

## Memo: North Pritchard Neighbourhood

Thank you for your questions and comments regarding the potential for development North Pritchard Neighborhood. The Town has received several requests for information regarding this area. If your questions aren't answered in the information and Town website links provided below, please be sure to reach out to us again.

The map below illustrates the areas in question. It is important to note that the potential residential development is completely outside of the designated North East Woods Park and conservation areas.

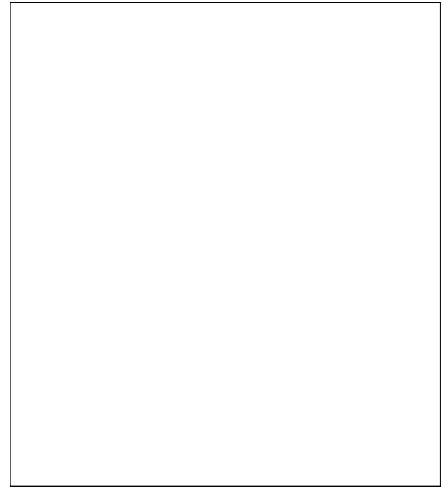
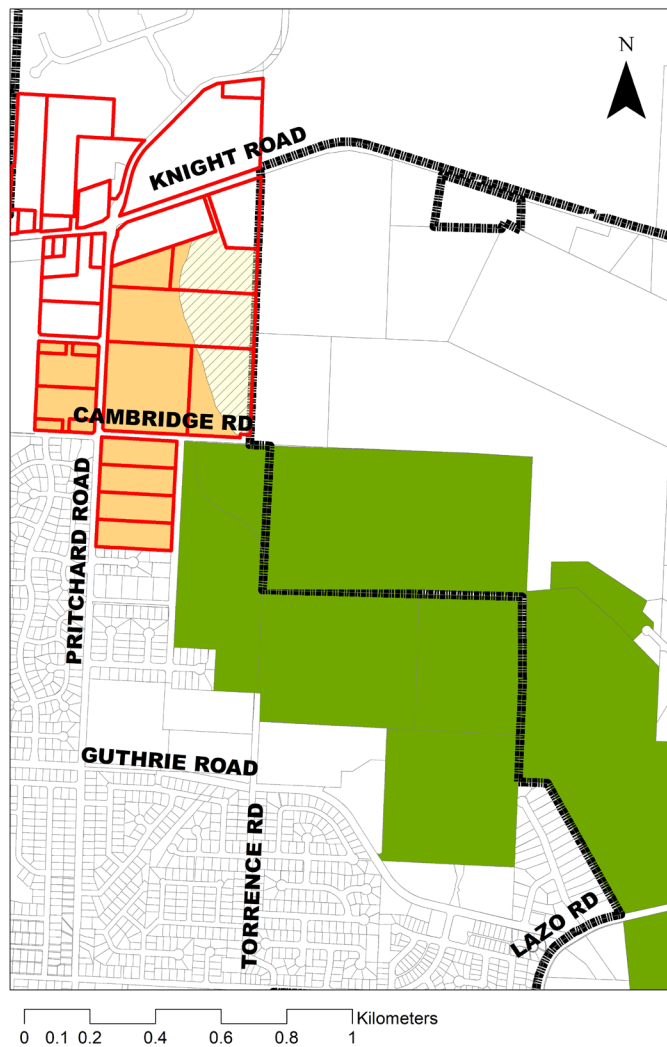
### Overview

- The North Pritchard Neighbourhood was first identified for development in the 1980's and reconfirmed through public processes in the 1990's, 2010's, and 2020's.
- The residential, institutional and industrial lands are outside of the North East Woods and protected environmental areas set aside during the community planning process.
- The North Pritchard Neighbourhood parcels are currently zoned R1.1 Single-Family and under this zone could be subdivided into single-family lots of minimum 650 square metres in size. R1.1 zone permits single-family dwellings, secondary suites, coach houses, bed and breakfast accommodations, home occupations, urban produce and urban hen keeping. Permitted uses have specific conditions, such as minimum property size and setbacks.
- All lands within North Pritchard Neighbourhood are owned by private landowners with certain development rights outside of Town control.
- Council provided direction to explore various residential density options with the goal of providing affordable housing, retaining more trees, and ensuring servicing infrastructure and maintenance costs are recovered but has no power to require this to happen and has received subdivision applications for single family residences on 1000 Pritchard (highlighted in green below) which the Town is legally obligated to process.
- Council has adopted its first Tree Retention Policy in anticipation of the upcoming developments in Town. However, because the current application is a subdivision and not a rezoning application, Council cannot require these policies be followed.

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We respectfully acknowledge that we gather and work on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.



### North Pritchard Neighbourhood

The area subject to NE Comox Storm Water Management Plan is identified on the map by the red borders. This area includes industrial, institutional and residential-zoned lands. The entirety of this area is owned by private owners, therefore the ability for the Town to prevent development in the area is limited. Further, current landowners have significant rights on how to develop their land and how they wish to manage the trees on their property, subject to current Town bylaws. Much of the residentially zoned land lies below the '20m geodetic height'. This part of the land cannot be serviced by gravity and higher density development is currently not feasible.



## History

The residentially zoned North Pritchard area, shown in orange colour and hatched on the map, was first identified for development in 1984. It was further confirmed as an area for development in 1994 through an Official Community Plan (OCP) update and, most recently, during the 2011 OCP update. During this process, the Town worked with many public, conservation, and government bodies to identify areas for tree retention and nature conservation. Significant amounts of land, North East Woods shown in green on the map, were set aside for conservation and park use, while the North Pritchard area was identified for housing provision.

During the OCP update in 2011, a number of public engagement sessions were held, including introductory meetings, 10 neighborhood meetings, two open houses, a youth-oriented workshop, and a seniors-oriented workshop. The development has not begun after adoption of the OCP, because there was no servicing infrastructure in place that could adequately manage the storm water runoff from the area.

Over the course of the more than 10 years, the Town and private landowners developed a storm water management and erosion and sediment control plans that were formally adopted into the Town's bylaws in 2021. The three-phase process of developing the NE Comox Storm Water Management Plan also had extensive public engagement, including:

- August 8, 2012 – Written notification to the following stakeholders on scope of study, objectives, and invitation for feedback/input: Department of National Defense, Agricultural Land Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, K'ómoks First Nation, Ministry of Transportation and infrastructure, Comox Valley Regional District, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Ministry of Environment
- June 7, 2012 – Public open house on Phase 1 (all open houses were advertised in two consecutive issues of the Comox Valley Record and posted on the Town's website)
- September 13, 2012 – Stakeholder meeting
- January 15, 2013 – Stakeholder meeting to review results of Phase 1
- November 18, 2014 and February 24, 2015 – Public open house to review results of Phase 2
- November 18, 2014 – Stakeholder meeting to review results of Phase 2
- April 26, 2018 – Public open house to review results of Phase 3
- April 26, 2018 – Stakeholder meeting to review results of Phase 3

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## **Present Situation**

The Town of Comox Council is faced with the reality that the North Pritchard Neighbourhood is pre-zoned as single-family residential. On February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, staff submitted reports on residential development scenarios and on a policy for mature tree retention and replanting. Council learned that should only single-family residential lots be developed in North Pritchard neighbourhood, as current zoning permits, the estimated net drain on Town annual budget would be approximately \$180,000 per year (requiring a tax increase to help fund infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs) and that single-family development leads to the lowest potential for existing trees retention and long term protection, and replanting is typically limited to public boulevards along the streets.

This information, and Council's desire to see more affordable housing options in the Town, resulted in direction to explore other residential development scenarios for the North Pritchard Neighbourhood, as well as adoption of the Tree Retention Policy setting goals for 30% mature tree retention or replanting, applicable to all lands within the Town, infill, redevelopment and greenfield development. The Tree Retention Policy targets do not apply to areas required for public infrastructure and road dedications. The vast majority of suitable areas for tree retention and replanting will be along the periphery of the development properties and within public greenways, boulevards and parks.

## **The Future**

The North Pritchard Neighbourhood will eventually be developed, but a full build out of the area will likely take a significant period of time. With the increasingly emphasis need for affordable housing, many processes are being examined at the Federal and Provincial levels to remove development roadblocks, which may limit the ability for municipalities to control development. It has been done in the past to fast track the construction of new homes.

The Town of Comox faces a difficult position of being required to balance the rights that current landowners have with the desire to provide affordable housing, services and public amenities, meet community interests in retaining mature trees, ensure any proposed development does not add a tax burden to the rest of the community, and the potential to lose decision-making to other governmental forces in the future.

Should any Zoning or OCP amendments be proposed, the Town will engage the public in the process. It will include public hearings, public Council meetings, notifications in the local newspaper, Town website and social media posts, as well as development application signs on the lands. However, please note that if an owner submits an application to subdivide land under the current single-family zoning, the process is different and does not involve such an extensive public notification.



Thank you for your patience and understanding while we try to navigate this difficult process. Like many concerned residents in the area, we're committed to keeping Comox a great place to live, work, and play.

Regards,

Town of Comox

**Links to additional information:**

NE Comox Storm Water management Plan

<https://www.comox.ca/development/north-east-comox-stormwater-management-plan>

February 16, 2022, staff report on North Pritchard Neighbourhood

<https://www.comox.ca/sites/default/files/2022-04/2202-02Feb-16%20RCM%20Agenda.pdf>

OCP Bylaw

<https://www.comox.ca/development/planning/official-community-plan>

Zoning Bylaw

<https://www.comox.ca/government-bylaws/bylaws-enforcement/zoning-bylaw>

Other Town Bylaws

<https://www.comox.ca/bylaws>

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