planning processes are important ways to communicate and educate.
3. Municipal decision-making should support a diverse community.
4. The District of Highlands encourages the formation, education, and ongoing participation of citizen volunteer committees to provide advice to Council on land use planning matters relevant to the committees' mandates.
5. Before and after decision-making, the District of Highlands will prepare and distribute to residents and landowners newsletters and other materials (such as notices and computer-based electronic bulletins) on planning matters of importance.
6. Public information meetings, open houses, surveys, and other means will be used to facilitate communication between the municipal government and the residents of the District of Highlands.
7. Efforts will be made to involve young people, tenants, absentee landowners, and others who might not normally express their views on planning matters.
8. Public involvement in land use decisions will be encouraged, as in policy 2.2.2.

8.8 Social Significance of the Environment

During the planning process the importance of the natural environment to the health and well being of Highlanders and the region was discussed. Natural areas allow for a variety of individual and group recreations, provide emotional and spiritual sanctuary, and help to form the character of the Highlands.

Social Significance of the Environment - Objective

- To encourage people to experience the natural environment.

Social Significance of the Environment - Policy

1. Activities that facilitate the communion of people with nature are encouraged. This would include such activities as seminars, workshops and retreats in rural areas of the Highlands.
2. Nature-based activities for children that support environmental awareness, understanding, appreciation and stewardship are encouraged.

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Chapter 9 – Economic Diversification

As a municipality, Highlands is somewhat unusual in that almost its entire land base is residential, rural or park. There is little area set aside for non-residential uses. This has an impact on the community in at least two ways:

- A large majority of working people commute to work outside the Highlands.
- The municipality is highly dependent on tax revenues from residential and rural properties.

At the present time the municipality does not have its own economic strategy. Highlands did, however, participate as a member of the Capital Regional District in the preparation of a regional economic strategy – The Opportunities Blueprint (2003). This strategy establishes a two-prong approach to improving the economic health of the region:

- Overcoming problems that are negatively affecting the local business climate.
- Enhancing existing or developing new business enterprises that are compatible with the region's commitment to sustainability.

This chapter of the plan puts forward objectives and policies intended to encourage a more sustainable and diversified rural economy within the Highlands. Local environmentally responsible businesses operated at an appropriate scale may include enterprises related to the food system, forest, tourism, internet-based service or home-based services that generate local jobs. Policies should encourage more Highlanders to generate some or all of their income from businesses located on their properties, or businesses located elsewhere in the Highlands. The District as a whole would benefit due to the increased 'social capital' and 'community-building' that would occur within Highlands boundaries. These policies are not intended to change the character of the community but to provide more choice for Highlands' residents.

9.1 Economy - General

General Objectives

- To encourage environmentally sustainable businesses (small-scale outside the Highlands Servicing Area), which are compatible with Highlands' rural character.
- To provide greater innovative and sustainable opportunities for residents to work within the Highlands, thereby reducing the amount of commuting.
- To foster opportunities for rural-based employment, self-employment and economic diversification that are of an appropriate size and scale to help broaden the District's tax base.

Economy – Policies

1. Encourage economic opportunities that have low impact on the environment.
2. Investigate how business regulations and licensing can help to further reduce GHG emissions.
3. Create opportunities for residents to learn about the benefits of local economies. This may include creating an inventory of local businesses.
4. The District may support widespread availability of low impact, high-speed communications systems and services to support local and regional businesses.
5. Ensure development of the southern industrial area adjacent to the City of Langford is based on health, safety and sustainable practices.
6. Encourage appropriately-scaled commercial activities within the Highlands Servicing Area on Map 2.1.

7. Encourage the reuse of goods and the sharing of local knowledge and skills.

9.2 Working Landscapes

Traditionally, rural communities have a strong bond with the land. In some rural communities, the land provides a livelihood for its residents through market gardening, farming, ranching, orcharding, forestry, fishing, and other activities such as animal husbandry and rural veterinarian services. At present, most Highlanders work outside the District in more urban settings.

During the planning process, citizens discussed possibilities for promoting 'working landscapes' to strengthen the rural character of Highlands. Identified possibilities include such activities as:

- Orcharding
- Organic market gardening
- Herbs
- Field flowers
- Beekeeping
- Livestock
- Field crops
- Greenhouses
- Vineyards
- Specialty nursery
- Forestry, including sustainable forestry specialty products, Christmas trees, and specimen landscape trees
- Non-timber forest resources

There is a history of agriculture land use in the Highlands. However, there are few farms that remain from the early settlement period and there are currently minimal full-time farming operations. There is no land within the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR). Steep topography, shallowness to bedrock, minimal soil development, and summer drought conditions have limited the viability of traditional agriculture activity in the Highlands. Wetlands were historically used to produce crops, however, these areas are highly valued for their role in ecosystem function, and the natural regulation of the important groundwater resource. Future agricultural activity in the Highlands needs to be ecologically based, and appropriately scaled to support Highlands's values around land use and the environment.

"Agroforestry" is a land management approach that integrates familiar and new agriculture and forestry practices into land management systems that contribute to diversification and sustainability of production. It is an emerging industry, and has not been studied as part of this plan. However, once the District understands more on this subject, the District may choose to encourage such practices where appropriate by harmonizing this term with "agriculture" and "forestry."

Working Landscapes – Objective

- To ensure that there are opportunities for Highlanders to use the land for traditional rural enterprises.

Working Landscapes – Policies

1. Agriculture and forestry uses that are consistent with environmental protection and the character of the Highlands are encouraged. These are acceptable uses in areas designated Rural, Rural Residential, Managed Forest, and Institutional on Map 2.1, where consistent with zoning.
2. The District should consider the development of a strategy to facilitate the production of agricultural and forest products by allowing related small-scale processing facilities, limited direct resource sales, and limited natural resource support services that are not harmful to the long-term natural resource. This strategy should suggest that such uses be located in areas within the Regenerative Development Land Use Designation.

9.3 Home-based Business

People work at their residence out of choice and out of necessity. Home-based businesses are a growing trend in communities across Canada. Improved communications technology has accelerated this growth. In the 2021 census, 29% of working Highlanders reported that they worked at home. During the planning process there was discussion as to whether facilities (studio, gallery, workshop) separated from homes would be appropriate. Home-based businesses are regulated through the zoning bylaw.

Home-based Business – Objective

- To ensure that there are opportunities for Highlanders to work from their homes.

Home-based Business – Policies

1. Home-based businesses are encouraged provided they complement the rural character of the community and have no appreciable negative impact on nearby neighbours or the natural environment. These are acceptable in areas designated as Rural, Rural Residential, Managed Forest, and Intensive Residential without a rezoning provide they comply with details set out in the zoning bylaw regarding size, parking signage, employees and other matters.
2. Consideration could be given to allow for home offices in all residential areas.

9.4 Nature-related Tourism

During the planning process there was discussion about diversification of Highlands' economy by way of businesses that cater to visitors who are interested in a nature-related activity such as: walking, hiking, birding, kayaking, diving, bicycle touring, fishing, orienteering, photography, nature interpretation, and equestrian activities.

Nature-related Tourism – Objectives

- To provide opportunities for Highlanders to operate businesses related to the natural and recreational assets of the community.

Nature-related Tourism – Policies

1. The District will encourage small-scale recreational and tourist uses that provide opportunities to diversify the economy by using, in an environmentally sensitive manner, the Highlands' abundant recreational opportunities and scenic and natural amenities. These businesses are acceptable in designated areas. Rural land use will be guided by the Zoning Bylaw.
2. Businesses that relate to the natural attributes and rural character of the community should have no appreciable negative impact on nearby neighbours.
3. The District should consider the development of a strategy to facilitate nature-related tourism in conjunction with the CRD's economic strategy.

Chapter 10 – Regional Context Statement

***replaced by Bylaw No. 418, 2019*

The Board of the Capital Regional District formally approved an updated Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in March 2018. The District of Highlands is a signatory to the RGS. As a partner, Highlands has established its commitment to the following:

- To plan and manage growth in a collaborative manner by participating in achieving the regional vision and the objectives.
- To consider the cross-boundary impacts of all development-related decisions.
- To work toward a more sustainable region by considering the environmental, economic and social implications of local government decisions.

The *Local Government Act* requires municipalities to adopt a “regional context statement.” This statement must identify the relationship between an Official Community Plan (OCP) and the RGS and, if applicable, must specify how the OCP will be made consistent with the RGS over time.

Population estimates and projections are in Chapter 1.

Regional context statements are a key implementation mechanism for the RGS. They also protect a municipal council's authority to make local planning decisions while ensuring that the council and the regional board agree upon matters of legitimate regional interest. While the RGS is not binding on the member municipalities, the regional context statements are.

Table 10.1 identifies the relationship between Highlands' OCP and the RGS.

Regional Context Statement – Objectives

- To plan and manage growth in a collaborative manner by participating in achieving the regional vision and the objectives in the RGS.
- To consider the cross-boundary impacts of all development-related decisions.
- To work toward a more sustainable region by considering the environmental, economic and social implications of local government decisions.

RGS Objectives	Relationship to Highlands OCP
Managing and Balancing Growth	
1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact	• Only a small percentage of land in the Highlands falls into the Highlands Servicing Area as shown on Map 2.1. The Servicing Area is contiguous with the Regional Urban Containment Policy Area (RUCPA) as set out on Map 3a of the RGS with the purpose of limiting expansion of urban settlement. • Policy 2.2.22 of the OCP further supports the implementation of the RUCPA and states: “All land use and design decisions will seek to prevent unplanned growth.” • Section 2.2 describes growth within Highlands as occurring slowly, at a rate of approximately 15 new homes per year. This contributes to slow growth in rural areas, which is in keeping with the RGS target of 95% of growth taking place within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and only 5% growth outside of the UCB. • Residential development within the HSAB is guided by Development Permit Area 5 – Intensive Residential. Guidelines promote: clustering and screening by native vegetation of housing; maintenance of natural drainage patterns; drought-resistant plantings; minimal alteration of natural features; maintaining or improving stormwater runoff in order to protect ground and surface water; enhancement of riparian areas; conservation and/or enhancement of identified green space areas; downward illumination; and design supporting transit.
1.2 Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities	• The OCP supports the continued conservation of and support for the rural community and lifestyle in Highlands. This is consistent with the RGS Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area objectives. The vast majority of Highlands (approximately 90%) is designated Park, Rural Residential and Rural land use in the OCP. These designations seek to protect rural character. • The Rural and Managed Forest designations allow for agriculture and forestry, while the Rural Residential and Institutional (where determined by zoning) designations allow for agriculture. • Policy 2.2.7 encourages development applicants to explore various means to develop land that minimizes impacts on the natural environment. • Policy 2.2.17 encourages the retention of the visual landscape, including retention of naturally vegetated buffer zones adjacent to parks and road rights-of-way.

RGS Objectives	Relationship to Highlands OCP
Environment and Infrastructure	
2.1 Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health	• Highlands' OCP acknowledges and supports the Capital Green Lands Policy Area (CGLPA) as set out on Map 3a of the RGS and the targets for completion of the sea-to-sea green blue belt and the regional trail network. These areas were originally defined in the previous RGS under the CRD Parks Master Plan. • Policies in Chapter 4 specifically discuss cooperation with the Regional District and Province in the conservation, continued establishment, development and management of regional parks, trails and natural areas. • Policy 4.2.1 states that: "Decisions regarding parks, trails and recreation should be guided, along with other relevant information, by the Highlands Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Trails Master Plan. The CRD Parks Master Plan and BC Parks should also be consulted as well as affected landowners". • Highlands is home, in part, to a number of regionally significant parks, as acknowledged in the RGS, including Thetis Lake and Mount Work Regional Parks, and home in entirety to Lone Tree Regional Park. • The OCP also recognizes the importance of identifying, protecting, enhancing and restoring healthy ecosystems consistent with the RGS policies for the CGLPA. • Section 3.2, Natural Hazard Conditions, discusses and provides policy direction for areas with steep slopes. Section 3.3 discusses Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and sets out detailed policies for sensitive vegetation, water features and riparian areas, and marine waters and shore lands. All of these policies are further supported by Development Permit Areas (Chapter 11) for Steep Slopes, Water and Riparian Areas, and Sensitive Vegetation, and are shown on Maps 11.1 and 11.2. By regulating land use and development, these policies and regulatory powers contribute to the RGS target for the reduction of contaminants in fresh and marine water bodies. • Policies 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 encourage environmental information sharing, stewardship, and responsibility-taking among the District, its residents and landowners, and environmental groups and agencies. • Section 11.8 establishes Development Permit Area 6 – Promotion of Energy and Water Conservation and the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases. The entire District is subject to this Development Permit under the following circumstances: (1) construction requiring a building permit and (2) any other project requiring a Development Permit. • Section 2.1 draws attention to the importance of considering water in all land use decisions.

RGS Objectives	Relationship to Highlands OCP
2.2 Manage Regional Infrastructure Services Sustainably	• The majority of land in the Highlands (approximately 90%) is outside of the Regional Urban Containment Boundary Area and not part of regional water or sewer systems. Policy 7.2.11 includes Map 2.1 that shows Highlands' Servicing Area, which is consistent with the RGS. Limiting significant growth to this area supports the sustainability of the regional infrastructure system. • Policy 7.3.6 provides for the servicing by public sewers or an alternative method of sewage disposal, which involves the use of reclaimed water, within the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development Area. • Section 7.4 discusses managing solid waste, focusing on reducing, reusing and recycling. • Policy 7.4.4 supports reduction of waste, reuse of materials, recycling, and backyard composting. • Policy 7.4.7 states that the District will actively pursue ways to allow for the conversion, and rehabilitation of existing landfill, waste burning and demolition sites. • The OCP places a high level of importance on protection and management of the groundwater resources. Consistent with the RGS, appropriate management of groundwater resources will help to limit the need for extensions of the regional water system and is critical to preserving rural and rural residential areas and ecosystem health. • Section 2.1 draws attention to the importance of considering water in all land use decisions. • Section 3.5 discusses and sets policies for watershed and groundwater management. • Section 7.2 discusses and sets policies for water supply and well protection. Some specific policies: ○ Policy 7.2.3 states, "In considering land use activity or change, the District of Highlands will consider the ability of surface water and groundwater to support human use without damaging ecosystems and aquifers..." ○ Policy 7.2.4 encourages water conservation. ○ Policy 7.2.5 encourages the use of drought-resistant native plant species in order to reduce irrigation need and to control potentially invasive species.

RGS Objectives	Relationship to Highlands OCP
Housing and Community	
3.1 Create Safe and Complete Communities	• Not applicable for the most part because the vast majority of Highlands is outside of the Regional Urban Containment Boundary. • Lands designated as Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development provide for a mix of housing, employment, services and recreation.
3.2 Improve Housing Affordability	• Policy 2.2.13 addresses the need to encourage housing for a broad spectrum of housing needs and states that “Housing for people with special needs by reason of age, income or disability is encouraged to meet the community’s anticipated needs.” • Policy 8.1.2 acknowledges that the District should encourage a range of housing forms to increase affordable housing.
Transportation	
4.1 Improve Multi-Modal Connectivity and Mobility	• The OCP supports the RGS goal to improve the regional multi-modal transportation network through development of roadside trails and to encourage increased transit use. This supports the RGS target for 42% of all trips in the region to be by walking, cycling and transit. • Section 6.3 discusses roadside trails, the objective of which is “To develop and maintain a network of roadside trails, as outlined in the 2010 Trails Master Plan, for a variety of means of non-motorized travel that is consistent with the character and activities of the Highlands.” • Considerations for transit with respect to land use are directed through policy 2.2.27. • Policies in section 6.5 support public transit, and an arrangement with a private provider in order to provide additional options for Highlanders.
Economic Development	
5.1 Realize the Region’s Economic Potential	• Given the limited nature of the industrial and commercial lands in the Highlands, there is little opportunity to add to the Region’s economic potential and the target to increase the jobs/population ratio as contemplated in the RGS. However, policies in the OCP do acknowledge and support ongoing commercial, industrial and forestry activity. • Section 2.9 discusses the Managed Forest land use designation. An objective is, “To encourage good forestry practices.” Policy 2.9.2 states that the District will seek to ensure long term protection of lands designated Managed Forest. • Uses allowed within the Regenerative Development and Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development OCP designated lands are intended for regional or greater market areas.

RGS Objectives	Relationship to Highlands OCP
Food Systems	
6.1 Foster a Resilient Food and Agriculture System	• The OCP supports a strong and sustainable regional agriculture and food distribution system. While the OCP does not explicitly include targets to increase the amount of land in food production, it does include policies that support food production on private properties, as well as community food gardens in new and existing development and on other underutilized lands. Emphasis is given to food production methods that are environmentally sustainable and do no harm to local ecosystems. • Policy 8.3.2 – “The District will support community food gardens in new and existing developments and in areas where lands are underutilized or residents do not have space on their own properties for gardens”. • Policy 8.3.4 – “The District encourages food production on private properties...” • Policy 8.3.5 – “Highlands will support the maintenance of a strong and sustainable regional agricultural and food distribution system”. • Policy 8.3.6 – “The District of Highlands may undertake an agricultural and Local Food planning process to support and guide future agricultural activities and to evaluate whether specific land use regulations may be necessary to help balance the full range of values expected by the community”. • Consideration of the RGS target for increased food production will be included in the next OCP review. • Section 8.3 sets out a number of policies in support of local food production and consumption.
RGS Objectives	Relationship to Highlands OCP
Climate Action	
7.1 Significantly Reduce Community-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions	• The OCP establishes policies and targets for Greenhouse Gas reduction. While the targets, a proposed 20% reduction from 2007 emissions by 2020, a 26% reduction by 2030 and an 80% reduction by 2050 do not mirror the RGS targets of a 33% reduction by 2020 and a 61% reduction by 2038, the goal is the same. These target dates will be reviewed and updated as part of the next OCP update. • Policies specifically in chapter 5, “Energy, Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change Adaptation,” and generally throughout the OCP seek to promote greenhouse gas reduction, energy efficiency, renewable energy production, water conservation, waste reduction and use or reuse of waste as resource. • Development Permit Area 6, “Promotion of Energy and Water Conservation and the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases,” implements this policy direction. The entire District is subject to this Development Permit under the following circumstances: (1) construction requiring a building permit and (2) any other project requiring a Development Permit.

Chapter 11– Development Review

Two of the most significant ‘tools’ that the Local Government Act provides local governments to help review development proposals include the authority to: require information for impact assessment, and establish a development permitting system. This chapter identifies a Development Approval Information Area and Development Permit Areas (DPAs), providing the justification for their designation. DPAs have guidelines to be taken into account by property owners, prospective developers, and their planning and design teams.

11.1 Development Approval Information Area

The Local Government Act allows municipalities to specify circumstances and designate areas in which a municipality may require an applicant to supply, at their expense, information regarding potential impacts of their proposal.

Area and Circumstances Affected

All lands shown on Map 2.1 are designated as a Development Approval Information Area. Applications for amendments to the Official Community Plan, amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, temporary use permits and development permits may be required to supply development approval information.

Objectives

Impact assessment information will be used to comprehensively evaluate the consequences of development on community sustainability. Such information will be an integral component of effective land use planning, ensuring that development minimizes adverse affects on the environment, is suitable for the location, makes efficient use of existing community infrastructure and services, accounts for community costs, is the product of informed public consensus and is consistent with the sustainability goals of the District. The development approval information process is therefore intended to:

- Encourage responsive and informed decision-making.
- Fully address the range of potential environmental, socioeconomic, transportation and fiscal impacts associated with a proposed development.
- Facilitate inter-agency cooperation and efficiency.
- Promote fairness and consistency in the approval process.
- Identify resource needs and constraints, whether public or private, that may impede the success of a development proposal.

In accordance with these objectives, any development that is the subject of an application for rezoning, Development Permit Area 4 or temporary use permit, may be required to provide development impact assessment information regarding:

- The natural environment
- Transportation patterns
- Local infrastructure
- Public facilities
- Community services
- Social and economic well-being
- Energy conservation
- Water conservation
- Greenhouse gas emissions

11.2 Development Permit Areas – General

Development Permits are one of the strongest legal tools for protecting environmentally sensitive areas, avoiding development in hazardous conditions, and for setting out expectations regarding “form and character” of development, for example to increase energy efficiency. Municipalities may designate Development Permit Areas (DPAs) in an OCP. When an area is designated, the municipality must describe the special site conditions or objectives that justify the designation, and specify guidelines to achieve those objectives. When an applicant applies to the local government for a Development Permit to alter the site,

buildings and structures, the guidelines in the OCP will direct what conditions, if any, are placed on the proposed development.

If construction does not substantially commence, the Development Permit expires at the end of two years. In Highlands, Development Permits are obtained at the same time as other permits such as tree cutting, blasting, soil removal or deposit, and building permits.

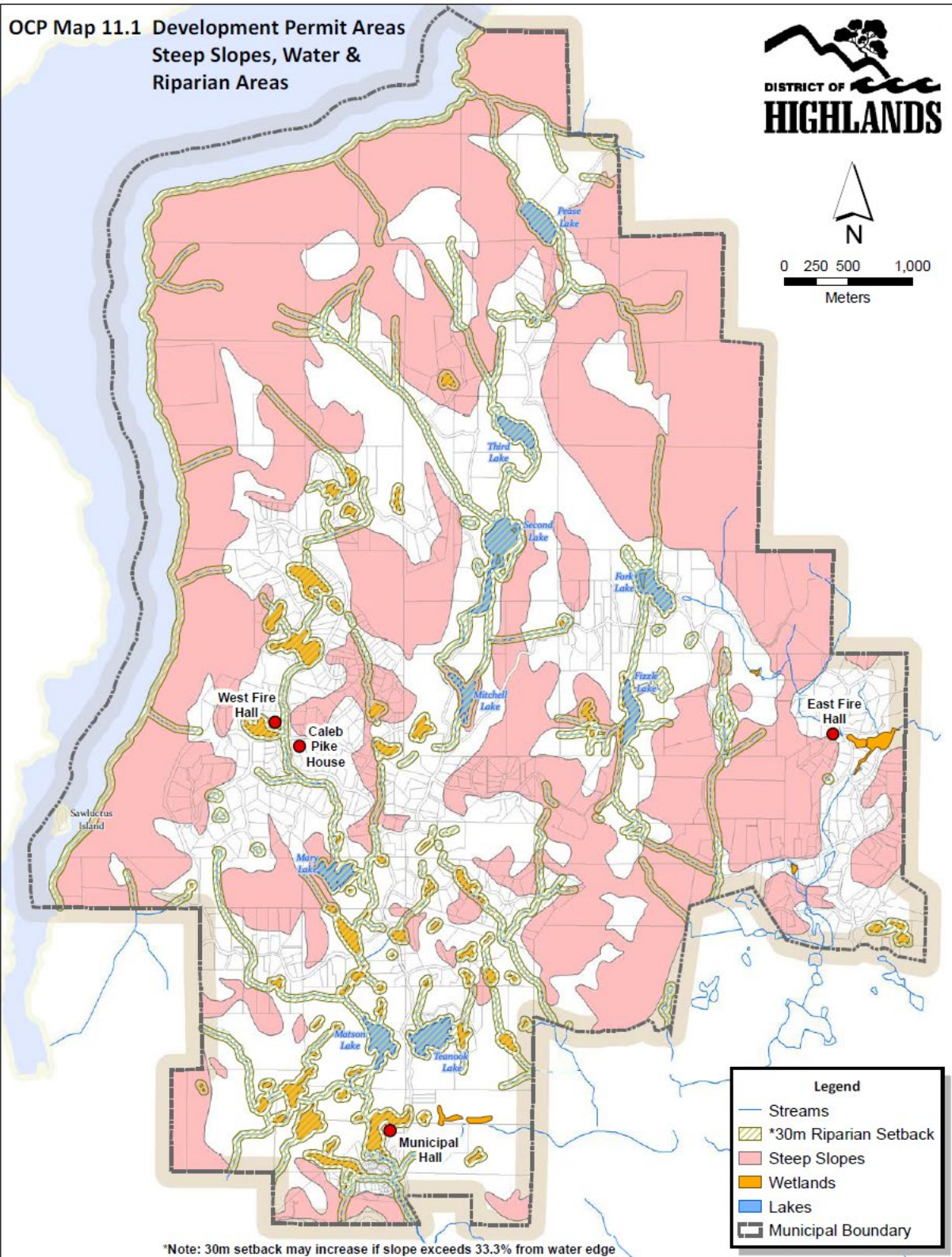
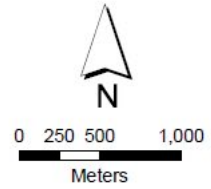
General Objectives

- To provide guidelines for property owners and developers regarding the District's expectations for the protection of the natural environment, avoidance of hazardous conditions and promotion of a form and character of development that is suited to Highlands.
- To use the provisions of the Local Government Act in order to facilitate a Development Permit approval through the designations of Development Permit Areas.

General Policies

1. Development Permit Areas are generally shown on Maps 11.1 and 11.2, and specifically apply to all land shown on Map 2.1.
2. The determinant for whether an area is subject to a development permit area will be dictated by what is on the ground, using Maps 11.1 and 11.2 as guiding references.
3. Guidelines are established for each DPA respecting the manner by which the special conditions or objectives will be addressed. Although compliance with any specific guideline may not necessarily be required, general and substantial compliance with the intent of all guidelines is required.
4. Where land lies within more than one Development Permit Area, Development Permit applications may be subject to the requirements of all guidelines of all such areas.
5. Before issuing a Development Permit, the District may require the applicant to furnish, at the applicant's expense, a report prepared by an independent certified professional to assist in determining what conditions or requirements will be imposed in the permit to ensure the development follows the relevant guidelines.
 - a. Pursuant to the Local Government Act, Development Permits may not be required for the minor modifications to an existing building(s).
6. Permits are not required in the DPAs for the following activities:
 - a. Habitat improvement activities undertaken by the District, the BC government, or other agencies approved by the District to conduct such work;
 - b. Forestry activities conducted on Managed Forest land in a manner consistent with the regulations pursuant to the Private Managed Forest Land Act;
 - c. Emergency responses or works required by the Provincial Emergency Program, the RCMP, the Ministry of Forests or the Highlands Fire Department as a response to an emergency.

OCP Map 11.1 Development Permit Areas
Steep Slopes, Water &
Riparian Areas



*Note: 30m setback may increase if slope exceeds 33.3% from water edge

11.3 Development Permit Area No. 1 – Steep Slopes

Area Affected

All areas having slopes that exceed 30% are designated as Development Permit Areas; these are generally shown on Map 11.1.

Purpose

The intent of this DPA is to regulate development in the area in a manner that protects against loss of property and protects the integrity of the slopes greater than 30%.

Justification

The Local Government Act provides local governments with the authority to establish a DPA in areas of hazardous conditions. Many areas of the Highlands are steeply sloped. Careful control of development or other alteration of these slopes is needed to reduce the risk to life and property, to prevent erosion and potential risks to down slope properties, to prevent destabilization of slopes, and to protect the visual quality of the slopes. Land clearing, road construction, changes in slope profiles, construction of buildings or roads, or other site disturbance in these areas could increase risk to life and property and harm the environmental value of the slopes.

Guidelines

These guidelines provide a policy framework for Council to assess applications. Council may adopt additional Development Permit guidelines for sites that have special features and concerns. Development Permits issued in steep slope areas shall be in accordance with the following:

1. No unnecessary site disturbances shall be permitted within areas designated as steep slopes.
2. Disturbance of vegetation and movement of substrate will be minimized.
3. Lot configurations and building designs will be compatible with the topography (rather than relying on creating large, flat lots by land filling or blasting). Building heights and roof forms will conform, as far as possible, to pre-development topographic conditions and minimize visual impact.
4. Erosion control measures, during and after construction, will be specified in the permit.
5. Removal of vegetation, especially trees, will be minimized. A disturbed site will be revegetated as soon as possible using plant material indigenous to the site or other suitable non-invasive plants.
6. The Development Permit will document how the owner's desire to change the existing views will be balanced with the need to maintain the existing vegetation.
7. Drainage will not be altered in ways that increase or decrease the amount of runoff from the site. On-site infiltration of runoff from impermeable surfaces, such as roads, driveways, etc., will be encouraged.

11.4 Development Permit Area No. 2 – Water and Riparian Areas

Area Affected

All water and riparian areas, including lakes, watercourses, wetlands and areas within 30 metres (100 feet) of those features are designated as Development Permit Areas and are generally shown on Map 11.1.

Purpose

To regulate development adjacent to water features and riparian areas in order to protect against loss of property and to protect the ecological value of these areas.

Justification

The areas generally identified on Map 11.1 are important to the ecological integrity of the Highlands, and serve as stormwater storage and transmission areas and are critical to natural environmental values in the municipality. Some of these areas are in floodplains. Building of structures or roads, or substantial land

clearing or disturbance in these areas could harm the functions of these water and riparian areas, and could constitute a risk to lives and property.

Guidelines

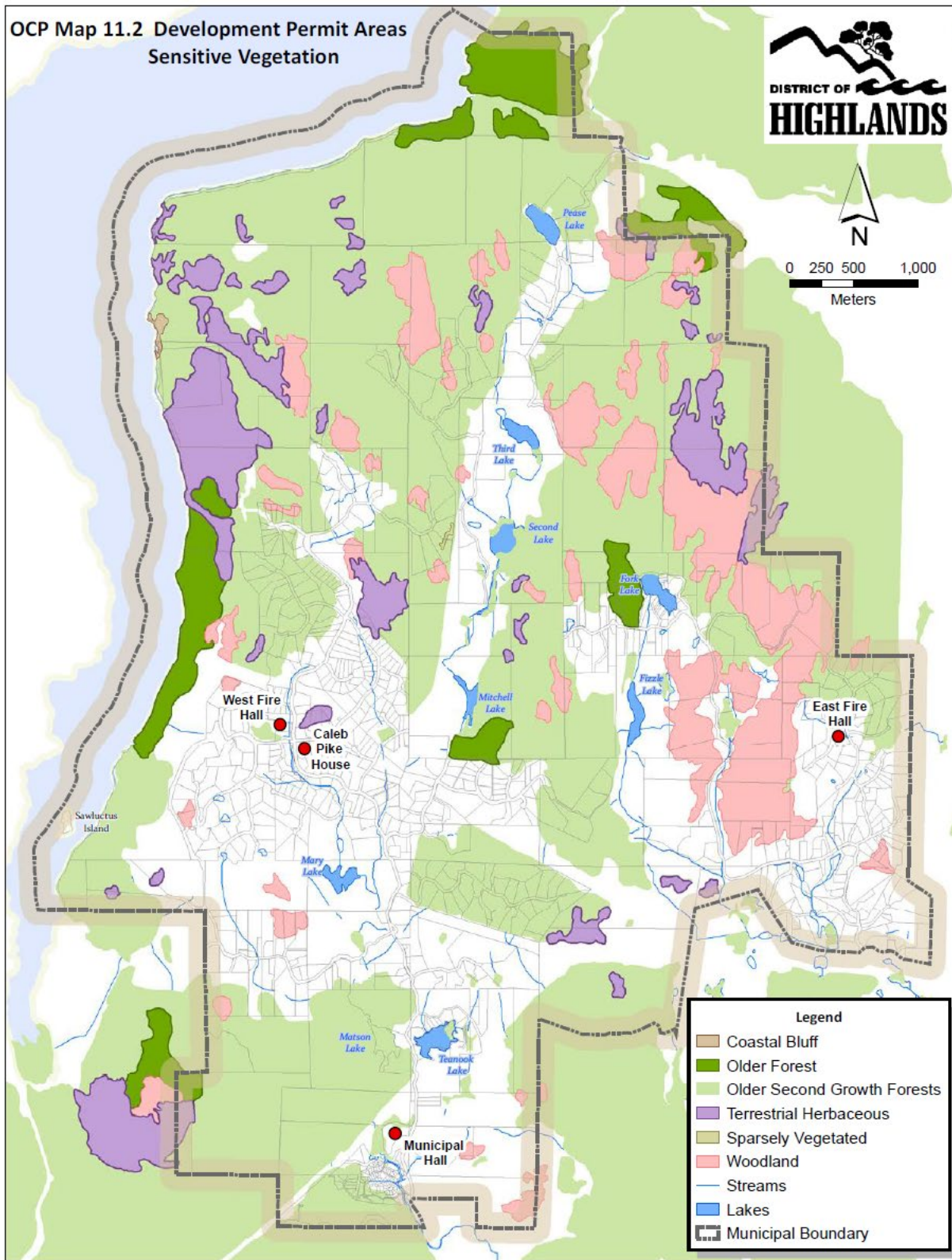
Development Permits issued in these areas shall be in accordance with the following:

1. No unnecessary site disturbances shall be permitted within at least 30 metres (100 feet) of the top of bank of watercourses, or the natural boundary of lakes, wetlands, and other water features. Existing vegetation shall be maintained in order to control erosion, protect banks, protect habitat, and retain the natural character of water features. Outside agencies, such as Department of Fisheries and Oceans and BC Ministry of Environment, will be consulted where necessary.
2. No habitable buildings or other structures requiring foundations will be constructed, and no septic tanks or fields will be installed within at least 30 metres (100 feet) horizontal distance from the top of a bank of a watercourse or high water mark of water features, and within 15 metres (50 feet) horizontal distance of the natural boundary of an area subject to flooding.
3. Provision will be made and works undertaken to maintain the quality of stormwater flowing toward or in the identified water features, and to ensure that the volume and peak flow of runoff from a property is not increased by any development or land altering activity.
4. Vegetation appropriate and preferably indigenous to the site may be required to be planted on the site to reduce erosion risk, restore and enhance the natural character of the site, improve water quality, or to stabilize slopes and banks. A landscaping security deposit will be required to encourage compliance. Outside agencies, such as Department of Fisheries and Oceans and BC Ministry of Environment, will be consulted where necessary.
5. Removal of gravel, sand, soil or peat from streambeds, lakes, or wetlands and the draining, dredging, infilling, piping or dumping of materials will be strictly limited. Outside agencies, such as Department of Fisheries and Oceans and BC Ministry of Environment, will be consulted where necessary.
6. Modification of channels, banks, or shores that could cause environmental harm or significantly alter local hydrological conditions will not be permitted.
7. Pollutants, including pesticides and fertilizers, will be prevented from entering water features or wetlands by requiring the control of surface water drainage.
8. All new developments or modifications of existing developments will be required to prove to the satisfaction of the District of Highlands that the development will cause no increase in runoff compared to existing conditions of the site.
9. Non-point source pollution will be prevented from entering water features from residential or commercial developments or agricultural activities.
10. Facilities to allow the use of gasoline powered boats and floatplanes will not be allowed.
11. The Development Permit may designate and specify where necessary, a buffer zone within which land alteration or structures will be limited to those compatible with the characteristics of the water feature.
12. Development Permits issued with regard to road and driveway construction in this area will ensure that:
 - a. Watercourse crossings are so located as to minimize disturbance of water feature banks, channels, shores, and vegetation cover.
 - b. Bridges are used instead of culverts for crossings of fish-bearing watercourses, wherever possible.
 - c. Where culverts are used, their size will be large enough to accommodate 100-year flood conditions. Culverts should be placed to allow unrestricted movement of fish in both directions. Where desirable, culverts may be designed to retard low flows and encourage in-stream storage of water.

In-stream work requires notification or approval under section 9 of the *Water Act*.

13. Watercourses should be left natural to protect habitat.
14. Should any application for changes to land within Highlands fall within the parameters of the BC Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR), an applicant will be required to furnish, at their expense, an Assessment Report certified by a Qualified Professional as defined by and meeting the intent of the RAR. All applications falling under the RAR will still be subject to Council review.

OCP Map 11.2 Development Permit Areas
Sensitive Vegetation



11.5 Development Permit Area No. 3 – Sensitive Vegetation

Area Affected

All known areas of sensitive vegetation are designated as Development Permit Area No. 3 and are generally shown on Map 11.2. Where there is a discrepancy between Map 11.2 and site conditions, site conditions will dictate whether a Development Permit is required. Please see descriptions of vegetation categories on page 18.

Purpose

- To regulate development in such areas in a manner that protects sensitive vegetation and ecological values.
- For the Older Second Growth Forest category: to regulate development in a manner that seeks to maintain the resource use values while minimizing the loss of ecosystem functions.

Justification

These are important vegetation communities that have been identified by the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory. Maintaining this vegetation is important to the protection of habitat and the natural environmental character of the Highlands. Land clearing, tree cutting, construction of buildings or roads, or other site disturbance in these areas could harm their functions and value to the municipality.

The Older Second Growth Forest category noted on Map 11.2 represents an “important” ecosystem – as opposed to sensitive – as defined by the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory Project. Because of this difference, management emphasis is less on protection and more on careful management of these lands. Lands in this category are subject to a Development Permit, but application fees will be waived for the Older Second Growth category. Applicants, whose site is within a residential use zone (RUZ), will not be required to furnish a professional report (unless extenuating circumstances present themselves), as it assumed that such considerations would have been taken into account when the RUZ was established. All others may be required to furnish an ecological inventory conducted by a qualified professional.

Guidelines

Development Permits issued in sensitive vegetation areas (that is, the “woodland,” “terrestrial herbaceous,” “sparsely vegetated,” “older forest,” and “coastal bluff,” categories shall be in accordance with the following (for the “older second growth” category, please see Guideline #9):

1. No unnecessary site disturbances shall be permitted within areas designated as sensitive vegetation.
2. In treed areas, mature vegetation will be protected, as will under storey plants and immature trees.
3. The level of the land surface will not be changed in sensitive vegetation areas if such change could affect the health of vegetation or the ecological structure of plant communities.
4. Drainage will not be altered in ways that increase or decrease the amount of surface water or groundwater available to the sensitive vegetation.
5. Where necessary, provision will be made and works undertaken to maintain the quality of water reaching the sensitive vegetation.
6. Removal of gravel, sand, soil or peat in sensitive vegetation areas will be strictly limited.
7. The Development Permit may designate and specify where necessary, a buffer zone within which land alteration or structures will be limited to those compatible with the characteristics of the sensitive vegetation.
8. Planting of invasive non-native vegetation adjacent to or in designated sensitive vegetation areas will not be permitted.
9. Older Second Growth Forests Category – Only the following guidelines apply to the older second growth forest category:
 - a. Where older second growth forests are adjacent to the sensitive ecosystems in Development Permit Area 3 (Sensitive Vegetation) and to riparian or wetland areas, options for conservation will be considered. In such cases, buffers of older second growth forest will be maintained as determined by a registered biologist. At the very least, site disturbances into such areas will be minimized.

- b. Loss of ecosystem functions will be minimized, while maintaining the resource use value of the property.
- c. Where such areas occur in isolation from other ecosystems, efforts should be made to retain the largest patches possible.
- d. Minimize edge effects by:
 - i. Retaining patches of forest rather than isolated trees.
 - ii. Treed areas should have the least possible amount of edge per unit area (i.e., should be as close to round as practical).
 - iii. The windward edge should be smooth and in areas of deep soils and well rooted trees.
 - iv. Edge stabilization treatments including feathering, sail pruning, topping, and removal of unsound trees should be used to ensure a windfirm edge.
- e. Manage recreational and livestock access to avoid damage to vegetation, soils and wildlife.
- f. Prevent disturbance of nesting and breeding areas.
- g. Control the introduction and spread of invasive plant species.
- h. Allow natural disturbances and successional functions and processes to occur.
- i. Infrastructure (including wells and septic fields) should avoid trees and their root masses that are to be conserved. Generally, staying back the distance equal to the height of a tree from its base or 15 metres, whichever is greater, will achieve this.
- j. Schedule land disturbance activities to avoid the spring nesting and breeding season for coastal wildlife.
- k. Design and implement appropriate sediment and erosion control measures.

11.6 Development Permit Area No. 4 – Regenerative Development

Area Affected

Lands designated as “Regenerative Development” on Map 2.1 are designated as Development Permit Area No. 4.

Purpose

- To promote greenhouse gas emissions reduction.
- To promote energy and water conservation.
- To regulate the form and character of commercial and industrial development.
- To protect the natural environment, its ecosystems, and biological diversity.

Objectives

- Prioritize environmental restoration through well-designed redevelopment.
- Support regenerative site design and construction outcomes.
- Sensitive integration of new development with the existing community and environmental context.

Specific Exemptions

Development Permits are not required in Development Permit Area No. 4 for:

- Minor alterations to the design and finish of the exterior of a building or structure that do not change the character of the development.
- Buildings, additions, structures and equipment less than 10m² in floor area.

Justification

The main purpose of this Development Permit Area is to support climate action. Land uses, activities and on-site programming can impact the climate either positively or negatively. Integrating natural assets and ecological values in any development proposal is critical. Moreover, facilitating developments that utilize innovative technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy and water is also key to climate action.

This development permit authority supports the provincial government’s broader action on climate change, including the requirement for local governments to have greenhouse gas reduction targets and policies and actions in official community plans and regional growth strategies and help meet their B.C. Climate Action Charter commitments.

Additionally incorporating the Form and Character Guidelines into a project’s design will encourage the creation of contextual and compatible architecture, high-quality pedestrian realms, and sustainable and resilient design, and will contribute to placemaking and design excellence in Development Permit Area No. 4.

Guidelines

Development Permits issued in Development Permit Area No. 4 shall be in accordance with the following Guidelines:

Sustainability, Ecology, and Rewilding

1. Prioritize the use of previously disturbed sites and preserve sensitive ecological areas, such as forests with mature trees, rocky outcrops, creeks, and wetlands.
 - a. Establish buffer zones or areas of non-disturbance which will remain free of development and prevent built-environment encroachment on natural areas.
2. Incorporate landscaping that prioritizes native and adaptive non-native plant species and provides a wide range of food sources for insects, birds, and other wildlife.
 - a. Clearly define ecological restoration strategies that account for the surrounding ecosystem and the impacts of past site disturbances.
 - b. Consider additional habitat restoration strategies, such as nesting boxes, green roofs, bioswales, and rewilding.

3. Establish wildlife corridors and exterior green infrastructure to connect fragmented habitats and promote biodiversity.
4. Minimize grading and excavation to reduce soil erosion and habitat disruption.
5. Implement soil erosion and sediment control measures to prevent site degradation during and after construction activities and to protect surface and groundwater quality.
6. Utilize strategies to control and eradicate invasive plant species including monitoring native species over time.

Stormwater Management

7. Use primarily landscape-based stormwater management best practices, such as rain gardens, swales, permeable surfaces, and green roofs, in order to:
 - a. Mitigate the impacts of past site disturbances.
 - b. Minimize the effective impervious area (EIA) on site.
 - i. *Best practices suggest an EIA target of less than 10% of the total site area.*
 - c. Protect and enhance surface water and groundwater quality and quantity.
 - d. Manage average rainfall events.
 - e. Limit underground stormwater management systems.
8. Plant native and adaptive non-native drought-tolerant trees and plant species that are resilient to future climate projections and that maximize ecosystem services.

Energy Efficiency

9. Use exterior design strategies to enhance buildings' energy efficiency and performance, such as:
 - a. Designing buildings with a simplified form, using simple shifts in massing and fewer complex junctions to minimize building envelope heat loss.
 - b. Using heat exchangers and/or similar technologies for heating and cooling.
 - c. Employing passive solar design strategies, such as exterior shading devices, to optimize solar gain in winter (and less in summer).
 - d. Optimizing natural ventilation opportunities.
10. Design buildings to include or be 'ready' for on-site exterior renewable energy systems by including, for example:
 - a. On-site power generation (e.g., solar photovoltaics) and battery storage.
 - b. Conduit from electrical panels to rooftop areas for solar panels.
 - c. Adequate space and structural support for the future installation of, for example, solar photovoltaic panels and battery storage.
11. Use durable exterior designs to extend the lifespan of buildings and reduce the need for frequent replacements.
12. Maximize the use of healthy and non-toxic finishes on buildings' exteriors.

General Architectural Design

Where appropriate and relevant to the use and function of the building:

13. Orient primary building façades and entries to the fronting street or open space to create street edge definition and activity.
14. Locate and design windows, balconies, and street-level uses to create active frontages and 'eyes on the street' with additional glazing and articulation on primary building façades.
15. Design buildings and site features to the human scale through the use of exterior architectural features, details, and site design elements that are human-proportioned and oriented toward pedestrian activity.
16. On larger sites, seek to create a unified and cohesive appearance and architectural character while introducing variation in façade treatments.
17. Use muted colours chosen from a palette representative of Highland's natural surroundings where a visual accent is warranted to optimize energy efficiency.
18. Provide weather protection for high-use areas, such as primary building entrances, exterior stairs, and active building frontages.
19. If high use, public spaces are created, consider integrating public art on-site to generate interest and activity and reflect the unique natural, Indigenous, industrial, or settler history of the Highlands.

20. Where possible, use site planning and landscape design to minimize noise impacts.
21. Employ wayfinding, lighting, and universal accessibility principles to appropriate site areas, such as primary building entrances and pedestrian routes.
22. Design building entrances to be well-defined, visible, and clearly lit.

Site Planning

23. Ensure that site planning and design achieve favourable microclimate outcomes through strategies such as:
 - a. Locating outdoor spaces to maximize sunlight throughout the year.
 - b. Planting both evergreen and deciduous trees to provide a balance of shading in the summer and solar access in the winter.
 - c. Using building mass, trees, and planting to buffer winds.
24. Design buildings, structures, and additions with consideration for the relationship of adjacent buildings, open areas, the efficiency of the circulation system, and compatibility with surrounding development.
25. Site and design buildings visible from roads so that their office and/or retail portion of the building is oriented towards the road.
26. Integrate loading areas into the design of the building.
27. Locate accessory uses (such as loading, garbage collection, utilities, and parking access) away from public view and not in conflict with public circulation patterns.

Landscape Design and Open Space

28. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to support public safety through the use of appropriate lighting, visible entrances, opportunities for natural surveillance, and clear sight lines for pedestrians.
29. Avoid blank, windowless walls along streets or other public open spaces.
30. Where large retaining walls are unavoidable, utilize terracing with integrated landscaping, including regularly spaced trees/hedging along the base that covers 75% or more of the visible portion of the wall from public spaces.
31. Design attractive, engaging, functional and efficient on-site exterior open spaces.
32. Use landscaping as a privacy buffer and define private, semi-private, common/shared, and public outdoor areas.
33. Integrate Pest Management measures for landscape design and maintenance.
34. Design communal outdoor areas to foster social interaction and a sense of community and provide outdoor employee amenities area such as lunch and break areas.

Screening & Fencing

35. Garbage and recycling materials should be in containers that are weatherproof, non-combustible, and animal-resistant within the boundaries of each site.
36. Integrate service areas, dumpsters and garbage containers, recycling containers, utility kiosks and areas, and service or mechanical apparatus into the landscape or exterior building design and screen with fences, walls, gates, or landscaping from public view.
 - a. Ensure these areas do not impact public open spaces or pedestrian pathways.
 - b. Ensure these areas are clearly shown on site plans.
37. Locate mechanical equipment, such as the outdoor components of heat pumps and air conditioners, vents, and service areas to minimize impacts on adjacent residential buildings by avoiding proximity to windows, doors, and usable outdoor spaces.
38. Design buildings to ensure that adjacent residential properties have sufficient visual privacy (e.g., by locating windows and balconies to minimize overlook and direct sight lines into adjacent units) and protection from light trespass and noise.
39. In cases where publicly visible parking is unavoidable, screen parking using strategies such as:
 - a. Landscaping and tree planting space.
 - b. Trellises.
 - c. Grillwork with climbing vines.
 - d. Other attractive screening with some visual permeability.
 - e. Incorporating a buffer or setback from the public to adjacent neighbourhoods.

40. Integrate perimeter landscaping of similar character with the natural landscape and the landscaping of adjacent development for streetscape continuity.
41. Maintain a wide natural buffer along Millstream Road, and additional landscape treatment and berming to attenuate noise, improve aesthetics, and reduce impacts of noise, odour, or shadow.
42. Fence designs will be appropriate to their function and location, with consideration for both landscape design and sustainability principles.
 - a. Where appropriate (e.g., perimeter lot fences), fences should be designed to facilitate the movement of wildlife (e.g., with a small gap at ground-level).
 - b. Fences visible to the public should be screened by landscaping.
 - c. Materials will be of sufficient quality, size, and strength.
43. Fence designs – including elevations, materials, and related construction details – will be submitted as part of a landscape plan.

Signage and Lighting

44. Signs may not contain or utilize any flashing, blinking intermittent or moving light as a source of illumination.
45. Locate signage below the roofline, and integrate signage with the building façade through colour and graphic style.
46. Integrate dark sky principles across site and building designs.
 - a. Ensure top-mounted light fixtures are fully shielded and directed away from residential or wildlife areas.
 - b. When top-mounted light fixtures are not feasible, use visors or other directional control devices to prevent spillage of light into the night sky.
 - c. Ensure on-site lighting and signs do not produce glare on neighbouring roads, properties, or the night sky.

Parking

47. Avoid locating off-street parking between the front façade of a building and streets, open spaces, or pedestrian circulation routes.
48. Where appropriate, divide large parking lots into smaller parking areas with well-integrated landscape pockets to avoid large expanses of paved areas and to provide easy accessibility to buildings.
49. Where practical, utilize landscaped swales adjacent to parking areas to maximize canopy coverage and provide cooling, GHG capture, air quality enhancement, urban habitat, stormwater capture, filtration, and infiltration.
50. Consideration may be given to the replacement of parking stalls with transportation demand management practices (e.g., transit passes, carshare) as recommended by a Parking Study.
51. Where appropriate to site uses and activities, provide secure, weather-protected bicycle and human-powered vehicle parking and amenities, including:
 - a. Covered short-term parking in well-lit and highly visible locations, such as near primary building entrances.
 - b. Facilities such as showers and lockers to support cycling and other forms of active transportation.
 - c. Ample space and consideration for cargo bikes and other larger forms of human-powered vehicles

Transportation and Mobility

52. Provide electric bicycle and vehicle charging infrastructure in line with District, Regional, or Provincial requirements and best practices.
53. Where appropriate to site uses and activities, create enhanced pedestrian routes, including weather protection on buildings and street frontages.
54. Provide support for car-share, carpool, bike-share, and other transportation-sharing models.

11.7 Development Permit Area No. 5 – Intensive Residential

Area Affected

All areas designated Intensive Residential on Map 2.1 are designated as Development Permit Area No. 5 in order ensure that development occurs in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines of this section.

Purpose

The intent of establishing this DPA is to regulate development in a manner that creates an attractive area for intensive residential development and protects the natural environment.

Objectives

- To regulate development in a manner that protects the integrity and ecological value of natural areas, and promotes the rural quality of the Highlands.
- To regulate development in a manner that creates an attractive area and a desirable place for residences with minimal impact on the environment and surrounding areas.

Justification

All areas designated Intensive Residential on Map 2.1 are also designated as Development Permit Areas to encourage well-designed places of residence, and accommodate the development of various types of residential housing.

Maintaining native vegetation, wildlife habitat and water features is important to the protection of the natural character of the Highlands. Building of structures or roads, or substantial land clearing or disturbance could harm the functions of these natural areas, and diminish their rural character.

Careful control of land development, buildings and landscaping is needed to protect the aesthetic qualities of the area, and to ensure that development is in harmony with the rural character of the Highlands.

Guidelines

Development Permits issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

General

1. Areas to be retained in a natural state will be identified by plan and demarcated on site.
2. Clustering of housing is encouraged and will promote screening by native vegetation and/or topography.
3. Development plans will incorporate natural features. All site conditions will be carefully examined before determining building locations, access and open green space areas. Wherever feasible, existing features and habitat should be retained, and where appropriate enhanced.
4. All designs should support public transit.

Landscaping and Vegetation Treatment

5. Disturbance of vegetation in natural areas will be minimized.
6. Natural grades will be maintained within and adjacent to natural areas and where vegetation is to be retained.
7. Natural drainage patterns will be maintained within and adjacent to natural areas and where vegetation is to be retained.

8. Limited tree and vegetation removal will be considered in designated natural areas to allow lighting into residential areas. Vegetation removed will be replaced by new plantings elsewhere on the property.
9. Landscaping will be used to integrate residential development with the natural environment and unify areas of the site.
10. For all projects the developer will be required to submit landscape plans prepared by a Landscape Architect registered within the Province of BC. Landscape plans will address the retention of existing vegetation and natural features, the stabilization and rehabilitation of disturbed areas, the treatment of common areas, and aquatic and riparian enhancements.
11. Plant materials and maintenance methods will emphasize species that are drought-tolerant and enhance wildlife habitat. Indigenous native plant species will be used where possible.
12. Permanent screening (by landscaping or solid structure) will be provided for each residential lot, to screen back yards.

Land Alteration

13. The individual lots, buildings, streets and parking areas shall be designed and situated to minimize alteration of the natural site features.
14. All areas proposed for land alteration shall be clearly demarcated by plan, and flagged on-site, prior to approval of the Development Permit. Land alteration activities will be limited and no unnecessary site disturbances shall be permitted.
15. Erosion control measures, during and after construction, will be specified in the permit.
16. Cut and fill slopes will be stabilized and revegetated immediately following construction.

Water Quality and Drainage

17. The quality of groundwater and surface water will be maintained through the employment of systems which encourage direct infiltration of surface water, by limiting the extent of impervious surfaces, and by incorporating sediment control features that limit the offsite transport of sediments directly into a watercourse or wetland. Rainwater harvesting is encouraged.
18. The quality of stormwater flowing toward or in water features or other sensitive vegetation will be maintained or improved, and the volume and peak flow of runoff from a property will not be increased by any development or land altering activity.
19. Measures to conserve domestic and irrigation water will be identified and encouraged.
20. Measures will be identified and undertaken to prevent pollutants and nutrient-rich run-off water from entering ground water, surface water and sensitive vegetation.
21. Prior to the issuance of a Development Permit for any development, reports and plans prepared by a qualified professional consultant (R.P.Bio) will be provided to document the impact of the proposed development on riparian areas, and provide recommendations for development impact mitigation and enhancement of the riparian areas.
22. Development will not be located within poorly drained areas.

Green Space Areas

23. Green space areas will be identified for conservation and/or enhancement, and these areas will be clearly designated on a plan and where appropriate, permanently demarcated on-site.
24. Green space areas will be provided for the enjoyment of residents and will encourage walking, outdoor play, vegetable gardening and other outdoor activities that lend to the enjoyment of the property.
25. Some portions of green space areas will be used for recreation vehicle, boat and visitor parking. All parking areas shall be in designated locations and suitably screened.

Architectural Form and Character

26. High quality architectural design, which promotes the use and/or appearance of natural building materials and common design elements will be required for all new developments.
27. Common building materials may include wood cladding, large timbers and stone. Building materials should be selected to ensure long-term durability and an appearance of solid, quality construction. The use of masonry or clay tile and stucco will not be permitted.
28. Common design elements will include gable roofs with uniform materials and pitches, porches and front facades with stepped-back portions.
29. Buildings will be stepped to follow the topography of the site.
30. Substantial grade changes should be accommodated through the use of a series of smaller retaining walls. Visible faces of retaining walls should have a textured finish or architectural treatment. The use of rock will be encouraged.
31. Stepping back portions of the front building façade should break up the massing of buildings. Continuous, uninterrupted, building facades should be avoided.
32. Building entrances should be well defined, visible, and clearly lit. Main entrances should face the public road.
33. Outdoor lighting should be low level and direct illumination downward. Lighting fixtures shall be of a decorative bollard type, with a maximum height of 1100 mm above ground.

11.8 Development Permit Area No. 6 – Promotion of Energy and Water Conservation and the Reduction of Greenhouse Gases

Area Affected

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act, all lands shown on Map 2.1 are designated as Development Permit Area No. 6 in order to ensure that development occurs in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines of this section for the promotion of energy and water conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

Circumstances Affected

- Any construction requiring a building permit for a building, or an addition, 50m² or larger once completed
- Any development requiring a Development Permit
- Subdivision of land

Showing its support for sustainability and development of innovative climate adaptation technologies, the District will charge no fee for this development permit on its own. The intent is that an applicant would direct that money toward development choices that, to the best of their ability, accomplish the purpose of this Development Permit area. Potential charging of a fee will be reviewed in successive OCP updates.

Purpose

The intent of establishing this Development Permit Area (DPA) for the entire District of Highlands is to regulate development in a manner that conserves energy and water and reduces greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions.

Objectives

- To guide development in a manner that conserves energy and water.
- To guide development in a manner that reduces greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions.

Justification

It is in the community interest that all new development and significant redevelopment should be consistent with the community's vision and goals for energy and water conservation as well as the reduction of greenhouse gases for the following reasons:

- a. The construction and operation of buildings has a substantial impact on the natural environment and collectively produces a significant contribution to the municipal carbon footprint.
- b. The community has committed to reducing its total GHG emissions from 2007 levels accordingly: 9% reduction by 2020; 26% by 2030; and 80% by 2050. These reductions will be achieved through the combined impact of local government influence (land use and transportation planning, development/building guidelines as well as waste reduction strategies), as well as the programs and initiatives of both senior levels of government and progressive partnerships in the broader community.
- c. Encouraging the development and building community to integrate measures designed to reduce a building's impact on the environment is an important step for reducing the portion of Highlands' energy consumption and GHG emissions attributable to the construction and operation of our built environment.

- d. Water-saving measures are encouraged to reduce the potential for negative impacts on local hydrological cycles and ecosystem function.

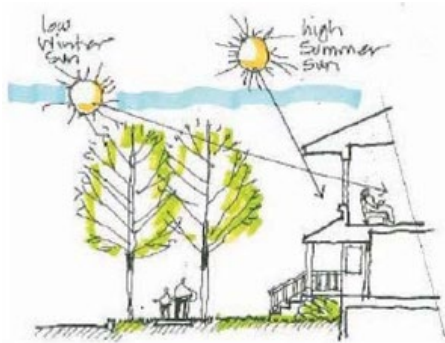
Guidelines

The guidelines are intended to meet the **Objectives** and should be considered collectively, choosing the best “mix” for each unique situation.

FOR BUILDINGS: ENERGY CONSERVATION

Building Orientation and Access to Sunlight

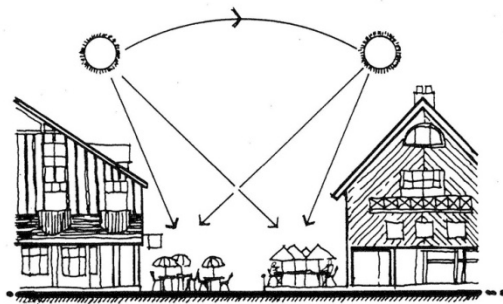
- a. Buildings should be located, oriented and designed to facilitate the retention of passive solar heat (e.g. larger south facing and smaller north facing windows), reduce heat loss and support natural ventilation.
- b. Whenever possible encourage building massing/shape to improve the passive solar performance of the structure, recognizing that a more compact form and a longer shape along an east/west axis is more appropriate for maximizing passive heat gain.
- c. Reduce the energy consumption of electric lighting by maximizing opportunities for the distribution of natural daylight into a buildings' interior spaces (excluding the use of skylights).



- d. Avoid the use of heavily tinted or reflective glazing that reduces solar heat gain but also reduces the penetration of daylight.
- e. Placement and retention of deciduous trees is encouraged such that these trees provide summer-season shading, and winter-season solar access.
- f. Encourage the design of on-site landscaping and screening to minimize negative shading impacts on the potential for solar thermal or photovoltaic systems.

Roof Design

- g. Roof overhangs and window placement should be coordinated to provide cooling and shade during the summer and solar access for passive heating in the winter.
- h. Roof surfaces should be designed to accommodate solar energy collection devices.
- i. Skylights are only encouraged if the benefit of natural daylight penetration is sufficient from an energy perspective, to outweigh their heat loss due to low insulation value.
- j. Consider light tubes as a passive light source, without unwanted solar gain or heat loss.
- k. Green roofs are especially encouraged where they can be shown to reduce heating and cooling needs, enhance biodiversity, reduce fire hazards, or realize other benefits.



Efficient and Renewable Energy

- l. For alternate wall systems designed to achieve higher “R” values or higher thermal mass than the standard in the BC Building Code, calculation of the total floor area should not include additional wall thickness used to compensate for higher levels of insulation.
- m. Strongly support the installation of on-site renewable energy systems wherever feasible (e.g. solar thermal hot water, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, low-noise heat pumps, and low-noise micro turbines).
- n. Design mechanical systems to enable interconnection with future sustainable energy systems. For example, this means a conduit to allow for solar or wind power installations, or district energy systems (within the Highlands Servicing Area).
- o. Encourage the recovery of available waste heat resources as a strategy to preheat incoming ventilation or domestic potable water supply.

Outdoor Areas

- p. Snow management should be premised on sound design principles and not be reliant on the integration of heat trace devices. Heated driveways, stairs, or pedestrian walkways are discouraged, where not justified to accommodate people with mobility challenges.
- q. While still supporting safe pedestrian mobility, all outdoor lighting should minimize wattage and be directed downward with full cut-off fixtures.
- r. The control of all outdoor lights with motion detectors or timers is encouraged.
- s. Outdoor lighting should be well designed to protect natural night skies and avoid light pollution.



Materials Management

- t. Recycling infrastructure and animal-proof storage areas are encouraged, especially for composting and organics recycling.
- u. Reuse existing building materials where practical.
- v. Wherever practical, new building materials should be:
 - a. Sourced locally or regionally to reduce transportation requirements whenever possible,
 - b. Durable for the intended use and last for the life cycle of the building, and
 - c. Non-toxic (in manufacturing process and once in use).
- w. Encourage construction waste diversion planning as part of the development process, including the identification of designated areas for the collection of recyclable materials during construction.

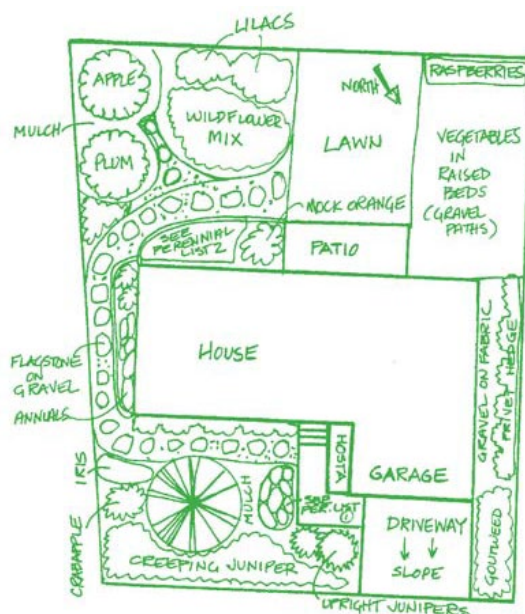
Preferred Transportation Choices

- x. Design which includes bicycle storage and easy access racks is encouraged.

LANDSCAPING: WATER CONSERVATION

- a. Landscaping design should preserve existing native vegetation, and use non-invasive plant species suited to the local climate, requiring minimal irrigation. Measures should include:

- i. Incorporating drought-tolerant, native plants and other xeriscaping techniques to minimize the need for landscape irrigation.
- ii. Maximizing the use of topsoil or composted waste for finish grading to assist in infiltration and to increase the water holding capacity of landscaped areas (30cm is the recommended minimum).
- iii. Maximizing the use of mulch layers above soil for all landscape planting areas; and utilizing rainwater capture systems for appropriate end uses where possible.



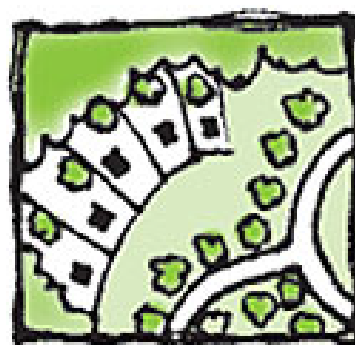
Xeriscape brochure, City of Kamloops

- b. Incorporate edible landscaping where possible.
- c. Use or manage stormwater and building water discharge on site. Site and building design measures should include:
- i. Maximizing pervious surfaces to enhance stormwater infiltration opportunities by reducing building footprints, paved parking areas and pedestrian pathways.
 - ii. Incorporating stormwater capture and storage measures including bioswales and rain gardens for infiltration.
- d. Utilize automated control systems where temporary or permanent mechanical irrigation systems are required.

FOR SUBDIVISION: ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GHG REDUCTIONS

Parcel Orientation and Access to Sunlight

- a. Parcels should be subdivided and oriented to take advantage of opportunities for improving passive solar heating, reducing heat loss and supporting natural ventilation. Plans need to explain how these aspects are achieved.
- b. Lot layout should minimize negative shading impacts on surrounding properties.
- c. Whenever possible encourage lot layout permitting building massing/shape to improve the passive performance of the structure, recognizing that a more compact form and a longer shape along an east/west axis maximizes passive heat gain.



Renewable and Alternative Energy

- d. Encourage lot layouts that enable interconnection with future District energy systems in those areas identified as having potential for such systems.

Preferred Transportation Choices

- e. Neighbourhood design and subdivision layout needs to include human/active transportation choices such as short pedestrian connections to adjacent roads.

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Chapter 12 – Plan Implementation

The implementation of this plan depends on the decisions and actions of individuals, businesses, the District of Highlands, and other levels of government. The District's means of implementing the plan include the land use (zoning) bylaw, subdivision regulations, Development Permits, fiscal programs to support land acquisitions, covenants and rights of way.

While the Local Government Act does not require the District to commit or authorize any specific project set out in the plan, it does indicate that all decisions should be consistent with the plan.

Plan Implementation – Objectives

- To carry out and enforce the policies outlined in this plan.
- To consult with affected and interested parties during the implementation of this plan.
- To implement actions that will move Highlands toward the shared vision articulated in the *Sustainable Highlands* ICSP.

Plan Implementation – Actions

The plan identifies a number of actions to be undertaken or initiated by the District. These actions will be implemented through a number of methods:

1. Alignment of decisions and actions with the *Sustainable Highlands* ICSP through:
 - a. Use of the Decision-Making Framework
 - b. Progress monitoring
 - c. An annual review process
2. Enactment and enforcement of District Bylaws
3. Work of:
 - a. District Staff
 - b. District Works and Services
 - c. Other Levels of Government
 - d. Non-Governmental Organizations

Appendix A – Public Amenities

Since its incorporation, the District of Highlands has used the density bonusing provisions of the Local Government Act in order to acquire public amenities, including financial contributions. Policy 2.2.20 of this plan states that:

“Public amenities may be offered through rezoning to justify an increase in density. Such amenities must be beneficial to the wider community, as well as the proposed development, and may be offered in recognition of the increased value of land resulting from rezoning.”

The basic premise of density bonusing is that the value of the additional density should be shared between the community and the developer. Negotiating public amenities as part of the development approval process may be a "win-win" arrangement, in which the community benefits from acquiring the amenity and the developer benefits from the value of the additional lots or units and from the increased values associated with having amenities on or near the development site.

a.1 Public Amenities

For the purposes of future applicants for development proposals that exceed the density policies of this plan, the following is a list of amenities that will be considered by the District in exchange for additional density. These are not in order of priority. The applicant may suggest other amenities.

1. Fire protection services
2. Protection of sensitive 'high value' environmental areas by covenant
3. Additional road corridor dedication, construction, or improvement
4. Additional dedication, construction or improvement of roadside trails
5. Installations of apparatus or equipment which make significant contributions to the conservation of water and energy, renewable energy generation or the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
6. Built space for child day care or elderly adult day programs
7. Additional park land for District purposes
8. Construction of Council Chambers and a community hall
9. Land and construction of recreational facilities, such as a major playfield
10. Construction of affordable or special needs housing units
11. Bus shelters, bike lockers and park and ride facilities
12. Electrical vehicle charging stations
13. Payment into a reserve fund specifically set aside for a particular amenity

a.2 Procedures for Consideration of Density Bonusing

1. Each proposal will be evaluated through a process that includes public participation, usually rezoning, and will be assessed upon its own merits. Highlands Sustainability Appraisal Form Policy – an implementation tool of *Sustainable Highlands* – and the District's Amenity Rezoning Considerations Policy provide criteria to help assess applications. This criteria may include:
 - characteristics of the site where the amenity could be provided
 - characteristics of the development site (size, development capacity and feasibility, water supply, traffic, etc.)
 - long-term costs to the municipality, neighbourhood(s)

- characteristics of surrounding neighbourhoods, land uses, and environmental features
- the size, type, and timing of the proposed amenity and the proposed development
- the monetary value of the amenity
- the desires of the residents of the surrounding neighbourhood

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Appendix B – Glossary

Technical words and terms used in the OCP are included in this glossary.

"Affordable Housing" means housing where the rent or mortgage plus taxes is 30% or less of the household's gross annual income.

"Amenity" means a feature that adds to the physical, aesthetic, or functional appeal of a particular site, neighbourhood or the community in general. In Highlands, the exchange of an amenity for additional density may be considered (refer to Appendix 3 for specifics).

"Agriculture" refers to crop-based agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, apiaries, orchards, tree farms, and nurseries.

"Biodiversity" applies to all varieties of life and their processes. Biodiversity encompasses the full range of natural variability, including genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.

"CEEI" stands for, "Community Energy and Emissions Inventory," which refers to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from community activities in on-road transportation, buildings and solid waste.

"Depleted Extractive Areas" refers to sites within the Industrial designation which are currently used for extraction of sand and gravel resources and are intended to be restored upon depletion of the resources.

"Density averaging" means the number of lots that can be obtained by dividing the gross area of a parcel by the minimum average area allowable. None of the lots created can be smaller than the minimum lot area for that land use designation.

"Development Approval Information Area" means an area, or circumstances, designated pursuant to the Local Government Act where local government may require information at the applicant's expense in support of an application for a rezoning, Development Permit or temporary use permit.

"Development Permit Area" means an area designated pursuant to the *Local Government Act* where approval of a Development Permit is required before a building permit can be issued. Development Permit areas may be established to protect the natural environment, to protect development from hazardous conditions, to guide the form and character of commercial, industrial and multi-family development or to protect farming.

"Development Cost Charge (DCC)" refers to a levy applied to new development to offset the cost of providing new or extended services.

"District Energy System" centralize the production of heating or cooling for a neighbourhood or community

"Ecological Services" are the benefits people obtain from eco-systems. Examples include: clean drinking water, pollination by bees, and oxygen from plants.

Energy:

"Alternative Energy" means energy, such as solar, wind, or nuclear energy, that can replace or supplement traditional fossil-fuel sources, as coal, oil, and natural gas.

"Renewable Energy" means any naturally occurring, theoretically inexhaustible source of energy, such as biomass, solar, wind, tidal, wave, and hydroelectric power, that is not derived from fossil or nuclear fuel

"Sustainable Energy" means the sustainable provision of energy that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Technologies that promote sustainable energy include renewable energy sources, such as hydroelectricity, solar energy, wind energy, wave power, geothermal energy, artificial photosynthesis, and tidal power, and also technologies designed to improve energy efficiency

"Erosion Potential" lands are lands which are highly susceptible to erosion.

"Golf Courses" include driving (practice) ranges, individual holes, buildings and structures used for golfing purposes.

"Heritage Sites" means sites of historic, architectural, archaeological, paleontological, or scenic significance to the municipality, and may be so designated under the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

"Home Based Business" means any occupation or profession carried out for gain and is secondary to the residential use of the property.

"Industrial" areas shall be for light industrial uses such as product assembly, product service and repair, manufacturing, warehousing, wholesaling and storage, or the extraction of sand and gravel as an interim use.

"Inland Wetlands" (bogs, floodplains and inland marshes) are lands usually comprised of poorly drained organic soils that remain ponded or flooded for extended periods or throughout the year and include permanent marshes which function as stream flow regulators.

"Institutional Uses" are generally educational, administrative, public safety, civic, health care, religious, and assembly uses. In Highlands, these are the District Hall and two fire halls.

"Local Road" provides for local traffic movement with direct access to abutting property.

"Multi-modal Transportation" means a connected transportation system that supports cars, bicycles, pedestrians, and public transit

"Nature Areas" provide protection for valuable habitat areas, scenic resources or environmentally sensitive areas, and include riverbank linear open space areas that may be acquired through subdivision dedication. These areas may remain undeveloped to preserve their natural qualities. Nature areas will reflect the physical features of the site.

"Nature Parks" are open space areas that will remain undeveloped by virtue of natural features such as steep slopes, ravines, watercourses, unstable soil or threatened ecological communities.

"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 or 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.

"District Parks" may be located on District-owned land and serve the recreational needs of a neighbourhood.

"Proper Functioning Condition (PFC)" means: Riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to:

- 1) dissipate stream energy associated with high water flows, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality;
- 2) filter sediment, capture bedload, and aid floodplain development;
- 3) improve flood-water retention and ground-water recharge;
- 4) develop root masses that stabilize stream banks against cutting action;
- 5) develop diverse ponding and channel characteristics to provide the habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production, waterfowl breeding, and other uses; and
- 6) support greater biodiversity.

"Provincial Parks" are parks owned by the Province.

"Regional Parks" are parks owned by the Capital Regional District.

"Riparian Area" means the land adjacent to the normal high-water level in a stream, river, lake or pond and extending to the portion of land that is directly influenced by the presence of adjacent ponded or channeled water.

"Rural" designated lands on Map 2.1 are mainly comprised of small-scale farm operations, rural residential lots not served with community sewers, and may include sensitive environments including rocky, sloped and forested areas.

"Sensitive Environmental Areas" include creeks and streams; inland wetlands; wildlife habitats; land subject to erosion, steep slopes or with unstable soil; rocky areas with minimal soil cover; heritage sites; sensitive ecosystems; and other vegetation features. Marine shorelands are also considered sensitive environments.

"Steep Slopes" includes all lands with slopes greater than 30%.

"Significant Wildlife Habitat" refers to those lands suitable for supporting a large number and/or variety of wildlife species or rare species relative to other areas of the Capital Regional District.

"Tourist Businesses" shall include those uses which serve the traveling public or provide commercial outdoor recreation activities and attractions to local residents and/or visitors. These uses are focused on specific amenities such as golf courses, equestrian centres or similar facilities.

"Working Landscape" means farm or forest land that is recognized for its role in food and wood production, floodplain storage and scenic values.

Appendix C - South Highlands Local Area Plan

The South Highlands Local Area Plan refines some of the broader concepts in the Official Community Plan. To the extent of any inconsistency between the South Highlands Local Area Plan and the remainder of the Official Community Plan, the South Highlands Local Area Plan takes precedence.

c.1 Table

The Table below shows how the OCP is updated and coincides with the South Highlands Local Area Plan (SHLAP).

SHLAP	OCP Amendment
Section 1.3 Area Context and s. 3.3 Land Use Map	Designate GFL Site, Millstream Meadows, OK Industries and Millstream Industrial Park as Regenerative Development Land Use Designation on Map 2.1
Section 1.3 Area Context, s. 3.3 Land Use Map and s. 3.4.3.1	Designate Tsartlip First Nation and Crown Lands as Special Plan Area Land Use Designation on Map 2.1
Section 3.2.1 Administration and s. 3.4.1 RD – Regenerative Development	Replace Commercial Industrial policies and objectives with Regenerative Development policies and objectives in Chapter 2 and other applicable sections
Section 3.2.1 Administration and s. 3.4.2 SPA – Special Plan Area	Add Special Plan Area policies and objectives in Chapter 2
Section 3.2.1 Administration, s. 3.4.1 RD – Regenerative Development and s. 6.2.6 Sustainability and Climate Action Policies	Replace Development Permit Area 4 – Highlands Commercial/Industrial Gateway Area in section 11.6 with a New Development Permit Area 4 – Regenerative Development

c.2 South Highlands Local Area Plan

1. Begins next page.



c.2 SOUTH HIGHLANDS LOCAL AREA PLAN (SHLAP)

FEBRUARY 3, 2025



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The South Highlands Local Area Plan (SHLAP) provides detailed policies and recommended actions to guide future land use and private and public investments in the South Highlands area for the next 20+ years.

The District of Highlands (the District) is characterized by an abundance of natural parks and large undisturbed areas that include rocky outcrops, older second growth forests, lakes, and wetlands. Highlands is surrounded by other municipalities, with Langford and View Royal to the South, Saanich to the east, and Malahat Nation and the CRD to the West, across Saanich Inlet. Additionally, the WJOLELP or Tsartlip First Nation is in close proximity to the Highlands.

The South Highlands is a unique area, consisting primarily of large rural lots, industrial sites, rural residential properties, and a golf course. The area is in a time of significant land use tension and transition. Recent rezoning applications (not approved) and mines permit applications (approved) have resulted in substantial unrest and uncertainty in the community with regard to future development and land use. This recent history is the primary catalyst for this Local Area Plan (LAP). In response, the SHLAP is an important tool to create a common vision and guide future land use decisions in the District.

In early 2020, the District commenced the LAP. Community consultation was central to the process, with a community Task Force playing a key role. The engagement process included multiple opportunities for dialogue and engagement, with residents, landowners, employees, and other stakeholders providing feedback via a project launch event, two community surveys, a stakeholder workshop, targeted stakeholder interviews, and other online engagement. The Project was undertaken during changing public health orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, posing multiple challenges and barriers to engagement across the Project lifespan.

Through this process, the community made its values clear, including protecting the natural environment and finding innovative ways to approach the challenges of the future as related to the climate emergency. As a result, this Plan aims to bridge a gap between the current model of land development and resource extraction with a future focused on protecting natural spaces and ecological recovery.

This Plan is based on community input, as well as contemporary best practices, policy directions, and planning principles. The policies and strategies seek to strengthen the long-term vitality and resilience of the area while being consistent with community-based goals, values, and principles.



LOCATION CONTEXT MAP



1.1 HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The SHLAP serves as a guide for future decision making and investment within South Highlands. The Plan provides clear goals, guidelines, policies, and strategies to help achieve the vision for the area.

1.1.1 What is a Local Area Plan?

Local Area Plans (LAPs) provide direction for how a particular area will be managed over time. They typically include detailed guidelines and policies to direct the land use, transportation (including cycling, walking, transit), parks and open spaces, design, and other planning elements in the area. An LAP further refines the high-level directions found in the documents such as the Highlands Official Community Plan (OCP) and Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) and applies those refined policies to a specific neighbourhood. The SHLAP seeks to achieve the Policies, Goals and Objectives of the OCP and ICSP, while also recognizing the specific opportunities and constraints of a defined area.

1.1.2 Who is the Plan for?

The SHLAP is intended to work as a guide for citizens, landowners, and District staff when contemplating development proposals and applications in the Plan Area. This Plan should be reviewed against private and public land use applications; capital works projects; and community improvement and development projects.

The Plan advances the implementation of OCP and ICSP Goals and Objectives as well as District initiatives as South Highlands changes over time. Finally, the Plan outlines the planning and design standards and expectations within the South Highlands Area to be considered by the District to facilitate achieving the Plan vision.

1.1.3 Understanding Policy Language

Where a descriptive section or image accompanies a policy, it is provided for information purposes only to enhance the understanding of the policy. Where “should” or “may” is used in a policy, the intent is that the policy is encouraged but can be adjusted where circumstances provide for courses of action that would satisfy the general intent of the policy.



1.2 CONTEXT

The SHLAP was developed at a time of transformation for the South Highlands and the region. During the development of this Plan, the region experienced:

- a. An increased demand for gravel and asphalt as a result of increased land and housing development; and
- b. A shortage of land for industrial development.

Additionally, both the Highlands and the Capital Regional District (CRD) declared a climate emergency and set objectives and goals respectively to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Meanwhile, the effects of climate change were seen in the record heat wave of June 2021 and massive flooding events in Southern BC during November 2021.

As a result, the Plan needed to respond to opposing interests related to:

- a. Pressure for continued economic growth and resource extraction associated with development; and
- b. Interest in protecting intact natural systems that contribute to making this planet habitable.

The Plan offers a balanced approach that transitions commercial industrial designated lands to a new designation that supports ecological protection and regenerative development. This approach leaves future Highlands Councils with some ability for adjustment as the severity of the climate emergency, and the values and costs of reforestation and ecological recovery become clearer.

A major limitation of immediately shifting to protecting natural systems and limiting development is the uncertainty surrounding future government support to incentivize ecological recovery, making land use decisions difficult.



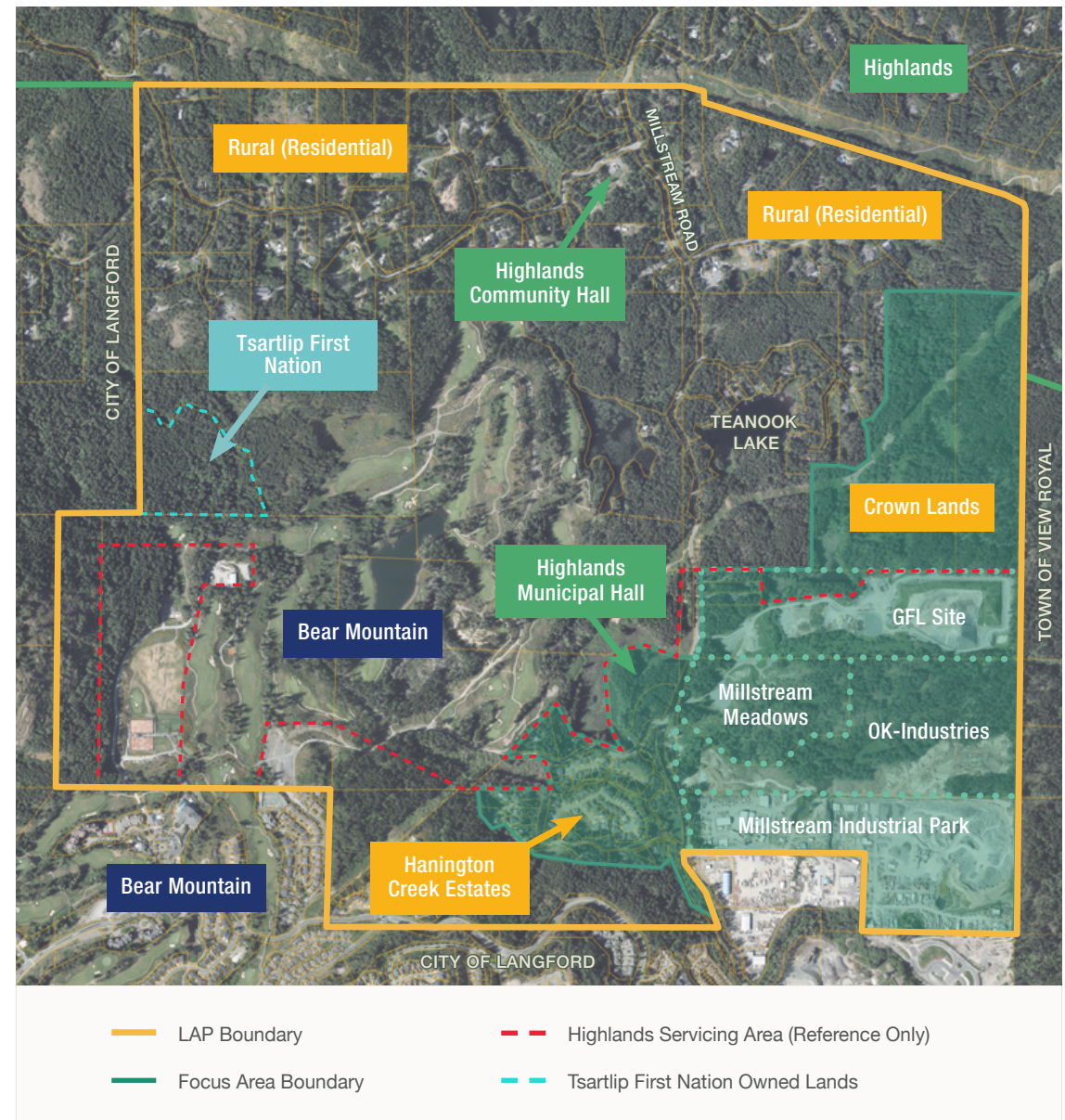
1.3 AREA CONTEXT

1.3.1 Plan Area

The Plan Area is outlined on the right, and shows both an LAP Boundary (i.e., the study area or LAP Area) and an LAP Focus Area (i.e., the area of emphasis).

Outside of the Focus Area, the study area primarily consists of rural residential properties, the Bear Mountain Golf Course and Ecoasis development areas, and community uses and amenities (e.g., community hall), as well as a large property owned by Tsartlip First Nation. The Focus Area primarily consists of industrial/commercial lands (in terms of active uses and/or current policy direction), Hanington Creek Estates, and two large parcels owned by the Province. The Focus Area was emphasized throughout the SHLAP process.

STUDY AREA MAP





1.3.2 History

FIRST NATIONS

The District of Highlands lies within the traditional territory of the WSANEC (specifically Tsartlip and Malahat Nations) and, to a lesser extent, Lekwungen peoples, who both have a rich cultural and spiritual connection to the lands that are now known as the Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands, and the surrounding sea, extending back in time over thousands of years.

Today, the Highlands is within closest proximity to the WJOŁEŁP or Tsartlip First Nation, which have a strong, distinct sense of community and culture.

EARLY SETTLERS

In 1852, the Douglas Treaty with the WSANEC peoples specified that hunting and gathering could be carried out in traditional areas on “unoccupied” lands. The Highlands quickly became “occupied” and supplanted First Nation use of the area. By the 1880’s the Highland Land District had surveyed properties, generally 160 acres, and these lands were made available to early settlers. Many of these early settlers left their mark on the Highlands today in the form of place names.

INCORPORATION & RURAL VISION

From the 1940’s, parts of the South Highlands has seen unregulated and regulated disposal of various liquid and solid waste materials. During the 1980’s, parts of the South Highlands were considered for possible urban settlement.



The Highlands was incorporated as a District municipality in 1993. Shortly after, the District completed its first OCP in 1997 – and its first policy goal was to protect the natural environment. This resulted in large rural lot sizes and the creation of large parks and conservation areas. Today, Highlands remains one of the least developed areas of the Greater Victoria Region.

1.3.3 Development Context

OK INDUSTRIES / MILLSTREAM MEADOWS

OK Industries and Millstream Meadows (owned by the Capital Regional District) make up a majority of the Focus Area. A joint rezoning application in 2015 (not approved) and mines permit application by OK Industries in 2017 (and approval in 2020) has resulted in substantial uncertainty in the community with regard to future development and land use. This recent history is the primary catalyst for this LAP and directs the Focus Area to the southeast portion of the District.

BEAR MOUNTAIN

The Bear Mountain Golf Course and development area makes up a significant portion of the LAP Area. Future development of this area is controlled by a combination of Highlands OCP, Zoning Bylaw, and a legal development agreement. As a result, this portion of the LAP area has been excluded from the Focus Area, despite its relative prominence.

1.3.4 Policy Context

The SHLAP is intended to identify and inform potential future amendments to existing policy (e.g., Highlands Official Community Plan).

EXISTING OCP LAND USE

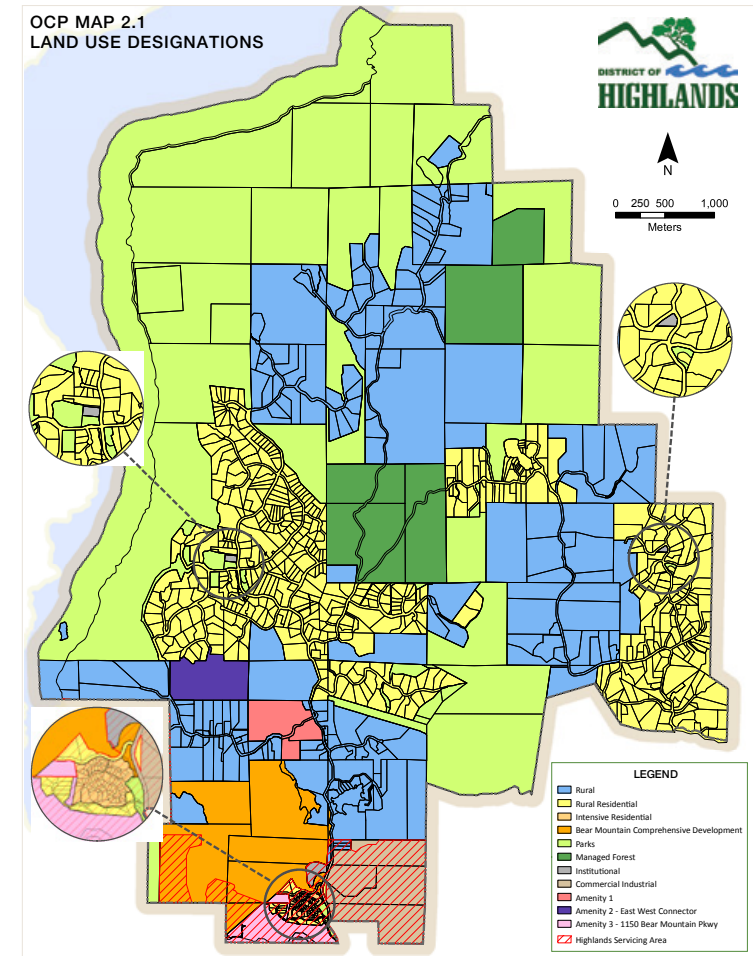
The OCP states that the opportunity to live near nature and enjoy a rural lifestyle is highly valued in the Highlands. This is seen in the large lot sizes, expansive natural areas, and balance of agricultural and forestry uses typical of rural communities. Public engagement over the past decade strongly demonstrates that people have chosen a rural lifestyle and wish to see this choice available to future residents. As such, residents expect a land use policy framework that responds to this vision and respects the needs of a rural lifestyle.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN: KEY DIRECTIONS

Key guiding policies, currently in the OCP, include the following:

- » The Highlands Vision describes a primarily residential community, rural in nature, that will strive to diversify its economy while preserving its natural systems.
- » The Highlands will provide for an adequate tax base, including light industrial, related commercial and nature-related recreational uses in some areas of the Highlands in order to support basic, affordable, municipal services and facilities.
- » Generally, the District encourages all buildings to leave a small footprint on the landscape and be built with energy efficient standards that represent industry best practices.
- » The District will provide sufficient park lands and trails for its community and work to protect and conserve local ecosystems.
- » For Commercial Industrial Land Use (in the Focus Area), which may be subjected to amendments:
 - » The Highlands Commercial-Industrial Gateway Area should be redeveloped with a range of light industrial and service commercial uses including green-economy based industries that are more consistent with the character of the Highlands.
 - » Landowners are encouraged to coordinate their business operations, land planning and servicing, which should be placed underground.
 - » Landscaping and screening of existing native vegetation will be maintained on any borders of the area and adjacent uses to prevent visual and noise intrusion of commercial and industrial uses.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (OCP) MAP



See the OCP Map 2.1 for a full version of the OCP Land Use Map.



INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY PLAN: KEY DIRECTIONS

An Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) is a framework that helps guide the community toward its articulated vision of a successful and sustainable future.

Key guiding principles include the following:

- » **Intergenerational equity** - providing future generations with the same environmental potential as presently exists
- » **Decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation** - managing economic growth to be less resource intensive and less polluting
- » **Integration** - integrating environmental, social and economic sectors when developing sustainability policies
- » **Ensuring environmental adaptability and resilience** - maintaining and enhancing the adaptive capacity of the environmental system
- » **Preventing irreversible long-term damage** - to ecosystems and human health
- » **Ensuring distributional equity** - avoiding unfair or high environmental costs on vulnerable populations
- » **Accepting global responsibility** - and assuming responsibility for environmental effects that occur outside areas of jurisdiction
- » **Education and grassroots involvement** - people and communities investigating problems and developing new solutions



HIGHLANDS PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION: KEY DIRECTIONS

The District of Highlands has three master plans guiding parks, recreation, and trail development including the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Trails Master Plan, and the Roadside Trail and Cycle Network Master Plan.

Key guiding directions include the following:

- » The Master Plans envisage a system of parks, protected areas, trails, and facilities that will provide recreation opportunities for the residents of the Highlands and Capital Region.
- » Continue to place a high priority on the conservation of the natural ecosystems of the Highlands in parks and other conservation areas.
- » Encourage recreational activities that do not compromise the integrity of the natural environment.
- » To take advantage of opportunities to add to the municipal parks and trail systems.

1.4 PROJECT PROCESS

The Project process was rooted in a community-driven approach to developing the final Plan.

The adjacent timeline illustrates this process – the core of which was the community consultation. In addition to these steps, the Project Team worked collaboratively and iteratively with District staff to refine the Project. Key stakeholders were directly engaged to provide input, including the Highlands Council, the Capital Regional District, and landowners within the Plan Area.

The majority of the SHLAP process was undertaken during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This posed numerous challenges to engagement, and, in response, the consultation process was adapted to heavily rely upon digital tools.

The final SHLAP was directly informed by the outcomes of the engagement process along with contemporary best practices, neighbourhood planning principles, consultant analyses, and staff input.

1.4.1 CONSULTATION

As seen in the adjacent diagram, the SHLAP Project process engaged a cross-section of the Highlands public including a Task Force, Stakeholders, and general public. The SHLAP Task Force played a key role in the development of the Plan.

TASK FORCE

A Task Force made of residents and landowners and was established to guide the development of the Plan, and provide input at key stages. The conduct of Task Force meetings was in general compliance with Council Procedure Bylaw No. 251. Over the course of the planning process, twelve Task Force Meetings were held from February 2020 to May 2022.

Task Force voting members, selected by Council, were based on a process that sought to achieve a broad range of views. Non-voting members were made up of Council representatives, District of Highlands planning staff, and Project consultants.



BACKGROUND ANALYSIS | UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

July-Aug 2020 - Project Team

Technical analysis of existing conditions to better understand the LAP context and identify key challenges and opportunities. Outcomes will inform the content of the subsequent consultation events.



IDEAS FAIR | VISIONING & ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

September 2020 - Public

An interactive consultation event to harvest public feedback and generate high-level directions and big ideas for the future of South Highlands.



POP-UPS & SURVEY | HARVESTING FEEDBACK

September-October 2020 - Public

Pop-up events (or alternative digital events), along with a widely-circulated survey, extended the reach of the Ideas Fair to the wider community. Directions from the public helped form the base for discussions during the Stakeholder Workshop.



STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP | GENERATING DIRECTIONS

November 2020 - Stakeholders

An interactive workshop helped to refine high-level directions into possible land use scenarios for the South Highlands. A set of key elements and scenarios was developed for use in the Early Directions Survey.



EARLY DIRECTIONS SURVEY | REFINING DIRECTIONS

Fall 2021 - Public

A second large public online event allowed residents to share feedback and comment on the early LAP directions generated from the workshop and Ideas Fair. A digital survey extended the reach of the gallery within the community. Further consultation with District Council also helped to inform and refine directions.



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT | REVIEWING THE DRAFT

Summer 2022 - Public

Once a draft LAP is developed, an online consultation is facilitated to give the public opportunity to comment on and discuss the draft Plan prior to the final round of revisions.



COUNCIL PRESENTATION

February 2023 - Public

The final SHLAP will be presented to Council at a public meeting.

2. PLANNING & DESIGN FOUNDATIONS

Throughout the Project process, the community provided input on the future vision of the area, as well as the core values and principles that should guide public and private investment.

2.1 THE 2050 VISION

South Highlands is a primarily rural residential community set within healthy forest ecosystems. Those who live in South Highlands highly value the natural environment and rural lifestyle. We are actively involved in the community and work with our neighbours to achieve common goals.

After many years of environmental stress on the landscape, the Gateway Area is a model of regenerative development. Some areas have been restored and managed through re-wilding and community-based climate action. And, other areas are regenerative economic hubs that strive to prioritize ecological health, while integrating with the rural nature of the area.

As stewards of the natural environment, we continue to protect the land and water to ensure its health and integrity for future generations. As community members, we continue to steward and establish open spaces, connected trails, and outdoor recreation amenities, while seeking other opportunities – such as alternative forms of housing – to support the needs of our community.



WHAT IS REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT?

A key term used in the 2050 Vision and policies of this document is Regenerative Development.

The term “development” generally refers to the use of resources (e.g., land development, agriculture) to improve the wellbeing of a society.

Regenerative Development is a development paradigm that seeks to push beyond sustainable development. While sustainable development focuses on development that protects the ability of future generations to develop and use resources, **regenerative development focuses on** the use of holistic processes to create feedback loops between manufactured, financial, social, human, and natural capitals that are mutually supportive, increasing the capacity of the underlying systems of each capital.

2.2 GOALS

The Plan Goals are the high-level outcomes that the SHLAP policies should seek to achieve in order to move toward the 2050 vision.



**BUILD COMMUNITY AND CELEBRATE
OUR RURAL LIFESTYLE**



**PROTECT WATERSHED AND
AQUIFER HEALTH**



**STRENGTHEN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH,
INTEGRITY, AND CONSERVATION**

2.3 PRINCIPLES

The Plan Principles are the guiding rules to follow in order to achieve the Project goals and vision.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Prioritize ecological health and integrity through environmental protection, restoration, and management.



SUSTAINABLE SITES

Ensure that the use of land, including the design of buildings, utilizes the latest strategies for reducing impacts on ecological systems, including stormwater management, energy efficiency buildings, renewable energy generation, and use of sustainable materials.



NET ZERO & NET POSITIVE

Seek land use outcomes that are “net zero” or “net positive” based on the full accounting of environmental, social, and economic impacts – i.e., they provide more benefit than cost.



SYSTEMS THINKING

Respect and seek to account for the connections between different complex systems around us, especially the nested environmental, social, and economic systems that relate to land use decisions.



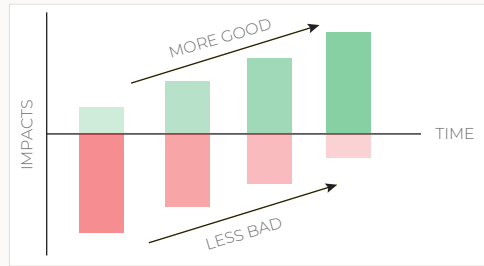
REGENERATIVE LAND STEWARDSHIP

Adhere to a stewardship approach to land management, in which the health of the land and community are paramount – rather than a paradigm of urban development and growth.

NET ZERO AND NET POSITIVE

According to the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To pursue sustainability through land use is to create and maintain conditions in which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony.

The terms net zero and net positive are used in this Plan to provide an aspirational framework for sustainable land use in the District, in which the outcomes of land use provide equal or greater benefits than costs to current environmental, social, and economic conditions. Overall, the framework seeks “more good” outcomes over time.



Net zero and net positive are typically evaluated in terms of energy use or carbon emissions; however, in this Plan, these terms will be considered across multiple environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Net zero actions should seek to reduce all impacts (e.g., emissions) to zero but need to balance positive and negative outcomes (e.g., emitting carbon through on-site operations while capturing carbon through on-site re-greening). Similarly, net positive actions must have greater positive than negative outcomes. This framework should be viewed in tandem with the ICSP.

Assessing net zero and net positive land use outcomes relies on definitions of environmental, social, and economic sustainability as outlined below.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Living within the means of natural systems and resources. Achieving environmental sustainability means that consumption of natural resources (e.g., materials, energy fuels, land, water) happens at a sustainable rate (i.e., more gains than losses). Humans play a crucial role in protecting, regenerating, or interacting with ecosystems over time.

SOCIAL

The ability of a community or organization to persistently achieve a high standard of social well being. Achieving social sustainability means that the social needs of people in a community or organization are met, upheld, and maintained over time.

ECONOMIC

A community or organization using its resources efficiently and responsibly so that it can function while meeting collective and individual needs. Without meeting its needs, an organization cannot sustain its activities. Without acting responsibly, an organization will not be able to meet its members’ needs or sustain its activities over time.

Baseline

In this plan, the baseline for assessing net zero and net positive outcomes will be determined by the council at the time of rezoning.

Net Zero

To achieve net zero, land use outcomes must balance benefits and gains (relative to costs and impacts) across environmental, social, and economic conditions in comparison to baseline conditions.



Net Positive

To achieve net positive, land use outcomes must provide benefits and gains (relative to costs and impacts) to each environmental, social, and economic conditions in comparison to baseline conditions.



3. LAND USE

This section provides detailed land use policies that serve to guide future decision-making regarding development and environmental stewardship in the Plan Area.

The following principles and policies prioritize protection and restoration of the natural environment, while allowing for some low-impact and regenerative development. These policies should also be viewed in tandem with other District policies including the OCP and Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

3.1 LAND USE PRINCIPLES

The land use principles are the guiding rules to follow in order to achieve the Project goals and vision.



RESPOND TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Respond to the climate emergency by prioritizing environmental values (i.e., over economic values) and being open to innovative and emerging land uses and perspectives.



ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & RESTORATION

Maximize ecological health through land stewardship, regenerative practices, and contained development.



TRANSITION TO REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Foster regenerative development through, for example, high performance buildings, sustainable site design, and/or innovative on-site activities and programming (e.g., waste management).

3.2 GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

3.2.1 Administration

1. The land use designations and accompanying policies of this section should inform all development application decisions in the Plan area. The land use boundaries and land uses established may be adjusted to account for unique circumstances, adaptability over time, and flexibility of implementation, so long as the intent of the policy is achieved and is consistent with the foundations, goals, principles, and policies of this Plan.
2. The District may amend OCP policies and Development Permit Area guidelines to be consistent with this Plan, including Chapter 2 Land Use and DPA 4 Highlands Commercial/Industrial Gateway Area.
3. The District may create a net zero and net positive evaluation/assessment tool.
4. In assessing land use applications, the District should prioritize the three pillars of sustainability in the following order:
 - a. Outcomes that move environmental conditions toward greater health and resilience.
 - b. Outcomes that move social and community conditions toward greater well-being and resilience.
 - c. Outcomes that move economic conditions toward greater prosperity and resilience.
5. Where a policy requires submission of studies, analysis, or other information, the District may determine the requirements and timing of the studies, analysis, or information.
6. At the time of Zoning amendment and Development Permit application, applicants may be asked to provide the following:
 - a. Detailed Landscape Plan.
 - b. Integrated Stormwater Management Plan.
 - c. Transportation Plan.

The SHLAP refers to “land use” as well as land use “activities” and “programming”.

WHAT IS LAND USE?

Land Use is the term used to describe the planned (i.e., policy) or regulated (i.e., zoning) human uses of a property. Land use tends to refer to the high-level uses (e.g., residential, commercial, parks, institutional) or more specific permitted uses (e.g., office, warehousing, single family dwelling).

WHAT ARE LAND USE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMING?

In this Plan, land use “activities” and “programming” are terms used to describe the site-specific activities, systems, and programs occurring on a particular property as part of its permitted land use.

For example, an industrial site may have specific uses, such as manufacturing and warehousing of widgets, along with onsite activities and programming, such as waste management and water systems, energy systems, recreational trails, agricultural activities, and transportation programs.

On-site activities and programming are key factors in assessing the sustainability of a particular site or land use.

3.2.2 Infrastructure

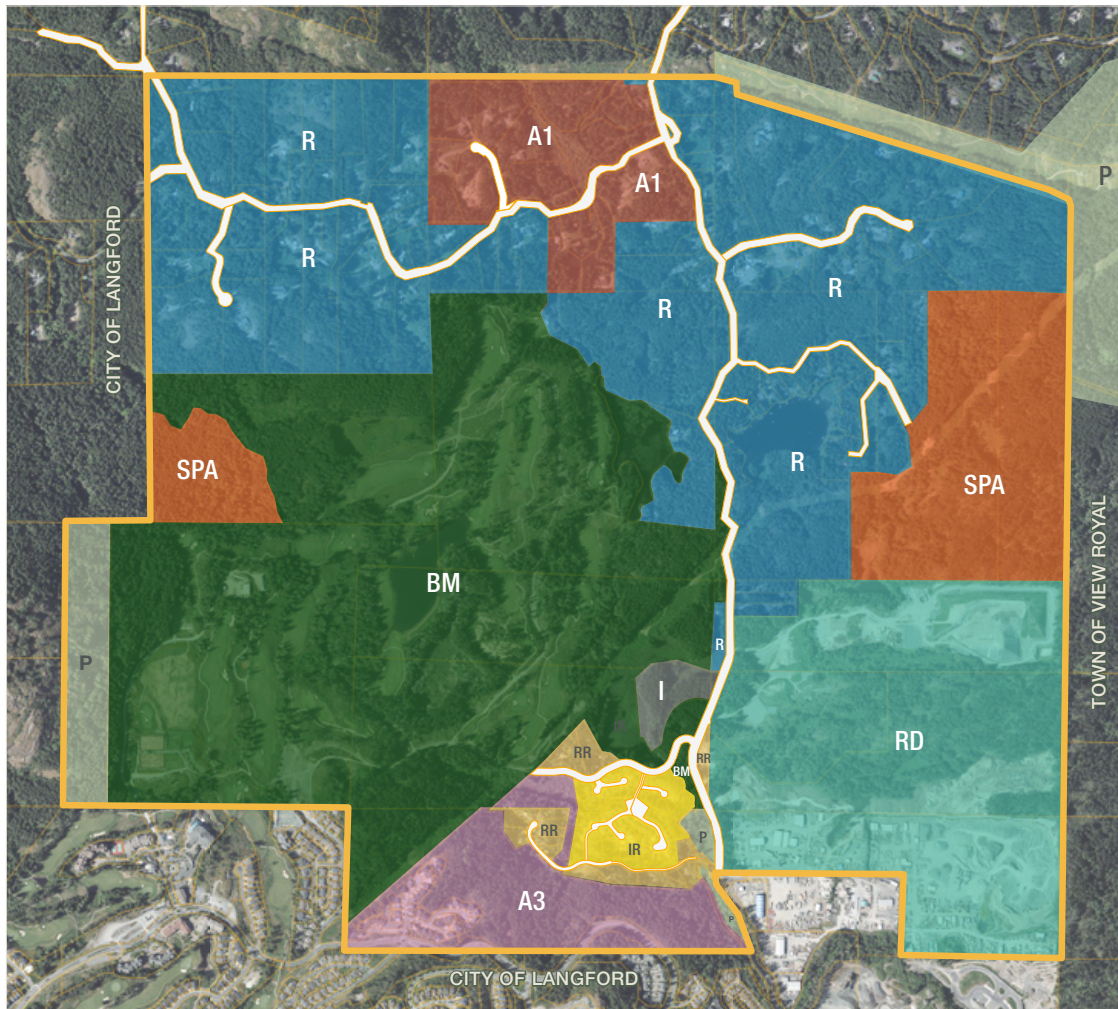
1. The District will not support any expansion to the Highlands Servicing Boundary.

3.2.3 Community Amenity Contributions

1. During zoning amendment process, the District may negotiate with all applicants for the provision of Community Amenity Contributions (“amenity contributions”) according to the District’s Amenity Rezoning Considerations Policy.
2. The District may update the District’s Amenity Zoning Considerations Policy with the guidelines below to provide better direction for negotiating community amenity contributions:
 - a. The provision of semi-public open spaces may be considered an amenity only where a legal arrangement has been established on title to preserve public access.
 - b. The provision of parkland beyond the statutory requirement (5% dedication) during subdivision may be considered an amenity.
 - c. The provision of public art may be considered within public or private space may be considered an acceptable component of an amenities package, with approval from the District and a binding agreement that includes provisions to ensure the long-term maintenance or replacement of the artwork.
 - d. Other amenities that might be considered acceptable include but are not limited to functioning natural habitats, landscape-based stormwater and wastewater management, affordable housing units, and childcare facilities.
 - e. Amenities provided off-site should not be considered as environmental offsets to on-site impacts and outcomes.



3.3 LAND USE MAP



RD - Regenerative Development

- » Prioritize environmental restoration through redevelopment
- » Support regenerative uses, activities, and on-site programming
- » Value and account for ecosystem services
- » Seek innovative & emerging opportunities for stewardship and climate action
- » Secure community amenities and benefits

SPA - Special Plan Area

- » Require dedicated future site-specific planning process

A1 - Amenity 1

- » Maintain OCP policies and encourage further community uses

R - Rural

- » Maintain OCP Policies

RR - Rural Residential

- » Maintain OCP Policies

BM - Bear Mountain

- » Maintain OCP policies

P - Parks

- » Maintain OCP policies

I - Institutional

- » Maintain OCP policies

IR - Intensive Residential

- » Maintain OCP policies

A3 - Amenity 3

- » Maintain OCP policies

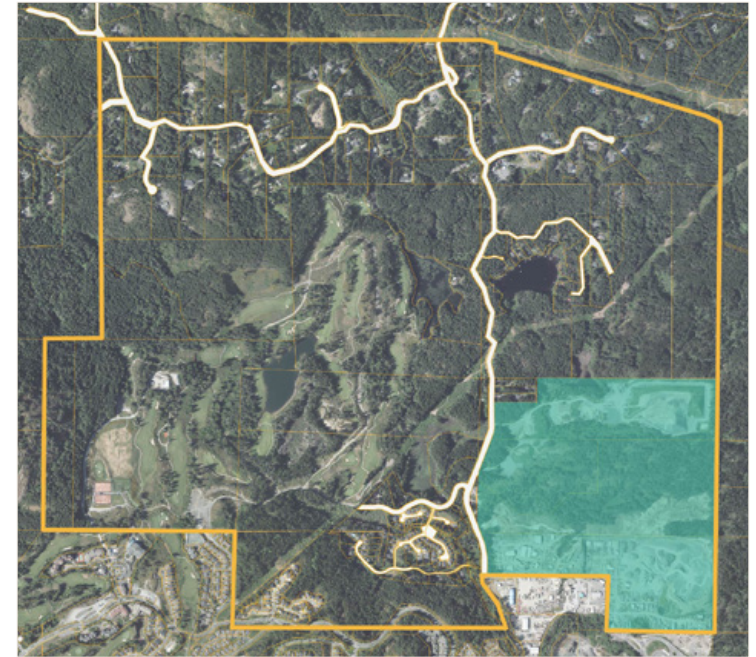
3.4 LAND USE POLICIES

3.4.1 RD - Regenerative Development

The Regenerative Development designation is intended to prioritize responding to the climate emergency through net positive land use outcomes. This can be done through environmental restoration, regenerative uses and activities, accounting for ecosystem services, accommodating innovative and emerging solutions, and securing community amenities and benefits.

3.4.1.1 POLICIES

1. Support a variety of land uses and on-site activities that:
 - a. Achieve net positive outcomes (see section 2.3. for definition).
 - b. Achieve site restoration including re-wilding of features or areas on a site.
2. All new developments should:
 - a. Incorporate high performance and healthy buildings standards to improve energy efficiency and occupant well-being (see section 3.6. Regenerative Design Gallery for examples).
 - b. Adhere to sustainable site design best practices, including the incorporation of 'green' infrastructure to manage stormwater and enhance environmental values (e.g., water quality, habitat).
 - c. Retain and enrich on-site biodiversity by proactively responding to the shifting needs of a natural, healthy environment and changing climate.
 - d. Reduce development impacts on the natural environment by ensuring that potential adverse effects of on-site activities are avoided or offset by regenerative activities.
 - e. Have on-site activities and programming that promote resource efficiency and circular economy practices that combine economic growth, social responsibility, and environmental protection (e.g., circular waste management).
3. The District may develop new design guidelines and identify necessary development permit area guideline amendments.
4. Appreciate the beneficial role of the natural environment on the community's general well-being and foster active participation in its guardianship for future generations.
5. As part of a zoning amendment application, the District may require an Environmental Stewardship Plan to address topics such as (but not limited to):
 - a. Invasive species management.
 - b. Stormwater and surface water management.
 - c. Tree canopy coverage.
 - d. Habitat and environmental restoration.



RD - Regenerative Development

- » Prioritize environmental restoration through redevelopment
- » Support regenerative uses, activities, and on-site programming
- » Value and account for ecosystem services
- » Seek innovative & emerging opportunities for stewardship and climate action
- » Secure community amenities and benefits





CASE STUDY - FINLAND REWILDING AFTER MINING¹

The Finnish community of Selkie is leading the rewilding of rivers, lakes and carbon-rich peatlands damaged by mining.

North Karelia, located in Eastern Finland, has been the traditional homeland of the Sámi, Karelian and Savo-Karelian peoples. The people of North Karelia have enjoyed a deep and rich connection with nature through the ages. Seasonal hunting, fishing, gathering activities and, in more recent times, small-scale agriculture, have formed the basis of life in a region rich in boreal forest, lakes, rivers and marsh-mires.

North Karelia has also been a central location in recent Finnish mining history for both peat and minerals, suffering major impacts as a result.

Finland emerged as a 'land of opportunity' for international and domestic mining in the 2010s, due to the legal reforms encouraging mining company access and investment, the downscaling of independent environmental authorities and a lack of existing social and legal rights of local communities.

The trend of increasing ease of access to mineral resources is expected to intensify in future as geopolitical interest in the boreal and Arctic peripheries grows. These regions contain much of the planet's untapped mineral wealth.

In response to these new realities, Finland and North Karelia have seen the emergence of local and global actions challenging this new wave of extractivism.

This resistance has yielded early victories, for example in the village of Selkie, where the community has succeeded in restoring a whole river catchment area to health after it was damaged by peat mining and ditching for industrial forestry.

Through a restoration program bringing together traditional knowledge and science, the area has enjoyed a dramatic and rapid return to health. It has quickly become a highly regarded wetland habitat for rare birds and mammals, including sandpipers, northern pintails and wolverines.

The benefits of co-management and restoration go far beyond these measurable environmental outcomes. The development of the co-management council has changed how local-traditional knowledge is recognized and valued.

Beyond North Karelia, the successes of the Linnunsuo and Jukajoki restorations to-date has stimulated a national program of landscape rewilding in Finland to alleviate the damage caused to Finnish marsh-mires and wetlands by extractive activities.

As of February 2019, the areas under restoration totalled more than 600 hectares in area. In time, these sites will emerge as Indigenous and local community conserved areas, managed and cared for by communities like Selkie.

¹ <https://theecologist.org/2019/dec/16/rewilding-finland-after-mining>



CASE STUDY - DORNEY POCKET REWILDING VISION²

The Berkshire village of Dorney lies north of the River Thames, to the southeast of Slough and northwest of Windsor. The village was founded on low gravel islands, surrounded by alluvium, on the historic Thames floodplain. The Dorney Boreholes draw water from the gravel, which is then piped to the Dorney Water Treatment Works. The areas around Dorney were traditionally managed as grazing and hay meadows. Without intervention, the site will revert to dense, low biodiversity scrub within 10 to 15 years.

A plan was developed to produce a “pocket rewilding” vision and management plan for the 22-hectare site which had been grazed by horses until 2015. Grounded in rewilding principles, and inspired by site visits, conversations with local stakeholders and drone imagery, the vision and plans seek to “steer” natural processes to create a rich and dynamic rewilding area that can act as a role model for recovering nature on smaller areas of land. Realization of the vision will also lead to the creation of a precious natural asset for the local community.

The Dorney rewilding vision proposes an innovative, three-phase pocket rewilding process. This would lead to a dynamic and diverse area of groves, meadows and bushy thickets and thereby provide an array of microhabitats for wildlife.

Phases one and two would involve “resetting” natural processes – “pushing” areas where the development of scrub is sparse back towards meadow and “steering” areas where scrub is forming – with additional planting designs – towards the establishment of thickets, copse and oak groves.

The Dorney rewilding vision will not only benefit wild nature, but also the local community and visitors. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important it is that we maintain our connection with nature, which helps to promote both mental and physical health. As the Dorney site becomes progressively wilder it will support an ever-growing range of activities, enhancing wellbeing and generating a sense of place and social cohesion; the mosaic of meadows and thickets will enable informal wandering and relaxation, areas of vegetation will emerge that will be ideal for school and/or therapeutic activities, orchards and berry-generating bushes will support foraging for seasonal activities such as jam and Christmas wreath-making, and the ever-changing nature of the site will create a wonderful asset for nature photography and recording.

² <https://ecosulis.co.uk/case-studies/dorney-pocket-rewilding-vision-for-thames-water/>

3.4.2 SPA - Special Plan Area

The Special Plan Area designation is intended to require a future site-specific planning process.

3.4.2.1 GENERAL POLICIES

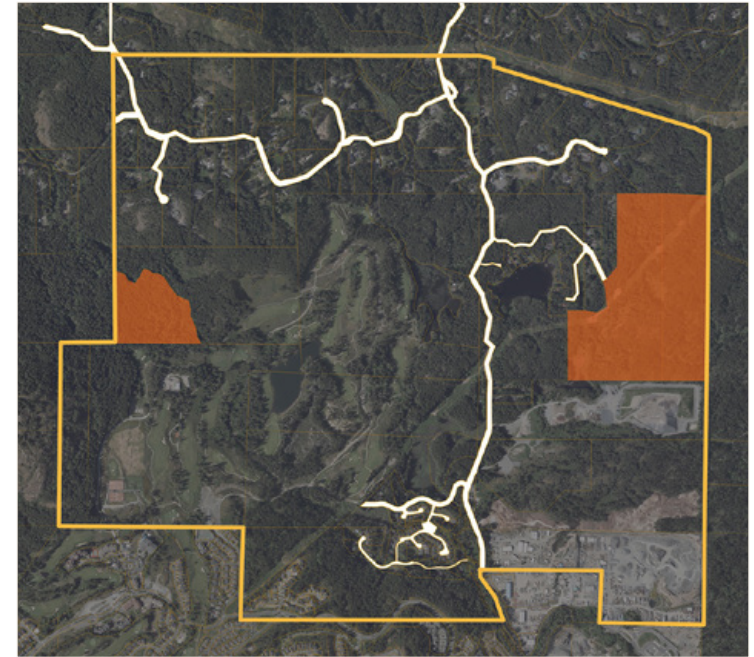
1. Special Plan Area sites require a future, site-specific process to develop a Special Area Plan to establish the future vision, land use, and other relevant directions for these sites.
2. Future Special Area Plans should be consistent with the vision, direction, and policies of this Plan.

3.4.2.2 TSARTLIP SPA POLICIES

1. The Tsartlip SPA process should involve intensive consultation and collaboration with Tsartlip First Nation.
2. The Tsartlip SPA should seek to meaningfully support Tsartlip in its community goals and the process should be undertaken in the spirit of reconciliation.

3.4.2.3 CROWN LANDS SPA POLICIES

1. The Crown Lands SPA process should involve intensive consultation with the landowners of the SPA lands and engagement with the wider Highlands community.
2. The Crown Lands SPA should give consideration for conservation lands and community housing (e.g., housing for residents that actively contribute to the Highlands community). See section 3.5 Housing for more information.



SPA - Special Plan Area

- » Require dedicated future site-specific planning process
- » Support plans consistent with the vision, goals, and principles of the SHLAP

3.4.3 R - Rural

3.4.3.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Rural should maintain all OCP policies.
2. Amend OCP to designate Tsartlip and Crown Lands as SPA.

3.4.4 RR - Rural Residential

3.4.4.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Rural Residential should maintain all OCP policies.

3.4.5 IR - Intensive Residential

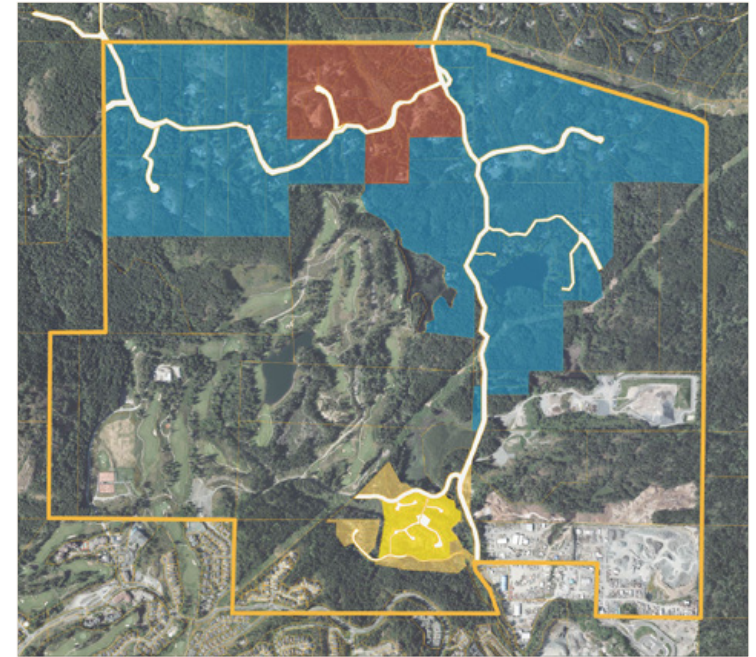
3.4.5.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Intensive Residential should maintain all OCP policies.

3.4.6 A1 - Amenity 1

3.4.6.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Amenity 1 should maintain all OCP policies and objectives to:
 - a. Provide appropriate amenities that offset negative impacts of development.
 - b. Further municipal policies as described in the OCP.
 - c. Assist integrating any development into the community.
2. The District may consider the addition of new community and institutional uses, such as:
 - a. Community and recreational spaces (both indoor and outdoor).
 - b. Municipal facilities (e.g., municipal hall, fire hall).
 - c. Community housing. See section 3.5 Housing for more detail.



A1 - Amenity 1

- » Maintain OCP policies and consider further community uses

R - Rural

- » Maintain OCP Policies
- » Amend OCP to designate Tsartlip and Crown Lands as SPA

RR - Rural Residential

- » Maintain OCP Policies

IR - Intensive Residential

- » Maintain OCP policies

3.4.7 BM - Bear Mountain

3.4.7.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Bear Mountain should maintain all OCP policies.

3.4.8 P - Parks

3.4.8.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Parks should maintain all OCP policies including:
 - a. Support the use of lands and waters for conservation and outdoor recreation.
 - b. Buildings that are ancillary and related to these uses are acceptable, provided they are sited to ensure that uses or other land alteration do not harm ecosystem function or eliminate the potential for public access and environmental protection.

3.4.9 Institutional

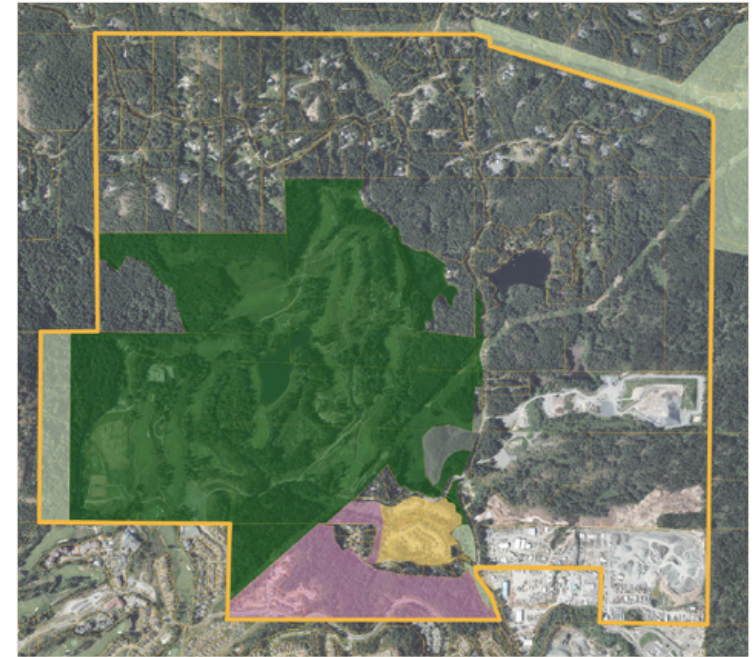
3.4.9.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Institutional should maintain OCP policies.

3.4.10 Amenity 3

3.4.10.1 GENERAL POLICIES

1. Lands designated as Amenity 3 should maintain all OCP policies.



BM - Bear Mountain

- » Maintain OCP policies

P - Parks

- » Maintain OCP policies

I - Institutional

- » Maintain OCP policies

A3 - Amenity 3

- » Maintain OCP policies

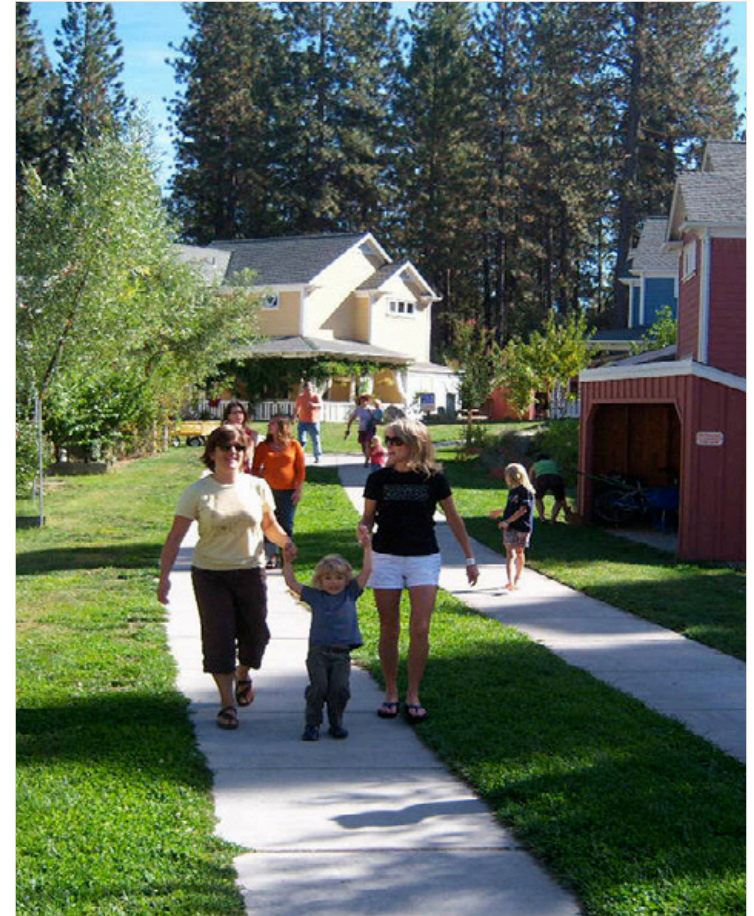
3.5 HOUSING POLICIES

3.5.1 General Policies

1. The District may develop a District Housing Policy that defines and seeks to identify and achieve community housing goals and objectives.
2. The inclusion of universally accessible and adaptable units in all new construction is strongly supported to support changing needs and demographics over time.

3.5.2 South Highlands Housing Policies

1. In reviewing land use applications and proposed Special Area Plans, the District may consider and give preference to:
 - a. Alternative and innovative forms of housing that meet community needs, such as non-market and co-operative housing for residents that are actively involved in the Highlands community.
 - b. A mix of housing types and tenures that accommodate a social mix, residents of all ages and abilities, changing demographics over time, and a range of income levels.
 - c. Partnerships with non-market housing providers that facilitate the creation of affordable/ community housing.
 - d. Opportunities for seniors housing and seniors supportive housing.
 - e. Housing that achieves net zero or net positive outcomes (e.g., zero emissions, conservation covenants, regeneration of impacted lands).



3.6 REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GALLERY

This gallery of aspirational images provides examples of model regenerative developments and illustrates the types of features that may be supportable in future land use proposals within the Plan area.



Outdoor space with garden/outdoor classroom provide cleansing gardens for adjacent buildings and pavement runoff.



Green roofs provide shade, remove heat from the air, and reduce temperatures of the roof surface and surrounding air.



Constructed wetlands provide aesthetic and educational benefits while they utilize remove contaminants and provide wildlife habitat.



Cisterns can store rainwater to be re-used for future landscape irrigation.



Green walls creates a natural feel and gives plants a place to thrive.



Bioswales reduce stormwater run-off.



Rain gardens have been shown to decrease the temperature of runoff from certain land uses, such as parking lots and roadways.



Porous asphalt paving reduces run-off in paving areas.



Green roofs store and utilize stormwater to reduce runoff from building sites.



Grates allow stormwater to pass through while allowing for pedestrian movements.



Structural grid paving reduces runoff in parking areas.



Trees and other vegetation can provide shade.



Curb cuts direct stormwater from street to landscape areas.



Landscape integration and natural systems reduce stormwater run-off significantly.



Facilities that support active transportation options for occupants reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

4. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

The rural character of the South Highlands is reflected in its transportation system with narrow winding roads found across the District. Pedestrian and cycling facilities are limited with the exception of trails. BC Transit service is also limited as the small population, limited destinations, and high vehicle dependency do not justify service.

With narrow winding roads, the principles and policies prioritize road safety as well as active transportation in response to Highlands' commitment to Climate Actions and reducing GHG emissions from private vehicles. These policies should also be viewed in tandem with other District policies including the OCP, ICSP, Trails Master Plan, Highlands Park & Recreation Master Plan and the Roadside Trail and Cycle Network Master Plan.

4.1 TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY PRINCIPLES



DESIGN FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & RECREATION

Enhance the safety, convenience, and connectivity of non-motorized travel and recreation.



PROVIDE SAFETY FOR ALL

Ensure the safety of all road users through road and intersection design, signage, and community action.



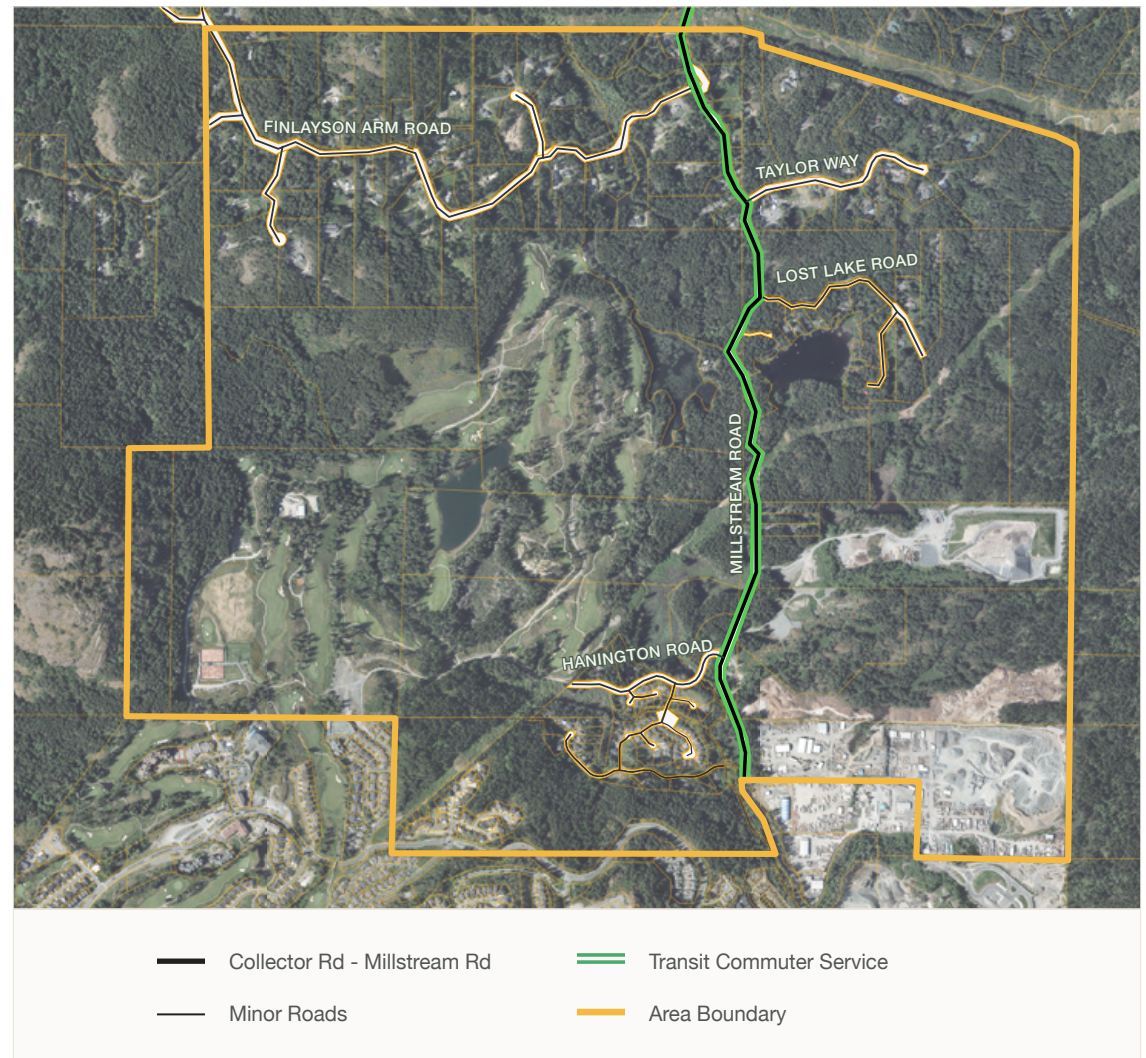
MITIGATE TRAFFIC IMPACTS

Maintain or create buffers and use traffic calming along major roadways to enhance safety, and mitigate noise, and visual impacts of vehicular traffic.

4.2 TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY POLICIES

1. Require applicants to provide a traffic impact assessment for all major developments at the earlier of the rezoning or development permit stage, within the Plan Area to the District's satisfaction.
2. Seek incremental improvements to the transportation network that improve safety and convenience for all road users, including signage, pavement markings, bollards, and new infrastructure.
3. Strongly consider temporary traffic interventions (e.g., traffic calming with bollards) as a way to assess the need and efficacy of larger capital improvement projects.
4. Improve short-term cycling safety with pavement markings (i.e., sharrows) in the shoulder and bicycle route signage.
5. Over time, develop multi-use trail connections (e.g., walking, cycling, equestrian) along or parallel to Millstream Road.
6. Over time, seek additional multi-use trail connections from Goldstream Park to Millstream Road and Thetis Lake Park.
7. Study and identify potential locations for traffic calming measures to combat speeding on Millstream Road and elsewhere.
8. Improve transportation network based on the activities in policies 6 & 7.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY MAP



5. OPEN SPACES, PARKS, & BUFFERS

The South Highlands open spaces and parks are dominated by rocky uplands and dense coastal forest. Nearby parks include Goldstream Provincial Park, Thetis Lake Regional Park, and Chow-Nicoll Park (Municipal) offer residents and regional visitors recreational opportunities.

The following principles and policies prioritize intact ecosystems, accessible experiences and the use of buffers to preserve community character. These policies should also be viewed in tandem with other District policies including the OCP, ICSP, Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Trails Master Plan, Craigflower Creek Watershed Plan, and the Millstream Watershed Management Plan.

5.1 OPEN SPACE PRINCIPLES



MAINTAIN INTACT ECOSYSTEMS

Maintain and responsibly manage a network of connected green spaces with rich biodiversity and minimized human impacts.



CREATE EXPERIENTIAL VALUE

Provide parks, open spaces, and outdoor recreational opportunities that can be accessed and experienced by community members.



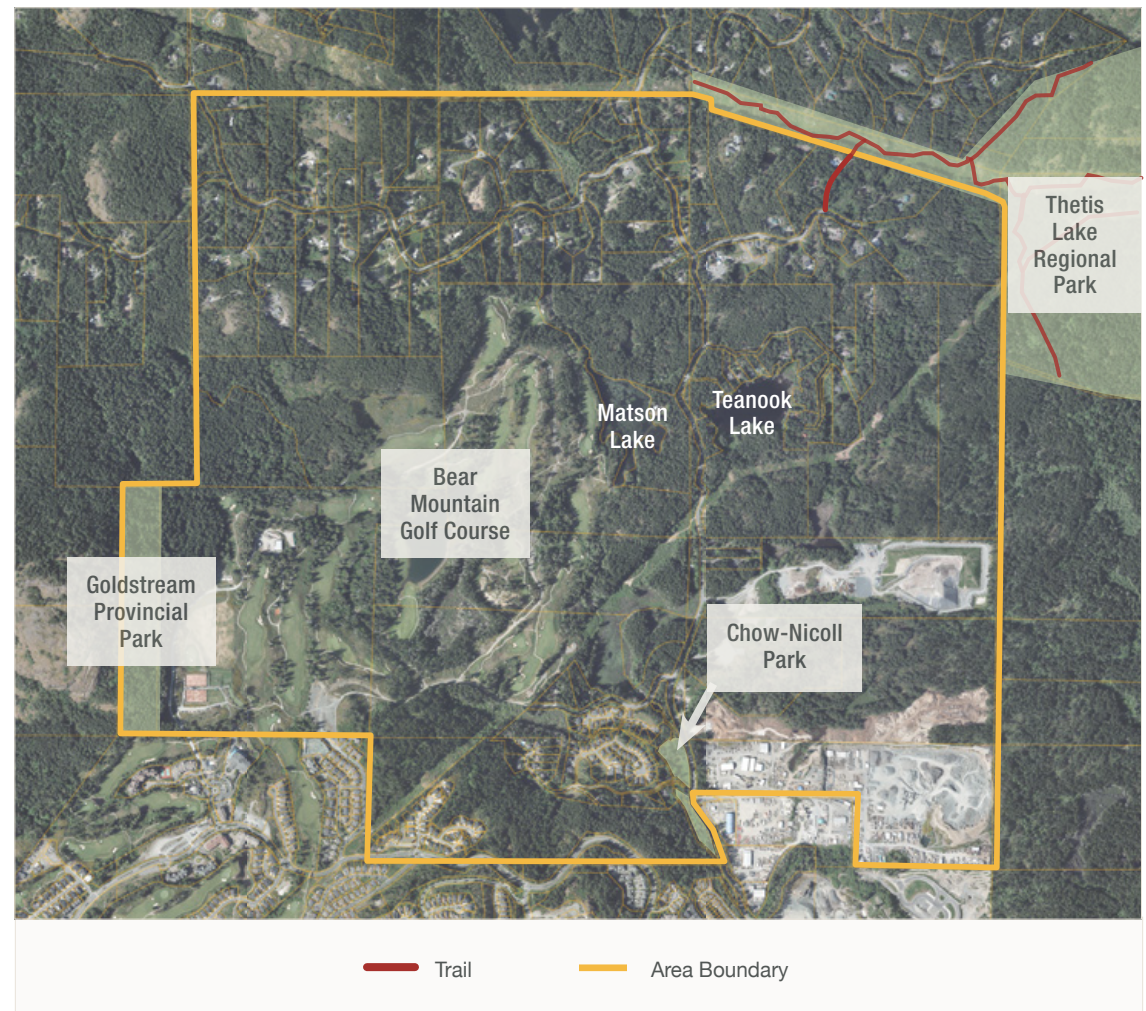
UTILIZE GREEN BUFFERS

Utilize buffer lands to mitigate land use impacts, preserve community character, and increase ecological and community connectivity.

5.2 OPEN SPACE POLICIES

1. Maintain the high priority on conservation of habitat, biodiversity, and ecosystems through green parks and other conservation opportunities, such as generous protection of riparian and other ecologically-sensitive areas through future land use approvals (e.g., covenants via subdivision or rezoning).
2. Enhance access and experiential opportunities in the parks and open space network for people of all ages and abilities, such as new trails, access points, programming, educational partnerships, and wayfinding.
3. Seek opportunities to increase trail connectivity within the public space network (e.g., parks, roads, and trails) for pedestrians, cyclists, and other users (e.g., equestrian), such as additional east-west connections into Goldstream and Thetis Lake parks.
4. Explore opportunities to integrate food production into the public space network through, for example, community gardens, permaculture demonstrations, and food forests.
5. Seek opportunities to expand and connect the open space network and habitat corridors through creative and alternative means – such as conservation subdivisions, naturalized buffers, and semi-private green spaces.

OPEN SPACES, PARKS & BUFFERS MAP



6. SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION

Sustainability and climate action in the District are primarily guided by the Highlands' OCP, ICSP, and Climate Leadership Plan. This section provides further principles and policies specific to South Highlands, including directions for valuing ecosystem services, increasing ecological integrity, and responding to climate change through climate action.

6.1 SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION PRINCIPLES



FULLY VALUE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES & ASSETS

Account for and prioritize ecosystems and 'green' infrastructure for their inherent benefits, 'services' to the community, and comprehensive values (e.g., environmental, social, economic).



STEWARD HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS & ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

Reduce environmental impact and increase carbon sequestration through protection of intact ecosystems and active restoration of impacted sites.



PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Integrate more efficient and sustainable transportation options, such as low-carbon vehicle technologies or improved active transportation.

6.2 SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION POLICIES

1. Maintain the current Highlands Servicing Area Boundary (no expansion).
2. Support investment in climate action and ecosystem service management as a means to support economic sustainability.
3. Reduce GHG emissions through low-impact and regenerative development, solid waste management, resource management, active transportation, and low-carbon transportation.
4. Encourage 'green' infrastructure – such as swales, rain gardens, and wetlands – to manage stormwater and enhance surface and groundwater quality.
5. District and community partners may seek ways to incentivize the preservation of habitat and tree canopy cover on private land.
6. The District may develop new site planning and design guidelines for the RD designation and identify necessary DPA guideline amendments.



7. PLACEMAKING & CULTURE

The placemaking and culture of the South Highlands should acknowledge and celebrate the recent history of the area, as well as its place within the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples. The future landscaping, site design, architecture, parks, trails and other elements (e.g., public art) can create a distinct sense of place in the South Highlands by embracing and celebrating these histories.

7.1 PLACEMAKING & CULTURE PRINCIPLES



RURAL CHARACTER

Ensure the Highland's rural character through land use, public space design, and limiting development.



SECLUSION & GATHERING

Respect residents' and visitors' abilities to enjoy nature while providing opportunities for social interaction, gathering, and diverse experiences.



HISTORY & HERITAGE

Celebrate the rich First Nations and settler history of the area through landscaping, architecture, other elements (e.g., public art), and programming and events (e.g., education, events).

7.2 PLACEMAKING & CULTURE POLICIES

1. Make landscaping and naturalized green spaces a focus in developments, public spaces, and view corridors throughout the Plan area.
2. Seek a rural, 'green' building aesthetic and well-defined sense of place in new development with a focus on the use of wood and other natural, locally-sourced materials, while considering fire interface guidelines.
3. Create opportunities for seclusion, social interaction, and gathering within public spaces.
4. Seek partnerships with Tsartlip and other First Nations in the creation of education, celebration, and community-building opportunities.
5. Seek partnerships with community groups and non-profit organizations to organize community-building activities and events, with a focus on connecting community members to each other and to the land.



8. IMPLEMENTATION

While this Plan provides a policy framework to guide future decisions in the area, key actions and next steps are necessary to fully realize the vision and concepts presented in this Plan.

This section provides an implementation strategy for on-going, short-term, and medium- to long-term actions – and links next steps with key policies found in this Plan. The actions outlined in this section act as a guide to the District and its partners in undertaking key planning priorities toward achieving the vision and goals of the SHLAP.

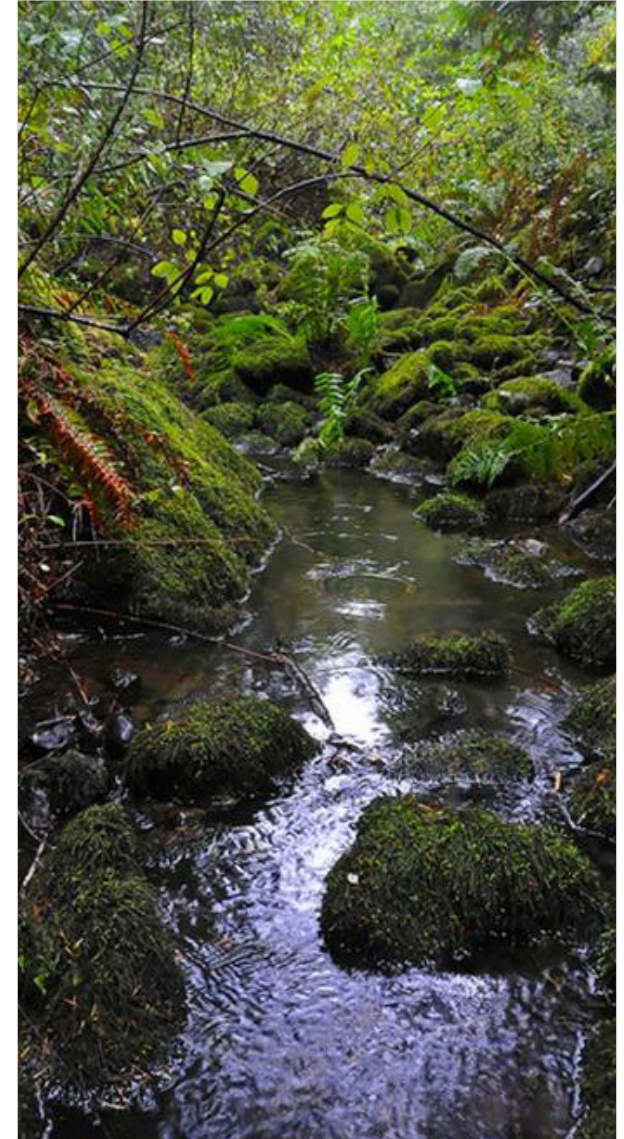
8.1 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

8.1.1 OVERVIEW

To realize this vision for generations to come, the District requires:

- a. A flexible yet coordinated approach to facilitating the vision.
- b. An interdepartmental willingness to go “outside the box” to create and achieve bold environmental and social outcomes.
- c. Collaboration with key partners – including the CRD, Province of BC, and the Tsartlip First Nation – to leverage win-win opportunities.
- d. Strong leadership to follow through on adoption of this Plan by allowing its policies to guide staff and Council decision-making with regard to development applications and capital investments in the area.

As the South Highlands evolves, this Plan – and specifically this section – should be revisited to reflect changing needs and priorities, as well as District budgeting and staffing resources.



8.1.2 ON-GOING ACTIONS

On-going Actions are actions that will be undertaken as opportunity and need arise.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	POLICY	ROLES
Amend the Zoning Bylaw	In response to new future land use applications, develop new site-specific Zoning Bylaw zones consistent with this Plan, for the gateway properties with RD designations, as well as SPA's.	» 3.2.1 Administration » 3.4.1 RD - Regenerative Development » 3.4.2. SPA - Special Plan Area	Highlands
Explore Food Production Opportunities	Explore opportunities to integrate food production into the public open space network through, for example, community gardens, permaculture demonstrations, and food forests.	» 5.3. Open Space Policies	Highlands

8.1.3 SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

Short-term Actions are high-priority or “low hanging” actions to be undertaken in the next 1-2 years.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	POLICY	ROLES
Update OCP to be consistent with policies from the SHLAP	Update the OCP to amend OCP policies and Development Permit Area guidelines to be consistent with this Plan, including Chapter 2 Land Use and DPA 4 Commercial Industrial Gateway.	» 3.2.1 Administration » 3.4.1 RD - Regenerative Development » 3.4.2. SPA - Special Plan Area	Highlands
Create a Net Zero and Net Positive Assessment Tool	Create a net zero and net positive assessment tool and better define outcomes and baseline conditions for land use applications.	» 3.2.1 Administration	Highlands
Create Site Planning and Design Guidelines	Develop new site planning and design guidelines for the RD designation and identify necessary DPA guideline amendments (e.g., DPA 4 and 6).	» 3.4.1 RD - Regenerative Development » 6.2. Sustainability & Climate Action Policies	Highlands
Update the District's <i>Amenity Zoning Consideration Policy</i>	Update the District's Amenity Zoning Consideration Policy with guidelines found in the SHLAP to better provide direction for negotiating community amenity contributions.	» 3.2.3. Community Amenity Contributions	Highlands
Develop a Housing Policy	Develop a Housing Policy that identifies and achieves District goals and objectives.	» 3.5. Housing Policies	Highlands
Improve short-term cycling safety	Improve short-term cycling safety with pavement markings (i.e., sharrows) in the shoulder and bicycle route signage.	» 4.4. Transportation & Mobility Policies	Highlands

8.1.4 MEDIUM - AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS

Medium- and Long-term Actions are lower priority actions or actions that require a long-term perspective to be undertaken in the next 3+ years.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	POLICY	ROLES
Develop multi-use trail connections	Incrementally develop multi-use trail connections (e.g., walking, cycling, equestrian) along or parallel to Millstream Road. Seek opportunities for additional multi-use trail connections from Goldstream Park to Millstream Road and Thetis Lake Park.	» 4.4. Transportation & Mobility Policies » 5.3. Open Space Policies	Highlands, CRD
Improve transportation network for safety and traffic calming (capital improvements)	Improve the transportation network that improve safety and convenience for all road users, as identified by the above action.	» 4.4. Transportation & Mobility Policies	Highlands