

**TOWN OF COMOX**

**BYLAW NO. 2054**

**A BYLAW TO ADOPT AN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN**

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WHEREAS Council has the authority under the provisions of the *Local Government Act* to adopt an Official Community Plan Bylaw;

AND WHEREAS Council has considered the Official Community Plan Bylaw in conjunction with its financial plan and any waste management plan that is applicable in the municipality or regional district;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Town of Comox, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

**1.0 TITLE:**

This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as the "Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2054".

**2.0 DEFINITIONS:**

2.1 In this Bylaw, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) "Council" means the Council of the Town of Comox.
- (b) "Town" means the Town of Comox.

**3.0 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN**

Schedule "A" attached to and forming part of this bylaw is hereby adopted as an Official Community Plan for the Town of Comox.

**4.0 REPEAL OF PREVIOUS BYLAWS:**

Comox Official Community Plan Bylaw 1685 is hereby repealed.

**5.0 ADOPTION:**

READ a FIRST and SECOND time this	5 <sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025
ADVERTISED a first time this	12 <sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025
ADVERTISED a second time this	19 <sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025
PUBLIC HEARING HELD this	26 <sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025

CORPORATE OFFICER

**Schedule “A”**

**TOWN OF COMOX**

# Official Community Plan



**TOWN OF  
COMOX**

A photograph of a dense forest of tall evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. The image is split horizontally by a dark blue curved band. The top half shows the upper canopy and sky, while the bottom half shows the lower forest floor and tree trunks. A semi-transparent olive green rectangle is overlaid on the bottom half, containing text.

The Town of Comox is located on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

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Appendix A: Regional Context Statement



PART 1

# OCP Context

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TOWN OF  
**COMOX**

# Overview

The Town of Comox is located within the traditional, unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, within the Comox Valley Regional District on the east coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The Town overlooks the Strait of Georgia to the east and Comox Harbour and K'ómoks Estuary to the south. Located in a glacial valley, the region consists of rich agricultural land and incredible recreational opportunities.



**Figure 1 - Context Map**



For thousands of years indigenous people occupied the shoreline of eastern Vancouver Island in a place referred to as “the land of plenty”. This Land of Plenty stretched from what is known today as Kelsey Bay in the north, down to Hornby and Denman Island in the south, and included the watershed and estuary of the Puntledge River. The people called K’ómoks today referred to themselves as Sahtloot, Sasitla, leeksun and Puntledge. They lived in Salmon River, Quinsam and Campbell Rivers, Quadra Island, Kye Bay, Comox Harbour and estuary, Baynes Sound, and many other locations throughout the territory.

Oral histories and archaeology describe a rich and bountiful relationship between the K’ómoks and Land of Plenty. Salmon, shellfish, herring, deer, elk, seal, cod, rockfish, geese, duck, and a plethora of berries and plant foods filled the tummies of young and old alike. The harvest, preparation and cultivation of local resources were appropriate to the environment, resource, and spiritual beliefs. Fish weirs, duck nets, berry picking techniques and clothing design met the needs of the K’ómoks, and for generations provided variety, utility, and sense of cultural uniqueness. Mask dances and rhythmic songs filled the winter nights and throughout the seasons. Property was distributed to guests in potlatches and elaborate naming ceremonies honoured the youth, leaders, and elders of the communities.

Following contact with Europeans, northern groups started a southerly move into K’ómoks territory. A period of conflict displaced the K’ómoks southward to their relatives, the Puntledge. Followed by a period of colonial policy and practices, the K’ómoks families endured hardship and loss of land, resources, and cultural connection. Modern leaders are striving to reclaim cultural expression and relationship with the “the land of plenty”.



Comox was an early focal point for development in the Comox Valley, attracting settlers for its agricultural potential, deep water access, and safe moorage. The Port of Comox was founded in the mid-1800’s and was an important port for Royal Navy ships and transport steamers. The first wave of settlers arrived in the area in 1862 on the shores above Augusta Bay (now known as Comox Harbour). Farming, fishing, and logging were the basis for development in the region.



Goose Spit became a Royal Navy Training Base in 1876. Roads began to be constructed in the late 1800's, along with schools and hotels, which brought increased development and eventually attracted tourism. CFB 19-Wing Comox was founded in 1942, bringing increased development to the region.

To this day, CFB Comox is the only Canadian Air Force Base on the west coast of Canada and is a major employer of community members across the Comox Valley.

The Town of Comox was incorporated as a village in 1946, and the area continued to grow and develop. Comox experienced a post-war housing boom until the 1970s, with large lots and simple houses on minimalistic streets with a grid pattern, and some rental apartments around the Downtown. The 1980s and 1990s brought conventional suburban development with medium sized lots, curving road patterns, and cul-de-sacs linked by walkways. There were also some townhouse developments in the 1990s. Since the 2000s, urban development has increased, including townhouses, apartments, and mixed-use buildings, but single-detached homes have continued to be a staple of new housing development.



# Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision sets the framework for the entire OCP. It is informed by community input gathered as part of the OCP update process and will guide growth and development in the community to 2045.

## VISION

Comox embraces its natural areas and surroundings, recreational opportunities and the unique atmosphere of its seaside setting. The heart of Comox is the Downtown – a compact, pedestrian friendly area with a lively mix of housing, services, and amenities. New development diversifies housing and employment options throughout Comox and is accompanied by concerted efforts to minimize environmental impacts. Mixed-use nodes throughout the community allow residents to safely access education, services, amenities, and employment by walking, rolling, or using public transit. The Town is committed to advancing reconciliation with K’ómoks First Nation.

The Guiding Principles add tangibility to implement the Vision. They are intended to help guide decision-making and reinforce key direction. All policies included in the document will align with at least one of the guiding principles.

1. Prioritize integrated community planning, and neighbourhood nodes, with strong links between land use, infrastructure, active transportation, and community amenities.
2. Plan Comox to be a complete community with convenient access to services and amenities linked by multi-modal transportation options for all abilities.
3. Enhance Downtown Comox in partnership with the Comox Business in Action (BIA) and other interested community partners.
4. Advance reconciliation and continue to build a strong relationship with K’ómoks First Nation, recognizing their evolving status as a Treaty Nation.
5. Expand and enhance partnerships with agencies, organizations, and regional partners.
6. Protect, restore and enhance the natural environment and urban forest.
7. Provide a connected and diverse network of parks, trails, and open spaces.
8. Enhance the Urban Forest and Contribute to achieving emissions targets and risk management objectives of the Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment.
9. Enhance employment and economic development for the Town of Comox.



PART 2

# Community Profile

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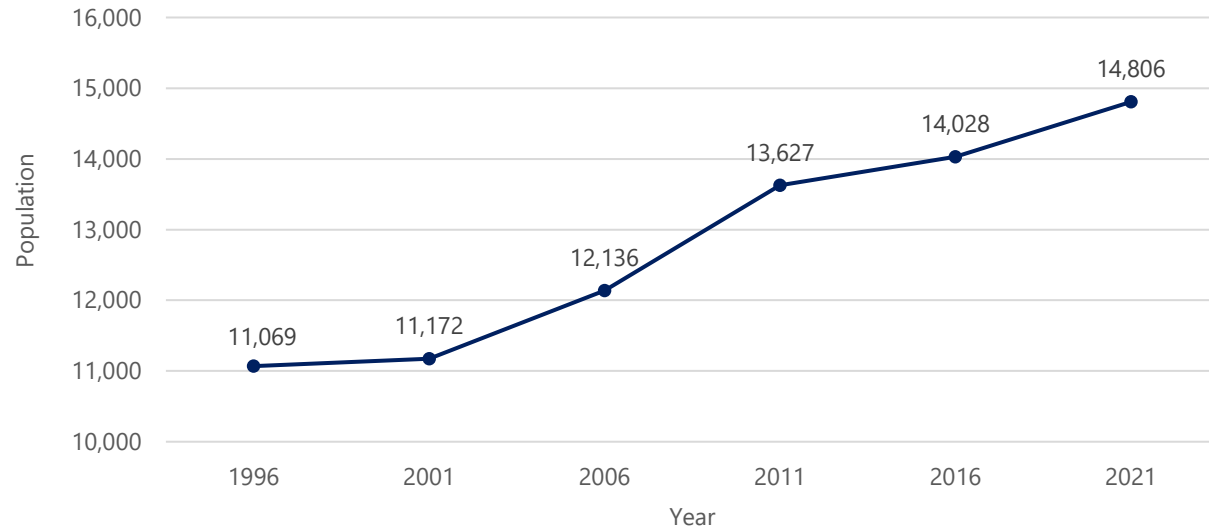
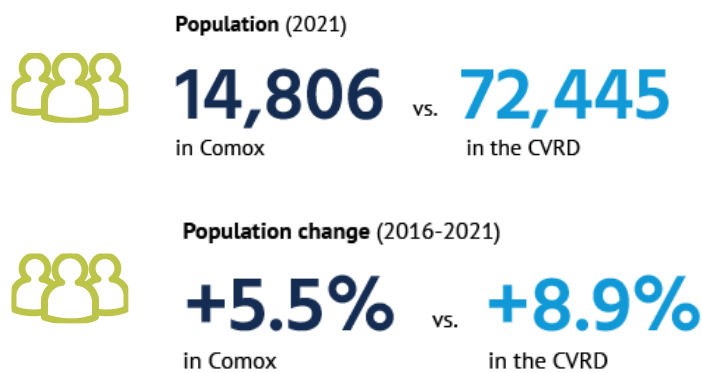


TOWN OF  
COMOX

# Population Growth

The 2021 Census reported a total population of 14,806, representing a 5.5% increase from the 2016 Census. Population growth from 2016 to 2021 was lower in Comox than in the region; the Comox Valley Regional District experienced an 8.9% increase in population. The population of Cumberland grew by 18.5% and the population of Courtenay grew by 10.8%.

Comox's population increased by approximately 3,700 people between 1996 and 2021. The Population grew by 33% from 2001 to 2021 and was higher from 2001 and 2011 (22%) than from 2011 and 2021 (9%).



**Figure 2 - Population of Comox from 1996-2021, according to census data.**



## Age Comparison

The Comox Valley will likely be more impacted by an aging population than many other areas of the province. Comox may also be more impacted than the region, with the highest median age among CVRD municipalities. When splitting the population into 10-year age cohorts, the 65-74 cohort comprises the highest proportion of the population. The 55-64 age cohort comprises the second highest proportion of the population.

The dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labor force (ages 0 to 14 and 65+) to those typically in the labor force (ages 15 to 64). In Comox, the dependency ratio is 84.7, much higher than the provincial ratio of 53.0. A high dependency ratio indicates a higher ratio of dependents to working-age individuals with a higher demand for services and lower supply of workers/taxpayers to provide services. A high dependency ratio can also lead to challenges with economic growth, since there is a lack of working age people starting businesses and spending on non-essential goods and services.

As Comox grows, there is a need to attract working-age individuals to lower the dependency ratio and ensure there are sufficient essential service workers, in addition to continued economic development.

### Median Age (2021)

**52.4** vs. **50.8** vs. **42.8**  
in Comox in the CVRD in BC

### Median Age within the CVRD (2021)

**52.4** vs. **48.8** vs. **39.2**  
in Comox in Courtenay in Cumberland

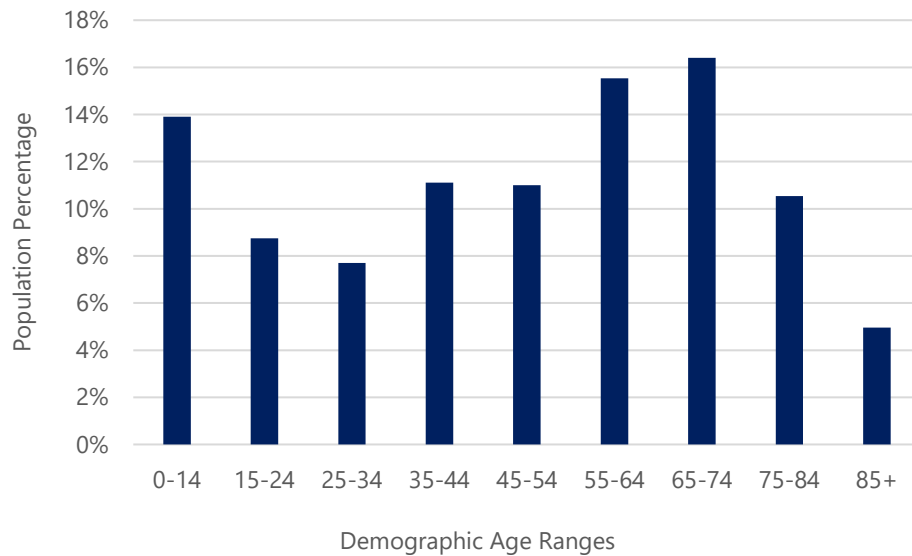
### 65+ Demographic

**31.9%** vs. **20.3%** of the population  
in Comox in the CVRD are 65+

### Dependency Ratio (2021)

**84.7%** vs. **53.0%**  
in Comox in BC





*Figure 3 - Population structure by percentage of population in Comox, according to 2021 census data.*

## Housing

Single-detached houses are the most common housing type in Comox (65.8%) with a proportion much greater than in the province (42.4%). The remainder of the housing stock is split closely between other attached housing types.



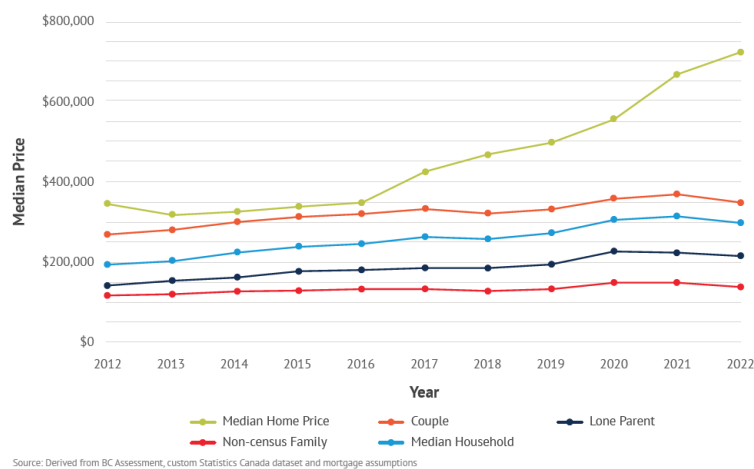
**Dwelling Type - Proportion of Single Detached Houses (2021)**

**65.8%** vs. **42.4%**  
in Comox in BC



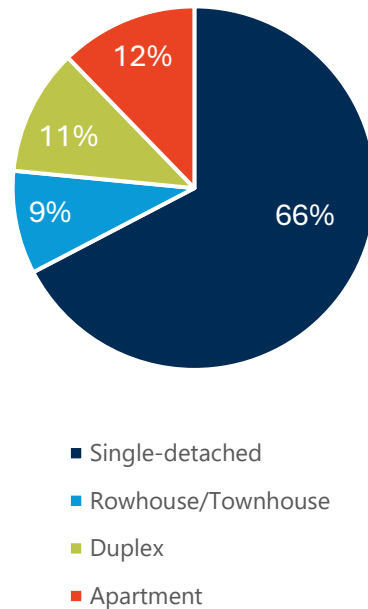
As of 2017, the gap between median home price and what households earning the median income could afford grew considerably. Figure 7.1 in the 2024 Housing Needs Report (**replicated below as Figure 4**) identifies that median home prices were close to being affordable for couple households earning the median income from 2013 to 2016. The gap widened significantly in the years following, representing a large discrepancy in home price and household income. This indicates increasing demand for ownership housing at a rate that has surpassed new housing supply. The affordability gap will continue to challenge people from all life stages, but particularly young adults, who will continue to be needed as essential service workers and future business owners.

Increased housing diversity can provide market housing options at lower prices than single-detached dwellings of similar age and condition. Strata and rental apartment units have comprised the highest proportion of recent housing development at 72% of housing completions from 2018 to 2022. Single-detached homes were the second most common type of new housing at 22% of housing completions. As Comox grows, there will be a need for family-sized housing options at lower price points than single-detached homes, such as 3+ bedroom apartments, duplexes, and townhouses.



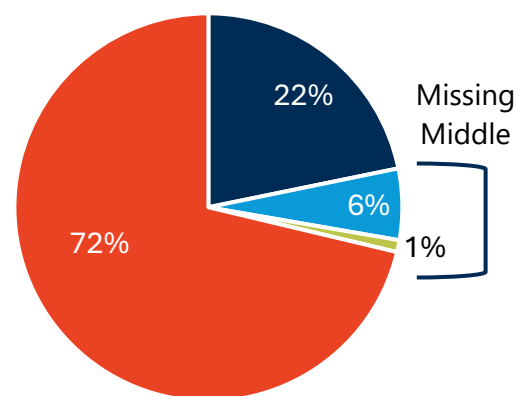
**Figure 4 – Housing cost compared to median income affordability.**

**2021 Housing Stock**



**Figure 5 - Housing Completions**

**Housing Completions 2018-2022**



## PART 3

# Community Policies



TOWN OF  
**COMOX**



**CAUTION**  
Decks, Ramps  
and Floats may  
be Slippery

**DO NOT LOOSE**  
Tools, Equipment  
or Materials

# 1. Housing Needs

OCP community engagement respondents noted housing choice and affordability as top improvement areas for Comox. As Comox grows, there is a focus on providing housing options for all types of residents including families, seniors, young adults, and single/couple households. By encouraging the creation of new rental housing and protecting existing rental housing, there is potential for more affordable and attainable housing options for residents. As land values increase, it is important to promote strategies and actions that limit displacement of low- or fixed-income residents currently living in Comox. Achieving many of the Town's housing goals will require partnerships with the non-profit sector, the development community and senior levels of government.

As of the 2021 Census, 66 percent of dwelling units in Comox were single-family dwellings. Construction of rental and multi-unit housing in Comox have steadily increased over the past decade. However, the gap between the cost of ownership housing and median household income has increased considerably and rental vacancy rates have remained extremely low, averaging 0.68% over the past decade and 1.7% in 2024. A large proportion of recent development has been apartments, and there will be a need for more ground-oriented multi-unit developments to accommodate families as Comox grows.

The 2024 Housing Needs Report identifies the need for 1,037 units from 2021 to 2026, and 3,358 units from 2021 to 2041. There are components of need that comprise housing need as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1 - 5- and 20-year Housing Need as Referenced in the 2024 Housing Needs Report, and Associated Population (Estimate)**

Component	5-year (by 2026)	20-year (by 2041)
A. Extreme Core Housing Need	49	196
B. Homelessness	38	76
C. Suppressed Households	68	273
D. Anticipated Growth	720	2,170
E. Vacancy	10	38
F. Demand Buffer	151	604
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>3,358</b>
<b>Associated Population</b>	<b>1,867</b>	<b>6,044</b>



The components of housing need are:

**A. Extreme Core Housing Need:** 20-year need is the total number of households currently in extreme core housing need as defined by Statistics Canada. 5-year need is 20-year need divided by four.

**B. Homelessness:** 20-year need is the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Comox in 2021 as determined by the provincial Integrated Data Partnership. Data is meant to determine homelessness throughout the year in contrast to point-in-time counts. 5-year need is 20-year need divided by two.

**C. Suppressed Households:** An indicator of households that would have formed if housing conditions in 2021 were similar to 2006.

**D. Anticipated Growth:** Status quo growth as determined by BC Stats by projecting past trends into the future. The theory behind the Housing Needs Report methodology is that if growth were to occur as per this component (similar rate to past growth), the other components of housing need would not be addressed.

**E. Vacancy:** 20-year need is derived by determining the number of vacant units that would increase the 2021 rental vacancy rate to 3%. 5-year need divides the 20-year need by 4.

**F. Demand Buffer:** A buffer to account for people that may move to, or around within a housing market.

BC Stats projects household growth from 6,903 households in 2021 to 8,198 in 2041 (1,295 households), representing 19% growth. The corresponding BC Stats population projection is 14,806 persons in 2021 to 17,410 in 2041, representing 18% growth (2,604 persons).

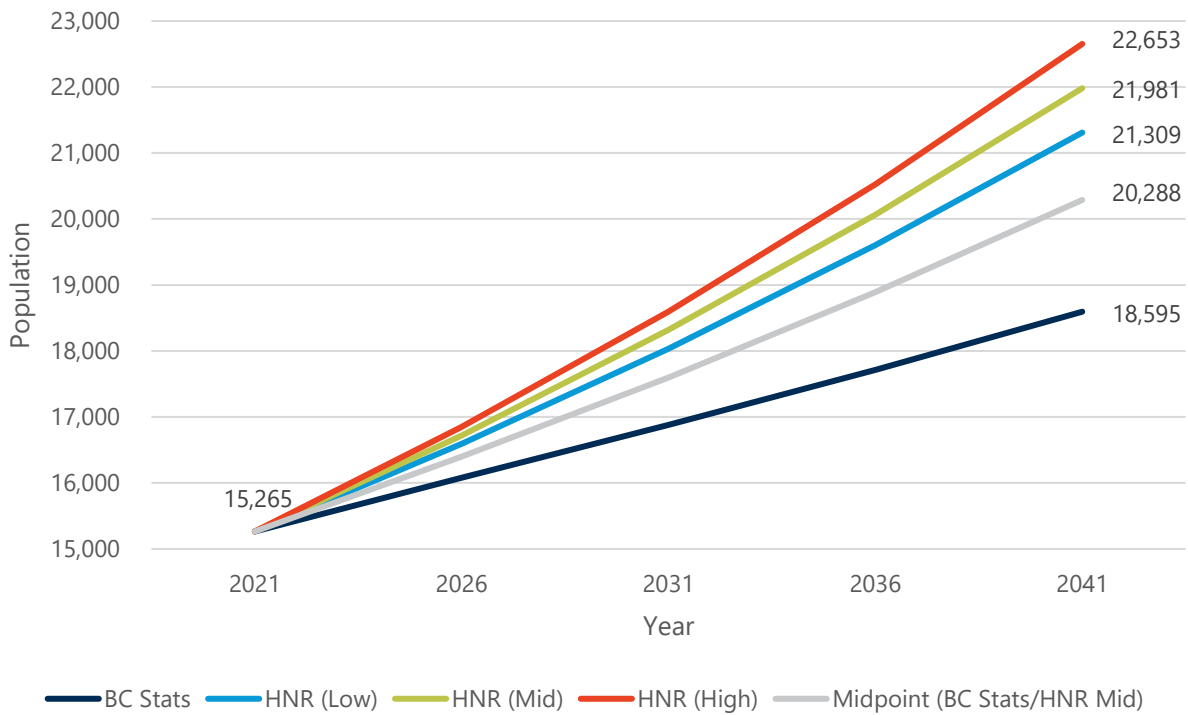
If housing need were to be met by 2041, the population could increase by approximately 6,000 to 7,400 persons from 2021 to 2041 as shown in Figure 6 below. The difference between BC Stats household and population projections, and population projections associated with fulfilled housing need, indicates that housing demand is higher than in the past. It is likely that housing supply rates would need to increase to moderate housing price growth.

Throughout the timeframe of the OCP, population growth in Comox is expected to be between BC Stats population projections and population projections associated with fulfilled housing needs, shown as the "Midpoint (BC Stats/HNR Mid)" line in Figure 6 below. Trends may fluctuate throughout the next twenty years based on supply/demand, social trends, and land economics.

BC Stats population projections are primarily based on carrying forward trends in mortality, fertility, and migration. Initiatives to increase housing supply in Comox coupled with high housing demand could influence trends in migration and lead to faster growth than projected by BC Stats. Initiatives to increase housing supply in Comox include changes directed by provincial housing legislation, Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives, and Development Application Process Review improvements. However, there are factors that affect housing supply growth that are out of the Town's control, such as construction costs, interest rates, and general macroeconomic conditions.



## Comox Population Projections



HNR (Low) assumes an average of 1.8 persons per new unit.

HNR (Medium) assumes an average of 2.0 persons per new unit.

HNR (High) assumes an average of 2.2 persons per new unit.

**Figure 6: BC Stats population projections compared to fulfilled housing needs scenarios.**

**Table 2: Comox Population projections.**

Year	BC Stats	HNR (Low)	HNR (Mid)	HNR (High)	Midpoint (BC Stats/HNR Low)	Midpoint (BC Stats/HNR Mid)
<b>2021</b>	15,265	15,265	15,265	15,265	15,265	15,265
<b>2026</b>	16,080	16,593	16,722	16,848	16,336	16,401
<b>2031</b>	16,878	18,036	18,318	18,595	17,457	17,598
<b>2036</b>	17,716	19,604	20,066	20,524	18,660	18,891
<b>2041</b>	18,595	21,309	21,981	22,653	19,952	20,288
<b>20-year growth</b>	3,330 22%	6,044 40%	6,716 44%	7,388 48%	4,687 31%	5,023 33%



As per Section 473(1)(a) of the Local Government Act, OCPs must include statements and map designations for the approximate location, amount, type, and density of residential development needed for at least the next 20 years. The OCP Future Land Use map identifies land use designations to support the amount of housing units needed in Comox for the next 20 years: 3,358 additional housing units.

After filtering out land that is not statistically likely to redevelop, the OCP land use designations provide capacity for **7,760 net new units** as identified in Table 2. The method to project net new units subtracts existing units within land use designations from build out projections. Standard gross densities are applied to each land use; these gross densities are lower than typical net densities to account for undevelopable areas and land dedication for road construction and improvements. As additional land become likely to redevelop over time, the OCP land use designations will provide for a higher number of new units.

**Table 3 - OCP Land Use and Housing Unit Capacity on land that is likely to develop or redevelop.**

OCP Land Use	Net New Unit Capacity
Ground Oriented Residential	590
Low-Rise Residential	1,970
Mid-Rise Residential	530
Low-Rise Mixed Use	2,630
Mid-Rise Mixed Use	1,930
Harbour and Marina CDA	110
Total	7,760

The following objectives and policies provide strategies to meet housing need over the next 20 years, particularly relating to non-market housing forms. Land use designations in the OCP and pre-zoning of parcels in the Zoning Bylaw aim to fulfill the market housing component of housing need. Regulatory and development process improvements completed through the Housing Accelerator Fund and Development Approvals Process Review are also contributing to increasing the supply of market and non-market housing in Comox.



## Objectives

- 1(A.)** Increase development of ground-oriented multi-unit housing to provide housing choice for families.
- 1(B.)** Increase the supply of non-market and below-market housing, in addition to other alternatives to market housing such as co-op and affordable ownership.
- 1(C.)** Increase the diversity of housing types and tenures by supporting the development of small-scale multi-unit housing and purpose-built rental housing.
- 1(D.)** Minimize impacts of redevelopment on current rental tenants.

## Policies

- 1.1** Encourage a range of rental and ownership tenures that support a variety of households, income levels and life stages.
- 1.2** Encourage multi-unit housing design that incorporates private open space, rooftop patios, gardens, greenspace and children's play areas to foster social connections, inclusion and intergenerational relationships.
- 1.3** Ensure retention or replacement of existing rental units and the mitigation of impacts to existing tenants as redevelopment occurs through planning tools that may include, but are not limited to, inclusionary and rental only zoning, rental replacement policy, and tenant protection bylaw as permitted by the *Local Government Act* and new provincial housing legislation.
- 1.4** Ensure short-term rental accommodation limits impacts on the long-term rental housing supply.
- 1.5** Consider working with BC Housing and non-profit developers on leasing underutilized public lands for the construction of co-op, rental, subsidized rental, special needs and/or supportive housing units.



## Actions

- 1.6** Consider adoption of a Development and Amenity Cost Charge reduction and/or waiver bylaw for non-profit housing and other eligible affordable and special needs housing.
- 1.7** Complete a comprehensive update to the Housing Affordability Strategy to guide housing actions following completion of the Housing Accelerator Fund. Include a monitoring framework to evaluate efficacy and review every five years and update as needed.
- 1.8** Complete financial analysis to support the consideration of density bonus and/or inclusionary zoning bylaws by June 2026 as per recent *Local Government Act* revisions, with the intent to replace the existing Affordable Housing Amenity Contribution Policy.
- 1.9** Conduct a parking-use study and reduce minimum residential parking requirements if warranted, including the potential for the lowest rates in areas within a 400 metre radius of Route #1 bus stops.
- 1.10** Consider developing and adopting a Tenant Protection Bylaw to mitigate the impacts of redevelopment on existing rental tenants.
- 1.11** Consider an amendment to the Comox Reserve Fund Bylaw No. 2025, 2023 to provide additional options for how funds in the affordable housing reserve fund are used, including consideration for provision of grants available to non-profit developers for the construction of co-op, non-market, special needs, supportive, and/or other affordable housing units, including within developments that include a market housing component.
- 1.12** Consider amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit commercial childcare, adult day services, and/or special needs and supportive housing in all residential and mixed-use zones.
- 1.13** Review, and if required, update policies and bylaws to ensure that under-represented forms of tenure, including but not limited to co-housing, fee-simple row housing, and rent-to-own, are encouraged, with consideration for incentives if warranted.
- 1.14** Review the Zoning Bylaw and Building Bylaw, and consider the integration of Universal Design (as outlined by CMHC) incentives and/or requirements that exceed the BC Building Code.



## 2. Transportation

The multi-modal transportation network in Comox includes infrastructure for walking, rolling, public transportation, car sharing, and vehicular transportation. The relationship between the transportation network and land use planning will have a strong influence on whether residents and visitors utilize passenger vehicles or active and public transportation.

Next to housing, transportation can be one of the largest household costs. When households can own one vehicle rather than two, there are significant cost savings that improve quality of life. However, many Comox households will continue to own at least one passenger vehicle to visit recreation areas within the region and Vancouver Island that cannot be accessed by public transportation. Therefore, the multi-modal focus of this OCP is to make active and public transportation the easier choice for the majority of trips, recognizing that many households will still opt to own at least one vehicle.

As reported in the Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment, transportation is the largest contributor to community emissions in Comox. Increasing the share of trips made by active and public transportation modes is a key aspect of climate action in Comox.

In addition to policies in this section, the OCP Active Transportation Network, Road Network, and Transit Network maps provide an outline of the future multi-modal transportation network in Comox.

### Objectives

- 2(A.)** Make it safer and easier to choose active and public transportation options when traveling to, from and within Comox.
- 2(B.)** Maintain a safe and efficient road network that is continually upgraded to accommodate growth and development.
- 2(C.)** Enhance partnerships with agencies, organizations, K'ómoks First Nation and regional partners to create a transportation network that benefits the movement of goods and people throughout and beyond the Comox Valley.
- 2(D.)** Ensure the transportation system respects the natural environment, minimizes climate impacts and improves the livability of the community.



## Policies

### General

- 2.1** Ensure that new development considers emergency access/egress where necessary.
- 2.2** Promote a higher degree of mixed land uses at higher densities in Downtown Comox, Anderton Road, and Guthrie Road west of Anderton Road, to reduce the need for vehicular travel and longer trips, support frequent public transit service, and encourage density and housing diversity near the transit network.
- 2.3** Encourage the development of mixed-use neighbourhood centres throughout the Town to provide services and amenities within walking distance of residents.
- 2.4** Incorporate strategies to reduce conflicts between all types of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, persons with disabilities and other forms of active and personal transportation in the design of roads, trails, and active transportation infrastructure.
- 2.5** Continue to pursue transportation infrastructure grant opportunities.
- 2.6** Engage K'ómoks First Nation in transit and transportation planning processes that may influence mobility, connectivity, or infrastructure within or adjacent to the Nation's lands.

### Active Transportation

- 2.7** The Future Trail / Multi-Use Pathway identified on the OCP Active Transportation Network map north of Cambridge Road and east of Pritchard Road shall be located on the future north-south servicing corridor and connect to Knight Road. The ultimate alignment to connect to Knight Road will be determined through application processes.
- 2.8** Encourage active transportation through ongoing implementation of pedestrian and rolling facilities and dedicated routes.
- 2.9** Create new pedestrian and rolling connections across the Town, and fill in gaps between existing connections, for a more permeable active transportation network, as a condition of subdivision and development approvals.
- 2.10** Maintain ongoing communication and cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, regional partners, user and service groups, with respect to expanding, enhancing, and maintaining the Town's active transportation network.
- 2.11** Work with BC Transit to ensure walking and cycling connections to the new downtown Comox Transit Exchange on Port Augusta Street at Comox Avenue, including the potential for statutory rights-of-way through large parcels to improve connectivity.



- 2.12** Work with School District 71 and the Comox Valley Regional District to establish active school travel and safe routes to school programs for Comox schools.
- 2.13** Promote active transportation as a direct means of reducing reliance on motor vehicles and the environmental impact of Comox's transportation system, along with the physical, mental, and social benefits.
- 2.14** Require pedestrian and bicycle connections to be developed as a condition of development approvals as determined by the Town, including potential access through a development site to connect adjacent roads and pathways through dedication or statutory rights of way.
- 2.15** Consider integrating and expanding active transportation connections beyond what is within the Transportation Master Plan to complement new development.
- 2.16** Strive to make preferred modes of active transportation affordable, convenient, and safe throughout the year.
- 2.17** Require land dedication for planned active transportation infrastructure improvements or installations through rezoning and building permit applications fronting planned active transportation routes, even when such improvements are planned in the future.
- 2.18** Protection and acquisition of active transportation routes may include, but not be limited to, right-of-way dedication or parkland dedication at the Town's discretion.
- 2.19** Explore concepts for an active transportation route through the Comox Golf Club to improve east-west connections through Downtown Comox.
- 2.20** Work with partners to prioritize cycling infrastructure improvements on Pritchard Road to improve the ability of residents to cycle to and from CFB Comox, the Airport, Highland Secondary School and Park, and Downtown.
- 2.21** Provide wayfinding along all active transportation routes, integrating best practices for sign colour, placement, frequency, and scale, while ensuring that content is consistent with regional standards.
- 2.22** In addition to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure improvements identified in the Transportation Master Plan, prioritize sidewalk, cycling, and traffic calming improvements that provide safe access to schools.
- 2.23** As a key pedestrian route to Highland Secondary School, advocate to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to improve Guthrie Road from Linshart Road to the Town of Comox boundary west of Nootka Street with safety standards that exceed the current shoulder.



- 2.24** Provide facilities such as bike shelters and accessible resting areas within public and semi-public spaces.

## **Roads**

- 2.25** Prioritize a well-connected grid road network; minimize dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs unless there is no feasible alternative as determined by the Town. The Town shall improve connectivity of the road network through the acquisition of land and road dedications where connections are warranted, and it is possible to do so.
- 2.26** Work collaboratively with K'ómoks First Nation to plan and manage transportation routes that traverse or bi-sect K'ómoks IR#1 in a manner that supports the needs and interests of the Nation.
- 2.27** Stewart Street serves as an important pedestrian and cycling route between central and Downtown Comox. Stewart Street between Cedar and Balsam Avenues will be maintained as an active transportation connection but not be opened for vehicular travel.

## **Site Access & Parking**

- 2.28** On mid-block development sites fronting arterial and downtown roads as identified on the OCP Road Network map, encourage parcel consolidation such that site access can be provided from a lower road classification.
- a) Where every reasonable effort has been made to purchase parcels or secure a right-of-way that would provide access from a collector road, local road, or lane, the Town may consider permitting site access from an Arterial or Downtown Road where there may be a safe way to do so.
- 2.29** Encourage the design of multi-unit residential parking structures to accommodate work vans and pickup trucks to address the parking needs of residents that work in trades. Where this is not feasible for the entirety of the parking structure, consider providing increased-height parking stalls in a portion of the parking structure near the entrance that are available to rent rather than being assigned to a specific strata or rental unit that may not need an increased-height parking stall.

## **Transit**

- 2.30** Continue to regularly review transit demand and advocate to BC Transit to plan for local and regional service, infrastructure upgrades and facility expansions when appropriate.
- 2.31** Advocate for a future direct transit route from Downtown Comox to the Comox Valley Airport.
- 2.32** Consult CVRD and BC Transit on land that may be required for future transit stops when



completing road improvements and facilitating land dedications for road improvements.

- 2.33** Work with CVRD and BC Transit to implement the Transit Future Plan and seek opportunities to advocate for improvements that are in the public interest of Town residents.
- 2.34** Work with BC Transit, CVRD, and large employers in the region to implement a program similar to the BC Transit ProPASS program, which provides discounted rates to employees deducted through payroll, to reduce demands for parking in Comox.

### **Truck Routes**

- 2.35** Designated Truck Routes consist of those arterial and major collector roads highlighted on the OCP Truck Routes map.
- 2.36** All trucks are required to remain on designated truck routes until reaching a point that minimizes the travel distance on other roads to reach the truck's local delivery or collection location.

### **Airport and Floatplane Access**

- 2.37** Work with the Comox Valley Airport Commission to partner on strategies that enhance access to and from the Airport.
- 2.38** Encourage the continued expansion of service at the Comox Valley Airport and the seaplane terminal at the Comox Marina through advocacy and partnerships.
- 2.39** Recognize the importance of the continued operation of the existing float plane site at the Comox Marina in cooperation with Transport Canada and any seaplane companies.

## **Actions**

- 2.37** Continue to update transportation modelling every five years to ensure that infrastructure planning reflects current and future needs.
- 2.38** Complete a Town-wide Transportation Master Plan update based on OCP projections for population, housing, commercial, industrial, and institutional growth to inform the 2030 OCP Update, Development Cost Charges Bylaw and the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.
- 2.39** Develop a Sustainable Transportation Policy that provides reductions to minimum parking requirements in exchange for car-share spaces, zero-emission vehicle parking, EV charging stations, and/or cash-in-lieu, including guidelines for how cash-in-lieu funds are used. Include recommendations to update the zoning bylaw with consideration of requirements for end-of-trip facilities for commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.



- 2.40** Develop a long-term strategy for the consideration of a phased publicly accessible multi-use path along the waterfront as identified in the Parks and Trails Master Plan, helping to connect the Comox waterfront to Goose Spit Park (CVRD) and Kus-kus-sum.
- 2.41** Complete a review of parking requirements for different land uses, residential tenures, and areas of the Town, considering access to transportation and daily needs as identified in the Complete Communities Growth Assessment; amend the Zoning Bylaw based on findings of the study.
- 2.42** Update the 2018 Traffic Calming Policy and Procedures to be in line with best practice.



# 3. Economic Development

Long-term economic sustainability requires concerted efforts to provide an attractive business environment and ample employment opportunities. Economic development policies are focused on building and maintaining partnerships with the business community and public sector employers to increase employment options, contribute to an attractive business environment, and support local tourism. Policies also recognize the importance of the Comox Valley Airport and Canadian Forces Base 19 Wing Comox to the local economy and aim to facilitate ongoing collaboration with these organizations. There are also policies to support ongoing collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation on economic development initiatives of mutual interest.

The 2024 Economic Development Strategy identifies a lack of non-residential tax revenues necessary for long-term financial sustainability in Comox. The Strategy identifies that an additional 26 hectares of industrial land should be designated beyond the 2012 OCP Light Industrial designation. This OCP designates an additional 13.3 hectares of Industrial land, approximately 6.4 hectares of which is developable. In addition to the long-term tax base, more industrial land will be needed for job creation to accompany residential growth and reduce the dependency ratio in Comox (discussed in Part 2 – Community Profile). There has been considerable vacant land designated for light industrial use in Comox for decades, with limited development uptake due to services constraints. Additional analysis could allow for targets strategies to increase industrial development if there is demand for it in Comox.

## Objectives

- 3(A.)** Increase the ratio of jobs to residents in Comox.
- 3(B.)** Base future land use planning for employment uses in evidence-based analysis.
- 3(C.)** Prioritize the enhancement of Downtown Comox to create a thriving complete community.

## Policies

- 3.1** Support economic diversification that is compatible with the OCP Vision, Guiding Principles, and land use objectives and policies.
- 3.2** Implement the 2024 Economic Development Strategy and Downtown Enhancement Action Plan (EAP) as feasible.
- 3.3** Collaborate with the development industry and other government partners to ensure a



commitment to service, competitive costs, and a fair, transparent development process.

- 3.4** Collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation as a neighbouring government to identify opportunities for economic development initiatives of mutual interest.
- 3.5** Ensure that the Business Park land use designation new and emerging industries via Zoning Bylaw text amendments to add new and emerging land uses for lands zoned I1.1 and I2.1 (light industrial and aeronautical industrial).
- 3.6** Vitalize and enhance downtown with boutiques, street-level retail, service and restaurants, tourist accommodation, and residential and offices above ground/ higher storeys.
- 3.7** Support the development of festivals and community events that will make Comox a tourist destination for a broad range of visitors year-round.
- 3.8** Support the Comox Valley Farmer's Market location in Comox to support local food security, agriculture, and community gathering.
- 3.9** Partner with and support the Downtown Comox BIA and non-profit organizations for community events and promotion of community identity.
- 3.10** Continue to engage the development community, Comox BIA and other business owners in engagement for Town-led initiatives and seek regular feedback on how Town bylaws and policies can enhance local business.
- 3.11** Encourage commercial and mixed-use zones as illustrated on the OCP Future Land Use map to improve access to daily needs, broaden economic opportunities, and stimulate employment growth.
- 3.12** Advocate to Comox Valley Regional District for the completion of a Regional Employment Lands analysis and/or strategy to identify opportunities and inform future planning for employment lands in Comox.
- 3.13** Support the efficient operation and expansion of the Comox Valley Airport and 19 Wing Comox Canadian Forces Base, including through prioritization of active transportation infrastructure to/from Downtown Comox, advocacy for more frequent public transit, and supporting development of hotel and conference centre space in North Comox.
- 3.14** Work with key partners, such as local and regional business and tourism associations, and provincial and federal tourism agencies to market Comox as a destination for visitors.
- 3.15** Support efficient operations of the Comox Marina, Comox Valley Marina and Comox Valley Harbour Authority, including continued engagement to seek alignment with Town plans and projects.
- 3.16** Work with marine-based businesses in Comox, such as charters, diving, sight-seeing, and



wildlife viewing, to ensure their efficient operation.

- 3.17** Recognize that facilitating attainable housing options are a key ingredient of maintaining and attracting a stable workforce, supporting business operations.

## Actions

- 3.18** Complete an employment lands study that includes commercial and light industrial demand analysis to inform future OCP updates and employment land strategies.
- 3.19** Create an Economic Development Strategy Implementation Plan.
- 3.20** Consider the completion of financial analysis on the feasibility of Downtown revitalization initiatives to attract new business and development.
- 3.21** Consider creating a gateway feature on Comox Avenue at the western entrance of Downtown Comox as identified in the Downtown EAP.



# 4. Parks, Trails and Open Space

Comox is fortunate to have a wide variety of parks, open spaces, and scenic trails. The Town is home to 35 parks, ranging from community and neighbourhood parks to natural and linear green spaces. These are complemented by a regional park and trail network that capitalizes on the area's natural beauty. The Town's Urban Forest is also a vital part of the parks, trails, and open space network. The health and maintenance of the urban forest will continue to be challenged by climate change.

There is strong community support for a well-rounded parks and trails system that offers diverse recreational opportunities. Such a system not only promotes physical and mental well-being but also plays an important role in protecting the environment. Green spaces help manage flooding, drought, wildfire risks, and sea level rise, while also restoring natural habitats and improving ecological connectivity. Further, they provide environmental services such as cooling and carbon sequestration.

As Comox continues to grow, careful planning for parks and open spaces is essential to maintaining a high quality of life. While the Town currently has a strong municipal parkland-to-population ratio of 9.7 hectares per 1,000 residents, future growth will require upgrades to existing services and the acquisition of new parkland. Investing proactively in a connected, inclusive, and adaptable parks and open space network will help ensure that Comox remains a vibrant and livable community for generations to come.

## Objectives

- 4(A.)** Provide a range of parks and open spaces to meet diverse needs and promote recreation, wellbeing, and community cohesion.
- 4(B.)** Create the urban forest as a connected system of forests, parks, trails, and open spaces that foster healthy and active living.
- 4(C.)** Increase community resilience to climate change through strategic location of parks and open spaces.
- 4(D.)** Ensure parks reflect their unique natural and cultural context.
- 4(E.)** Encourage partnerships with residents, neighbourhood associations, community organizations, and sports groups in acquiring, developing and managing lands for outdoor recreation and parks.



## Policies

### Planning and Design

- 4.1** Expand and improve existing parks to maximize existing infrastructure, flexibility and opportunity, as well as efficiencies during operation.
- 4.2** Integrate parks and landscaping initiatives with other infrastructure initiatives to maximize the multifunctional use of town assets—supporting recreation, enhancing aesthetics, providing cultural opportunities, and managing stormwater where appropriate.
- 4.3** Use the Five-Year Financial Plan to guide the development of parks and trails based on the Parks and Trails Master Plan and the CVRD Active Transportation Network Plan.
- 4.4** Use green infrastructure strategies, such as rain gardens, healthy tree canopy coverage, and ecosystem restoration, in parks and open spaces to improve the Town's climate resilience.
- 4.5** The location and design of public plazas in Downtown Comox should incorporate the following:
  - a) Optimum sunlight exposure
  - b) Primarily hardscape with planted areas and shade trees incorporated
  - c) Seating and gathering areas
  - d) Public art
  - e) Located within central areas as opposed to on the edges
- 4.6** Create healthy planting sites for trees and greenery in lower equity areas and areas particularly subject to the urban heat island effect, as determined through the Urban Forest Management Strategy (e.g. convert underutilized road ends, install bump outs, use soil cells, etc).



## Acquisition

- 4.7 Support parkland targets as per the Parks and Trail Master Plan or future iteration thereof.
- 4.8 Incrementally increase the ratio of Comox's active parkland to residents to account for a higher proportion of new residential units being within multi-unit developments with limited access to private open space.
- 4.9 Consider a balanced approach between all park types when considering the acquisition of future parkland to acknowledge the wide diversity of park users and park needs.
- 4.10 Provide an equitable distribution of neighbourhood and community parks throughout the Town through new park acquisition and development.
- 4.11 Seek strategic dedication or acquisition of parkland and public access that provide significant environmental and recreational benefit as a condition of development such as trail linkages, waterfront access, and recreational opportunities.
- 4.12 Secure multiple public plaza spaces in Downtown Comox ranging from 0.2-0.4 hectares in size through zoning amendment processes or strategic acquisitions.
- 4.13 Target access to a playground/Active Parkland within ~5 minute (~400m) of home for Comox residents within the Urban Containment Boundary.
- 4.14 Incrementally acquire land within the Town through purchase, dedication, and statutory rights-of-way as feasible to develop a contiguous community waterfront trail/route that connects Pioneer Memorial Park to Goose Spit Park, advocating to CVRD to do the same.
- 4.15 Improve trail connectivity to provide a broader scale network from the ocean to the upland extents of the Town.
- 4.16 Pursue acquisition or statutory right-of-way as part of subdivision, rezoning, or redevelopment of lands that would support trail linkages for the Ocean to Upland Trail Network as identified in the Parks and Trails Master Plan, existing greenways, or identified active transportation linkages.
- 4.17 Continue to improve the existing node of harbour and marina node and waterfront access on the harbour as a priority recreation interest for the Town.
- 4.18 Continue to identify priorities for new trails and implement improvements to existing trails as per the *CVRD Regional Active Transportation Network Plan*.
- 4.19 Manage trails in a manner that minimizes their impact on the natural environment and adjacent residential areas.
- 4.20 Work with private landowners to obtain formal access to trail corridors for recreational use



where appropriate.

- 4.21** Improve safety, accessibility, and wayfinding to parks, open spaces, and trails for community members of all ages and abilities.

### **Placemaking**

- 4.22** Highlight unique and culturally significant spaces in urban plazas and parks and provide spaces to celebrate a diversity of heritage, arts, and culture.
- 4.23** Consider the needs of diverse groups and cultures when designing public amenities and spaces.
- 4.24** Design for a variety of facilities and amenities that function for a diversity of ages and abilities in urban plazas and parks.
- 4.25** Provide natural vegetation buffers with existing mature trees retained to the greatest extent possible on both sides of Pritchard Road from Guthrie Road to Knight Road. The right-of-way width shall be at least 12.0 metres and dedicated to the Town or secured through statutory right-of-way, restrictive covenant, or another measure.

### **Partnerships**

- 4.26** Support the acquisition of regionally significant lands within the Town by the CVRD to fulfill regional park and trail goals.
- 4.27** Foster partnerships and collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation to build greater understanding, opportunities for education, and for celebrating culture within public parks and trails.
- 4.28** Collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation to guide the planning and management of the Northeast Woods lands in support of shared goals.
- 4.29** Encourage partnerships with other agencies and community groups to deliver high quality public space and park amenities, as well as maintenance agreements.
- 4.30** Promote shared public space in private developments for a variety of land uses through partnerships.
- 4.31** Continue collaborating with School District 71, Conseil scolaire francophone, and private schools on shared use agreements for community use of school sites on evenings and weekends.

## **Actions**



- 4.32** Update policy and requirements for parkland acquisition and dedication to ensure desirable parkland is secured through the Town's continued growth and development.
- 4.33** Implement and monitor progress on the Parks and Trails Master Plan.



# 5. Infrastructure

Most of Comox is serviced by a water system and sanitary sewer system as well as a storm water collection infrastructure. The responsibility for water and sanitary sewer systems is shared between the Town and the CVRD. The CVRD provides the Town with bulk treated water and storage while the Town provides the water distribution system. The Town provides the sanitary sewerage collection system and the CVRD is responsible for wastewater treatment needs. Comox has a municipal stormwater collection system and post-development flows are required to meet pre-development flows. Required system improvements to service the identified lands and land use designations in the Plan have been recognized in studies commissioned by the Town of Comox and are updated as needed.

Strategic investment and long-term infrastructure planning is required to support our growing community. Facilitating land use development in areas where infrastructure with servicing capacity already exists will improve the economic sustainability of infrastructure in Comox. Property tax revenues from low-density residential areas typically do not cover the costs of installing and maintaining publicly owned infrastructure, whereas revenues in high-density mixed-use areas typically exceed infrastructure costs. Property tax revenues from employment uses are also an important aspect of a sustainable and diversified tax based and can provide rationale for the infrastructure upgrades that can facilitate industrial development.

## Objectives

- 5(A.)** Ensure development funds infrastructure that contributes to the Guiding Principles of this OCP.
- 5(B.)** Require infrastructure upgrades and new installations required to service growth to be provided without subsidy from the Town or existing taxpayers.
- 5(C.)** Ensure that infrastructure planning is coordinated with ongoing development projections in addition to high level population, housing, industrial, commercial, and institutional growth projections.
- 5(D.)** Prioritize infrastructure investment decisions that align with community growth priorities and financial sustainability.
- 5(E.)** Work with regional partners to provide efficient infrastructure systems that capitalize on economies of scale.
- 5(F.)** Continually reduce daily per-capita water consumption.



## Objectives

- 5(G.)** Identify and value natural assets and incorporate into the Town's asset management plan.

## Policies

### General

- 5.1** Make infrastructure planning, investment, operations and maintenance decisions from an asset management perspective that considers long-term full life-cycle cost accounting. This includes design, maintenance and upgrades to infrastructure and utilities, including natural assets.
- 5.2** Design infrastructure to serve multiple purposes wherever appropriate. This includes coordinating with adjacent jurisdictions, other levels of government and utility service providers to ensure all infrastructure expansion and renewal projects consider multiple community objectives and agency needs.
- 5.3** Require the developer to fund costs of servicing growth to facilitate new development in Comox, and consider the use of front-end agreements, latecomer agreements, and similar cost-recovery tools where needed.
- 5.4** Collaborate and partner with K'ómoks First Nation, City of Courtenay, Comox Valley Regional District, and the Village of Cumberland in the planning, financing, and construction of infrastructure.

### Water

- 5.5** Continue to implement water conservation measures, including but not limited to:
- a) public education on installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures, drought-tolerant landscaping, rainwater catchment systems, and the use of grey water systems for toilets, lawns, and landscaping,
  - b) implementation of universal water metering, and
  - c) pricing on a user-pay basis.



## Sanitary Sewer

- 5.6 With the exception of parcels and building types exempt within the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, all new development and redevelopment must be connected to the Town's sanitary sewer system.
- 5.7 On-site private wastewater treatment will continue to be permitted where already in place, but strategic expansion of the Town's sewer service will be encouraged where needed, and funded by the developer, in support of removing on-site septic systems.
- 5.8 The Town will operate a sewerage collection system that will discharge into the CVRD regional trunk sewers and wastewater treatment operated by the CVRD. The Town does not envision the need for wastewater treatment or disposal within the Town's boundaries.

## Storm Water

- 5.9 Ensure the design and management of stormwater management systems will avoid impacts to downstream properties. Where development occurs, control should be included to limit runoff to pre-development conditions and not increase the flows to downstream infrastructure, creeks, streams or other natural environments.
- 5.10 Mimic natural ecosystem processes in rainwater system design and construction as much as possible. This includes minimizing runoff, maximizing infiltration, preserving and protecting the water absorbing capabilities of soil, vegetation and trees particularly along riparian corridors and minimizing impervious surfaces on both private and public lands.
- 5.11 Where a surface drainage system has been approved and designed to function within a park area or natural open space, it is not eligible as credit towards *Local Government Act* parkland dedication requirements at time of development, except at the Town's discretion; and must include appropriate maintenance access and landscaping.
- 5.12 Explore opportunities to retain excess stormwater through natural infrastructure.

## Other Services

- 5.13 The Town will continue to partner with Comox Strathcona Waste Management and utilize the Comox Valley Waste Management Centre for the disposal of organic material and landfill materials. Recyclables will continue to be delivered to the nearest Recycle BC approved Material Recovery Facility.
- 5.14 The Town will continue to support the implementation of various solid waste initiatives, including the provision of recycling and composting services for multi-unit development.



- 5.15** Collaborate with utility companies to coordinate the development and delivery of reliable, safe, and efficient electricity, natural gas, and other energy and communications infrastructure (e.g. solar, geothermal, etc.) to leverage efficiency, minimize costs, and mitigate negative impact to the community and to the environment.

## Actions

- 5.16** Update the Town's modelling and master planning every five years to inform capital planning, requirements for new development, and updates to the Development Cost Charge Bylaw.
- 5.17** Track development and building permit applications for proposed and approved units by housing type, number of units, and industrial/ commercial/institutional floorspace, by infrastructure servicing catchment, to track existing demand for services throughout the Town.
- 5.18** Update the Development Cost Charge and Amenity Cost Charge Bylaws annually based on the Consumer Price Index.
- 5.19** Complete comprehensive Development Cost Charges and Amenity Cost Charges Bylaw updates no less than every five calendar years.
- 5.20** Explore options such as subsidized or reduced utility and development fees/charges for water and sewer upgrades to support the viability of infill small-scale multi-unit housing development in the Ground-Oriented Residential designation to increase housing availability.
- 5.21** Develop and implement a fast-track stormwater management guide that provides standardized solutions to retention, detention, and filtration of stormwater on parcels within zones that permit SSMUH development to reduce burdens on municipal stormwater infrastructure from the increase of on-site impervious space.
- 5.22** Continue to seek grants and funding programs to implement mandatory water metering Town-wide.
- 5.23** Review and update the Flood Plain Designation Bylaw based on updated mapping of the 200-year floodplain that incorporates sea level rise modelling.
- 5.24** Explore potential amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and Highway Use Bylaw that would require the use of permeable and pervious materials in new parking lots and driveways.



# 6. Community Connection and Wellness

Community connection and wellbeing are fundamental aspects of a thriving society. When individuals feel connected to their community, they experience a sense of belonging and support that can significantly enhance quality of life. Wellbeing encompasses physical, social, mental, and emotional health. A community that prioritizes wellbeing ensures that its members have access to greenspace, healthcare, education, childcare, recreational facilities, diverse housing options, and more. Collaboration with government and other partners is vital to achieving long-term community connection and wellbeing.

## Objectives

- 6(A.)** Ensure that the built environment and community amenities are accessible and appropriate for all residents.
- 6(B.)** Increase opportunities to participate in place-making and community identity.
- 6(C.)** Continue to consult and collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation to advance reconciliation.
- 6(D.)** Support community and senior government partners in providing sufficient services such as special needs housing, childcare, education, healthcare and other social services.
- 6(E.)** Enhance resilience to climate change and environmental risks through emergency management and food security initiatives.

## Policies:

- 6.1** Plan for recreation facilities to be expanded in tandem with population growth to maintain long-term community livability, ensuring that costs are captured through the Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw.
- 6.2** Recognize the importance of d'Esterre House Seniors' Centre in supporting the physical, emotional and general well being of seniors and continue to support the operation of a senior's centre in Comox.



- 6.3** When the Town's public facilities are due for upgrades, complete accessibility audits and implement recommendations as part of renovations and upgrades.
- 6.4** Design all future Town public facilities to be universally accessible.
- 6.5** Encourage the efficient use of community facilities through multi-purpose operations, such as seniors' use during the morning/early afternoon, and youth use in the late afternoon/evening.
- 6.6** Continue to refer development permits applications to the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee for feedback on accessibility concerns.
- 6.7** Explore strategies to encourage the transformation of underused spaces into childcare facilities (e.g. schools, religious assembly spaces, and amenity spaces in strata developments).
- 6.8** Continue to support the operation of Filberg Heritage Lodge and Park by the non-profit Filberg Heritage Lodge and Park Association.
- 6.9** Work with K'ómoks First Nation to ensure protection of Indigenous cultural heritage and compliance with current and emerging legislation.
- 6.10** Collaborate with the owners of properties with heritage buildings or features with high conservation values to consider heritage designation.
- 6.11** When streets are being upgraded, consider the inclusion of neighbourhood place-making design features such as light post banners, standalone signs at key intersections, and placards on street signs.
- 6.12** Refer significant residential subdivision (more than 10 new lots) and zoning amendment applications (for more than 10 residential units) to Island Health to receive comment on how public health interventions can be integrated into developments.
- 6.13** Collaborate with Island Health planners to incorporate healthy built environment best practices into infrastructure and public space development, maintenance and upgrades.
- 6.14** Continue working with community organizations to identify how the Town can provide recreation programming that meets the needs of all ages and abilities.
- 6.15** Continue to advocate that School District 71 locate childcare centers, and especially before- and after-school care programs, on existing and future school sites.
- 6.16** Continue relationships with local schools and seek opportunities to include students in community engagement processes.
- 6.17** The Town will seek the expertise of seniors with respect to age friendly initiatives at the



regional level including for the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy when it is updated.

- 6.18** Promote the Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP) in partnership with Comox Valley Emergency Management.
- 6.19** Ensure regular collaboration with emergency service providers, including planning for a growing population.
- 6.20** Enhance youth recreation opportunities to maintain livability for families.
- 6.21** Collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation on community initiatives that support reconciliation and shared interests in community wellbeing.

## Actions

- 6.22** Implement the Town of Comox Accessibility Assessment and Action Plan, and review and update every five years.
- 6.23** Continue to provide temperature-related emergency services such as cooling stations and warming centers.
- 6.24** Continue to provide equitable access to community recreation through the Leisure for Everyone Accessibility Program (LEAP) and the Town of Comox Resident Inclusion Program TRIP programs, or future iterations thereof.
- 6.25** Continue to deliver youth recreation opportunities and support the Comox Youth Council.
- 6.26** Continue to support Nautical Days and the Filberg Festival, Music in the Park, Operation High Jump, Polar Bear Swim and other special events.
- 6.27** Continue to provide space for Pearl Ellis Gallery and CAMS.
- 6.28** Continue to support community Halloween and Christmas Market events.
- 6.29** Implement recommendations of the Comox Valley Child Care Action Plan.
- 6.30** Explore potential incentives for the creation of new childcare spaces.
- 6.31** Pursue provincial and federal funding opportunities for the creation of new childcare spaces.
- 6.32** Consider leasing Town-owned space in public parks and buildings to be used for the creation of new childcare spaces.
- 6.33** Consult with K'ómoks First Nation to identify appropriate areas for incorporating K'ómoks language, history and culture into naming, signage, and information in public spaces and



parks.

- 6.34** Consider permitting commercial childcare use in all residential zones in the Zoning Bylaw.
- 6.35** Consider the creation of a neighbourhood placemaking policy that provides grants for events and activities such as block parties, and public events/gatherings in neighbourhood parks.
- 6.36** Complete minor updates to the Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw every year to account for inflation as determined by the Consumer Price Index.
- 6.37** Complete major reviews and updates to the Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw every five years to ensure that amenities are commensurate with growth. Include public engagement to determine desired community amenities.
- 6.38** In addition to development application referrals, continue to inform School District 71 on projected growth to inform education planning.



# 7. Environment and Climate Action

Comox's natural environment is a diverse landscape that continues to support K'ómoks First Nation as well as other residents in the Valley. The community is home to a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including upland forests, streams, wetlands, and intertidal zones. Coastal ecosystems play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity and are vital for migratory birds, particularly those traveling along the Pacific Flyway. The K'ómoks Estuary is designated as an Important Bird Area, recognizing its role as a vital stopover and wintering habitat for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. It is also identified as a Class 2 estuary, reflecting its regional importance for habitat conservation and ecological function on the B.C. coast. Additionally, the bluffs facing the Strait of Georgia and Comox harbour require special management due to their geological features. These areas also support rare Garry Oak ecosystems which are of high ecological value and require targeted conservation efforts.



Since the mid-1800s, lands within and around the Town of Comox have been significantly altered to accommodate development, resulting in smaller, disconnected patches of habitat separated by roads, infrastructure, and buildings. The degradation of ecosystems threatens biodiversity and increases costs for local governments by eliminating the 'free' services provided by healthy ecosystems—also known as natural assets—such as carbon sequestration, stormwater management, and cooling.

The OCP bolsters the Town's Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment and the Urban Forest Management Strategy by ensuring that development mitigates environmental impacts and natural hazards.



## Objectives

- 7(A.)** Recognize and sustain the functional role of natural features such as wetlands, streams, forests, and shorelines in providing essential functions such as carbon sequestration, stormwater management, cooling that support community well-being and resilience to climate change.
- 7(B.)** Minimize the impacts of development on sensitive and other important ecosystems.
- 7(C.)** Identify, protect, restore, and connect sensitive and other important ecosystems, including municipal parks and conservation areas, to enhance biodiversity and ecological functions.
- 7(D.)** Foster climate action and increase the resilience of municipal facilities and infrastructure to climate change.
- 7(E.)** Work in collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation, government partners, and community groups to foster regional ecological connectivity and climate action objectives.
- 7(F.)** Protect, enhance, and expand the urban forest.

***An urban forest includes all the public and private-owned trees and the supporting vegetation in the Town of Comox. It includes all the individual trees and groups of trees located in natural areas, parks, backyards, on streets, and in commercial and industrial zones. It also includes other elements such as plants, water, soil, microorganisms, and wildlife. All these elements, the people, and the built environment can have a significant impact on the health of the urban forest.***



## Policies

### PLANNING AND DESIGN

#### Natural Assets

- 7.1** Plan, manage, and design municipal parks to support ecological processes that enhance watershed health, water quality, and the broader ecological and community benefits these systems provide.
- 7.2** Retain and restore native vegetation in coastal and riparian areas.
- 7.3** Encourage “soft” shoreline management techniques and “Green Shores” approaches through development processes to protect and restore coastal shorelines.
- 7.4** Seek opportunities to plant new trees on public lands, ensuring that public realm design standards accommodate large canopy trees when the private realm cannot, prioritizing tree planting in low tree equity areas as identified in the Urban Forest Management Strategy.
- 7.5** Preserve and expand tree and vegetation cover on steep slopes to minimize erosion and enhance other ecological functions.
- 7.6** Emphasize “right tree in the right location” to help ensure that trees will not have to be removed due to future conflicts with utility wires, infrastructure, building foundations, etc.
- 7.7** Encourage the retention of healthy, mature trees where feasible.

#### Infrastructure and Buildings

- 7.8** As public infrastructure is maintained or renewed, assess potential risks from sea level rise and evaluate adaptation or risk mitigation strategies to enhance long-term resilience to sea level rise.
- 7.9** Encourage builders and developers that pursue green building certifications such as Passive House, Net Zero Home, and LEED.

### ACQUISITION

- 7.10** Seek public ownership of land adjacent to Brooklyn Creek to form a continuous, naturalized Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area as identified in the Parks and Trails Master Plan.



- 7.11** Seek public ownership of lands to connect Brooklyn Creek Park to Skeena Park and the Northeast Woods as identified in the Parks and Trails Master Plan to support biodiversity and enhance ecological connectivity.
- 7.12** Prioritize the acquisition of parcels that contain sensitive ecosystems or are vulnerable to flooding, such as those within riparian areas or coastal zones, to support long-term ecological health and climate resilience.
- 7.13** Enhance and maintain the ecological function and biodiversity of sensitive ecosystems such as the K'ómoks Estuary, Lazo Marsh, and Brooklyn Creek through restoration, land acquisition, lot consolidation, and dedication during development.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- 7.14** Collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation to understand and support their priorities for stewardship, restoration, and protection of sensitive and other important ecosystems.
- 7.15** Collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation, CVRD, City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, and other interest holders on regional initiatives including biodiversity corridors, climate change mitigation, and shared ecosystem management priorities such as the K'ómoks Estuary.
- 7.16** Collaborate with CVRD, K'ómoks First Nation, City of Courtenay, and Village of Cumberland to coordinate regional climate change mitigation and adaptation planning initiatives.
- 7.17** Support the regional Solid Waste Management Plan and initiatives for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.

## Actions

- 7.18** Monitor progress toward achieving emissions targets and actions identified in the Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment.

**Table 4: Greenhouse Gas Emissions targets as identified in the Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment (2024).**

Year	Provincial Emissions Reduction Goal	Annual Emissions Targets for Comox
2007	Baseline Year	72,600 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
2025	16% below 2007	61,000 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
2030	40% below 2007	43,600 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
2040	60% below 2007	29,100 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
2050	80% below 2007	14,500 tCO <sub>2</sub> e



- 7.19** Monitor progress toward achieving canopy cover targets and actions identified in the Urban Forest Management Strategy.
- 7.20** Review and update Comox Tree Management and Protection Bylaw No. 1125, 1994, to include all lands in Comox and ensuring tree replacement on development sites exceeds the existing number trees.
- 7.21** Review and update Town of Comox Flood Plain Designation Bylaw No. 1474.
- 7.22** Encourage the development of Environmental Farm Plans, especially on ALR lands on which Brooklyn Creek is located, to improve the long-term health of Brooklyn Creek and the marine environment of the Comox Harbour, and increase efficiency, profitability, and new customers for farmers as a result of increased environmental sustainability. This includes the exploration of grant funding that could assist in the development of Environmental Farm Plans such as through grants offered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.
- 7.23** Collaborate with the CVRD to update environmental mapping that highlights critical information, such as sensitive ecosystems, watercourses and riparian areas, parks and greenways, and working landscapes, including in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- 7.24** Consider completing a Town-wide assessment of riparian areas to classify streams and wetlands and update the Riparian Ecosystems Development Permit Area with clearly defined Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area provisions and requirements, which will ensure alignment with provincial regulations and improve clarity for applicants during development application processes.
- 7.25** Partner with Bee City Canada to facilitate habitat creation and management, education and engagement, and celebration during Bee City Pollinator Week.
- 7.26** Work with and educate private land holders on the benefits of protecting and enhancing sensitive and other important ecosystems.



# 8. Reconciliation

The Town of Comox respectfully acknowledges that it is located on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the first inhabitants of these lands. The Town is bordered by K'ómoks First Nation lands to the west (IR #1) and south (IR #3, Goose Spit) and recognizes K'ómoks First Nation as a neighbouring level of government and an important partner.

The Town seeks to engage meaningfully with K'ómoks First Nation through a respectful, collaborative relationship. The Town is committed to working with K'ómoks First Nation, Indigenous residents, organizations, and other levels of government to advance long-term shared priorities and reconciliation efforts within the Comox Valley.

Although this policy section focuses on fostering strong government-to-government relationships, the OCP aims to incorporate reconciliation throughout the various sections of the OCP.

## Objectives

- 8(A.)** Maintain a respectful, collaborative, government-to-government relationship with K'ómoks First Nation, recognizing the Nation's shifting status as a Treaty Nation.
- 8(B.)** Meaningfully collaborate with K'ómoks First Nation to advance shared priorities and manage overlapping interests.
- 8(C.)** Identify opportunities to recognize and integrate K'ómoks' culture and heritage in public spaces.

## Policies

- 8.1** Engage with K'ómoks First Nation on projects that could impact archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, or heritage resources, ensuring that Cultural Heritage Investigation Permit (CHIP) and Heritage Conservation Act permits are obtained where needed.
- 8.2** Work with K'ómoks First Nation to develop and implement protocol agreements and/or memorandums of understanding to establish processes for sharing information and managing referrals.
- 8.3** Continue to engage in ongoing, meaningful dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation to advance shared priorities identified in the Nation's Comprehensive Community Plan, including collaboration related to lands, infrastructure, governance, the environment and



wildlife, economic development, and community resilience.

**8.4** Consider opportunities for the Town to acknowledge shared efforts with K'ómoks by means of public celebration and formal recognition.

**8.5** Undertake actions to welcome and meaningfully include local First Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples in the current fabric of Comox, with consideration of:

- incorporating Indigenous languages on public signage.
- commemorating K'ómoks' culture and heritage in public spaces.
- involving K'ómoks in Town events.
- increasing opportunities for Indigenous public art.
- encouraging First Nations and Urban Indigenous cultural celebrations.



## PART 4

# Growth and Land Use Policies

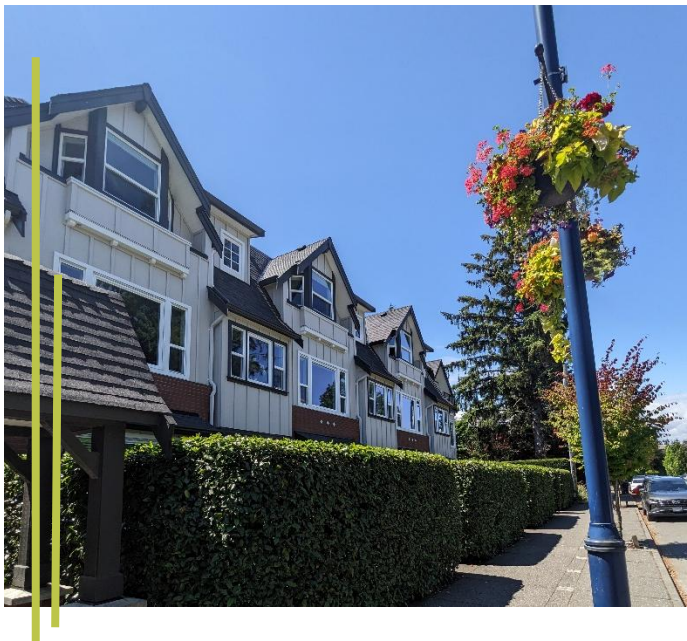
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TOWN OF  
**COMOX**

# 9. Future Growth Concept

The Town undertook a Complete Communities Growth Assessment (CCGA) in 2024 that informs the Future Growth Concept of the OCP. Complete communities have ample daily needs (e.g. work, school, childcare, amenities, etc.) that can be accessed with active and public transportation from a diversity of housing options. The CCGA includes a geospatial analysis that identifies access to daily needs, existing housing density, likelihood of (re)development, and transportation access throughout the Town. The OCP identifies Growth Areas and Neighbourhood Mixed-Use Nodes in alignment with the findings of the CCGA to improve community completeness as Comox grows.



Growth management helps communities achieve sustainable development and maintain a high quality of life. By prioritizing new development in areas with infrastructure servicing efficiencies and limiting the impacts of development on natural areas, growth is environmentally responsible and economically viable. Establishing an Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and limiting municipal services beyond that boundary helps to control urban sprawl and protect valuable agricultural and natural lands. Growth management also promotes increased density in areas with commercial and institutional uses, supporting walkability, transit service levels, and business health.



There are three types of Growth Areas identified in Figure 7, including Corridor, Centre, Infill Area, and Neighbourhood Mixed Use Node:

**CORRIDOR**

**Guthrie-Anderton Corridor:**

- The Comox Valley's most frequent Route #1 runs from Downtown Comox along Anderton Road and Guthrie Road to the North Island College/Hospital/Aquatic Centre area, through Downtown Courtenay, to Driftwood Mall in South Courtenay as shown on the OCP Transit Network map.
- The Airport Zoning Regulation in Comox limits building height in much of this Growth Area to 15 metres, with some exempt sites up to 25 metres. There are development opportunities on large properties that are well-served by daily needs and public transit.

**Harbourview Corridor:**

- The Harbourview Corridor is adjacent to Comox Avenue, west of Downtown. Most of the area does not have Airport Zoning Regulations and buildings up to six storeys are permitted in much of the Corridor. The future of the decommissioned St. Joseph's Hospital site is a key aspect of Harbourview that is envisioned to include market housing, supportive housing for seniors, and commercial services in a prime location on the waterfront. Residential densities will support commercial uses in Downtown Comox and future commercial uses in Harbourview that are a component of mixed-use developments.

**Airport Corridor:**

- This Growth Area includes a variety of land uses and will function as a node providing commercial services, employment opportunities, and increased housing diversity in North Comox. The south end is adjacent to Northeast Woods Park, an expansive passive park area with a diverse trail network that connects to Lazo Wildlife Park and Marsh, Highland Secondary School, and Brooklyn Elementary School. East-west regional greenways are envisioned along Dryden Road between Anderton Road and Cambridge Road that would connect Courtenay to Comox and Northeast Woods Park.
- This Corridor includes some of the last remaining greenfield parcels with development potential in the Town. It will require considerable investment to upgrade services to accommodate growth, which will be provided without subsidy from the Town. The inclusion of infrastructure projects to service this Corridor in the DCC Bylaw may be considered second priority compared to other Growth Areas, but higher priority than areas of the Town not identified as Growth Areas.
- The Business Park designation in this Centre is intended to provide regionally serving employment lands that contribute to the efficient operation of the Airport and 19 Wing Comox. Lands owned by the Department of National Defence are included in the Centre to identify the Town's support for continued growth, but this is ultimately up to the Department of National Defence. Department of National Defence lands



include recreation uses and commercial services that benefit Town residents and have potential to be scaled up in collaboration with the Town as Comox grows.

#### **Downtown Centre:**

### **CENTRE**

- The Downtown Centre is envisioned as a character-rich mixed-use centre in the heart of Comox. There are many existing commercial services that draw visitors from throughout the Comox Valley, and tourists from beyond the Comox Valley. The Comox Valley marinas are also in Downtown Comox, making it a particularly lively area in the warmer months. Filberg Heritage Lodge and Park is just east of Downtown and functions as a regional and tourist attraction.
- Residential and mixed-use development can make Downtown Comox a more vibrant centre during off hours and throughout the year, but it will require attention to detail to be compatible with the character that residents know and love. Buildings fronting Comox Avenue should be encouraged to provide retail commercial units on building faces fronting Comox Avenue to create a lively, animated street.

#### **West Comox Infill Area:**

### **INFILL AREA**

- This area is characterized by a grid road network with parcel sizes and building ages that indicate it may have a greater likelihood for infill small-scale multi-unit housing development compared to other areas of the Town. It is designated Ground Oriented Residential, which supports a variety of building types up to three storeys in height. There will be a need to consider the condition of services to accommodate potential infill growth.

#### **Central Comox Infill Area:**

- This infill area is just north of the Downtown Centre and close to the Comox Community Centre and multiple schools. There are large parcels in the area that are appropriate for parcel consolidation to facilitate townhouse development beyond four units on a parcel. Infill growth in this area will enhance business viability and vitality in Downtown Comox.

#### **Mixed Use Nodes:**

### **MIXED USE NODE**

- Beckton
- Highland
- Dogwood
- There are three mixed-use nodes identified in east Comox to provide access to daily needs in what are currently residential neighbourhoods. The nodes include the Low-Rise Mixed-Use designation to sensitively add commercial services and housing diversity at key intersections in buildings up to four storeys. The preferred ground-level commercial uses are those that people use regularly, such as childcare, small grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, fitness centres, and cafés. Commercial office spaces that are used more sporadically, such as health and professional offices, are preferred above the first storey. Residential apartment





units are also encouraged above the first or second storey with residential parking under the structure.





# TOWN OF COMOX

## OCP Growth Areas

### Town of Comox Growth Areas

#### Priority Growth Areas

- Downtown Centre
- Guthrie-Anderton Corridor
- Harbour View Corridor

#### Secondary Growth Areas

- Airport Corridor

#### Infill Areas

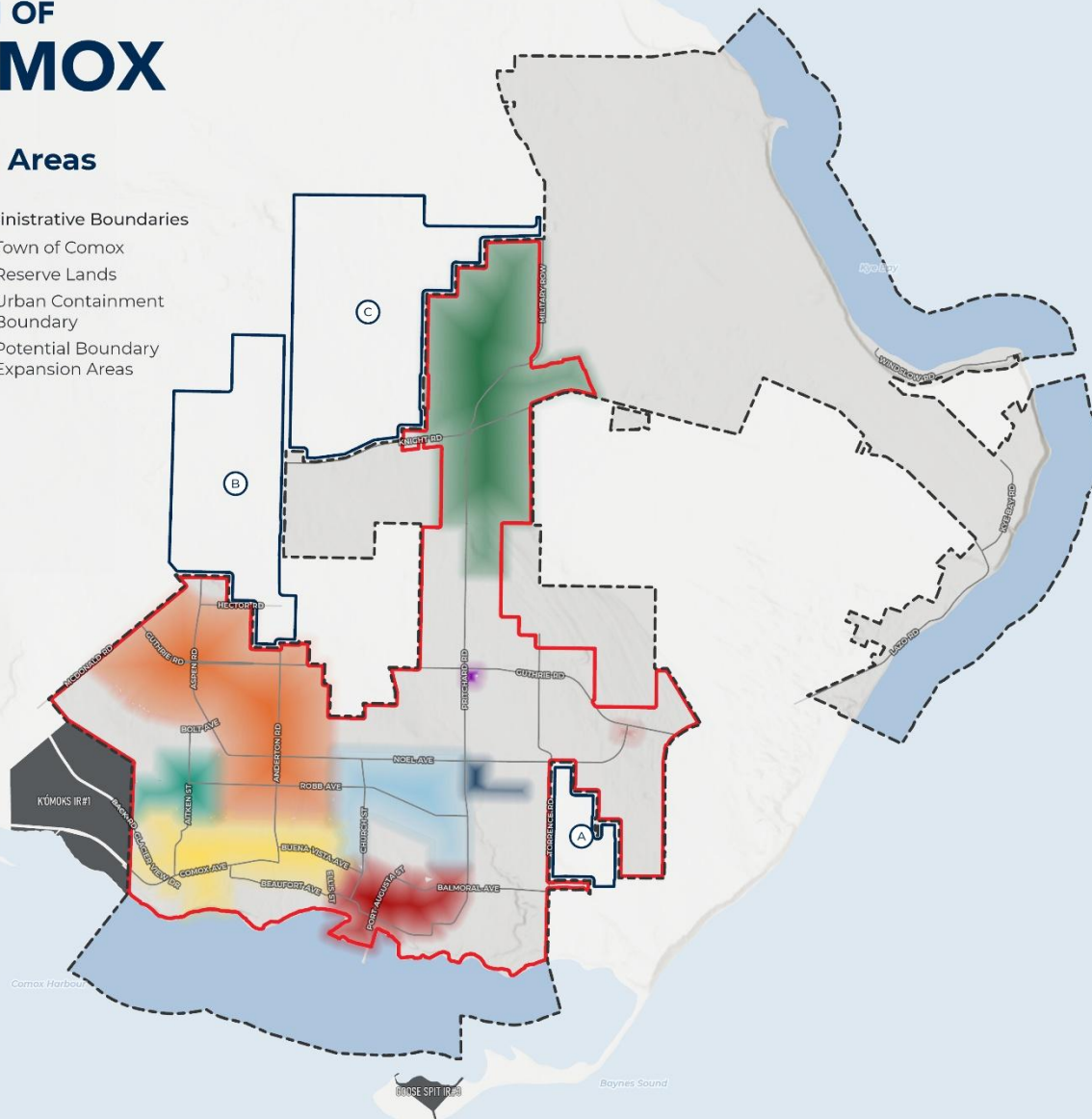
- Central Comox
- West Comox

#### Mixed-Use Nodes

- Beckton
- Highland
- Dogwood

### Administrative Boundaries

- Town of Comox
- Reserve Lands
- Urban Containment Boundary
- Potential Boundary Expansion Areas



1,000

Meters

Scale: 1:30,000  
(When Printed at 11 x 17")

Figure 7 - OCP Growth Areas



## Objectives

- 9(A.)** Prioritize new development in areas that have infrastructure servicing efficiencies to support long-term financial sustainability.
- 9(B.)** Increase density in and around areas with concentrations of commercial and institutional uses, public amenities, and access to public and active transportation infrastructure to support walkability, increased transit service levels, and business health.
- 9(C.)** Minimize impacts of development on agricultural and natural areas by encouraging growth within the Urban Containment Boundary.

## Policies

- 9.1** Prioritize growth at the highest densities in the Harbourview Corridor and Downtown Centre, and moderate to high densities in the Guthrie-Anderton Corridor as identified on OCP Future Land Use and OCP Growth Areas maps. Encourage development in these areas to be at the maximum potential buildout that is achievable with the applicable land use designation.
- 9.2** Prioritize Ground Oriented Residential growth in the West and Central Comox Infill Areas.
- 9.3** Support zoning amendment and subdivision applications that consolidate parcels for development of more than 4 units per parcel in the Central Comox Infill Area.
- 9.4** Support mixed-use development in neighbourhood mixed-use nodes to provide convenient access to daily needs within walking distance.
- 9.5** In the Neighbourhood Nodes, ensure that ground-level commercial uses are those that people use regularly, such as childcare, small grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, fitness facilities, and cafés. Commercial office spaces that are used more sporadically, such as health and professional offices, should be above the first storey.
- 9.6** In Neighbourhood Nodes, residential apartment units are encouraged above the first or second storey with residential parking under the structure to provide for housing diversity within established neighbourhoods that are primarily single-detached residential.
- 9.7** Limit support for subdivision and extension of infrastructure services beyond the UCB as identified in OCP Growth Areas map, subject to Policies 8.11-8.14 below (not including minor or technical subdivisions at the Town's discretion, such as lot line adjustments and road, greenway, and park land dedication).



- 9.8** Limit further subdivision of parcels within the Flood Extents as identified on OCP DPA - Hazardous Conditions map, to mitigate the impacts of flooding to new buildings and septic systems.
- 9.9** Do not support Agricultural Land Reserve subdivision and exclusion applications unless it is demonstrated that there is a significant lack of future agricultural viability, and that there will be significant benefits to the community.
- 9.10** Continue to pursue an exemption of Kye Bay from provincial Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing requirements due to servicing constraints, environmental impacts, geotechnical risks, flood hazard, physical separation of the area from the remainder of the Town, and the area being outside the UCB.

### **Long Term Growth Reserve**

The Town of Comox is bordered by K'ómoks First Nation to the west (IR#1) and south (IR#3), the City of Courtenay to the west, and by rural residential, agricultural, and natural areas within the CVRD on its other borders. The Regional Growth Strategy identifies rural residential lands bordering the Town as Settlement Expansion Areas. The 2011 OCP identified three potential boundary expansion areas within the Settlement Expansion Areas. Where greenfield areas are available for development, public and private resources are directed to those areas and can detract from growth within other priority growth areas. This OCP is focused on growth within existing Town boundaries to prioritize sustainable development patterns and resource efficiencies.

### **Partial Boundary Expansions**

Partial Boundary Expansions incorporate a portion, but not all, of Area A, B, or C as shown on Figure 7. They can slowly expand Town boundaries, but are not guided by cohesive land use, environmental management, or engineering services plans. As a result, ongoing Partial Boundary Expansions can lead to patchwork growth that erodes future opportunities for cohesive planning. They may be considered in limited circumstances where aligned with the following policies.

- 9.11** Consider Partial Boundary Expansions that are contiguous with existing Town boundaries, within a portion of a Boundary Expansion Area identified on Figure 8 and the OCP Growth Areas map, subject to compliance with the Regional Growth Strategy, and the following to be secured prior to subdivision approval and final reading of a zoning amendment bylaw:
- a) The extension of municipal services and installation of new infrastructure is required at the applicant's expense, unless the impetus for service extension is failing private services that present a significant public health risk as determined by Island Health.
  - b) The provision of land for, and construction of, an active park that includes amenities that are needed in the community as identified in the



Parks and Trails Master Plan at a rate of 3.2 hectares per 1000 residents based on build-out population for the area, or cash-in-lieu, in addition to minimum parkland dedication requirements.

- c) Provision of a grid road network with greenway and cycling connections that tie into the Town's existing networks, and no new driveways connecting to an arterial or major collector road as identified on the OCP Road Network map.
- d) Proposed land uses are compatible with adjacent land uses as identified on OCP Future Land Use map.

### **Strategic Boundary Expansion**

Figure 7 identifies Potential Boundary Expansion Areas A, B, and C that are outside of the existing UCB. These are potential greenfield development areas that would be guided by public engagement and analysis of existing environmental conditions to determine whether they are suitable for further consideration of incorporation into the Town. If it is determined that a Potential Boundary Expansion Area under consideration is suitable for greenfield development, comprehensive Local Area Plans and Engineering Services Plans would be created to guide development.

**9.12** Consider a Strategic Boundary Expansion to incorporate a Potential Boundary Expansion Area into the Town if needed in the future to meet housing need as identified in the Housing Needs Report, subject to compliance with the RGS, and the following:

- a) Completion of a feasibility analysis to determine the suitability of physical conditions for greenfield development, including but not limited to consideration of geotechnical and environmental conditions.
- b) Identification of watershed boundaries to refine the boundary expansion area and form future Local Area Plan boundaries.

**9.13** Where a Potential Boundary Expansion Area is incorporated into the Town, in addition to RGS policies, require the following to be completed prior to an OCP amendment that identifies land use designations for the area, and prior to consideration of subdivision and rezoning applications (except applications related to the use of land consistent with the existing land uses of the area):

- a) Completion of a Local Area Plan and Engineering Services Plan that outline a cohesive and financially sustainable growth framework that aligns with complete community planning principles, including consideration of employment lands.



- 9.14** Require a new Local Area Plan to be mostly built out prior to consideration of any further Strategic Boundary Expansions to ensure timely completion of the road network, services, and amenities required to service growth in the area.



# Land Use Designations

Land use designations will guide growth and development in Comox over the next 20 years as shown on the OCP Future Land Use map, and provide specificity to the Growth Concept outlined in Section 8 – Future Growth Concept, while contributing to fulfilling the Guiding Principles outlined in Part 1 - Context, and Objectives in Part 2 – Community Policies. The Development Permit Areas in Section X provide guidelines for the form and character of development as per the land use designations.

Land use designations provide a vision for the future that often differs from how parcels are currently used, while the Zoning Bylaw regulates the current use. Some parcels are currently suitable for development and others will require zoning amendments, subdivision, consolidation, and/or infrastructure upgrades to develop based on the land use designation.



As outlined in Part 1 – Context, there is a need for more missing middle housing in Comox. In June 2024, the Town amended zoning of most parcels that used to be limited to one single-detached dwelling and accessory dwelling unit to permit up to four dwelling units per parcel. As part of the 2025 OCP and Zoning Bylaw updates, select parcels in Growth Areas have been pre-zoned to facilitate townhouse development, a common form of missing middle housing.

The Town will ensure coordination with other plans and bylaws as development takes place, such as infrastructure Master Plans, the Development Cost Charges Bylaw and the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw. Strategic Planning documents such as the Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment, Parks and Trails Master Plan, and Urban Forest Management Strategy provide actions the Town is taking to respect the environment, improve livability, and address climate change as Comox grows.



# 10. Ground Oriented Residential

The Ground Oriented Residential designation supports a variety of housing types such as single-detached dwellings, duplexes, townhouses, accessory dwelling units, and houseplexes, in buildings up to three storeys in height. Development within the Ground Oriented Residential designation encompasses small-scale multi-unit housing with 1-6 dwelling units on a parcel, as well as strata townhouses and fee-simple rowhouses, with more than 6 dwelling units on larger parcels.



## Policies

**10.1** Consider support for parcel consolidation and zoning amendments for more than four dwelling units per parcel on sites that align with one or both of the following:

- a) Frontage on a major collector or arterial road as shown on the OCP Road Network map.
- b) Located within a Primary Growth Area, Mixed-Use Node, or the Central Comox Infill Area.



- 10.2** Where buildings with units accessed from an internal corridor are proposed under Policy 9.1, parcel frontage shall not exceed 60 metres.
- 10.3** Permit buildings up to three storeys in height.
- 10.4** In addition to small-scale multi-unit housing and strata development, encourage the development of fee-simple rowhouses with vertically separated units, where each unit fronts a public street, with parking accessed from a rear lane, and the land on which the units are located is divided into fee-simple lots with zero-lot line setbacks (except on end units).
- 10.5** For subdivision to create SSMUH parcels with a new road network, encourage vehicle parking to be provided from a rear lane unless not feasible, to provide the following benefits:
- c) Increased front-yard area to accommodate landscaping and trees.
  - d) A safer and more enjoyable pedestrian environment.
  - e) Increased on-street parking.
  - f) A more efficient use of parcel area for SSMUH buildings.



# 11. Low-Rise and Mid-Rise Residential

The Low-, Mid-Rise Residential designations are intended to facilitate residential apartment development close to existing and planned mixed-use areas, transit routes, and the active transportation network. Townhouse development is also supported in the Low-Rise Residential designation, while apartment development is preferred in the Mid-Rise Residential designation to provide sufficient density for commercial vibrancy and frequent transit viability. The locations and densities for this designation will contribute to facilitating vibrant mixed-use centres and increased transit service levels throughout the Town.



## Policies

**11.1** The Low-Rise Residential land use designation supports apartment, townhouse and rowhouse building forms.

**11.2** Building heights should be up to the following:

- a) **Low-Rise Residential:** 4 storeys
- b) **Mid-Rise Residential:** 6 storeys

**11.3** Commercial child-care facilities are permitted on the first storey.

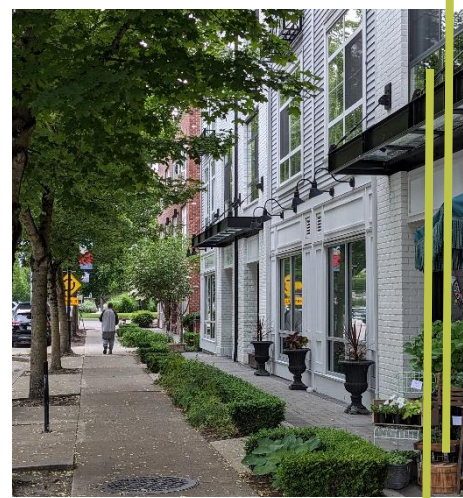


- 11.4** Encourage point-access block/single stair buildings on small parcels that might otherwise be consolidated; point access block/single stair buildings provide opportunities for a higher proportion of units with two or more exterior walls than typical double-loaded corridor buildings, resulting in improved cross ventilation and natural light.
- 11.5** Support the incorporation of ground-oriented units, including multi-storey townhouse-type units, in the design of apartment developments to support a variety of household types and sizes.
- 11.6** Encourage the incorporation of units with three or more bedrooms in apartment buildings that are within 400 metres of a school.
- 11.7** Support increased density provisions where more than 80% of parking required in the Zoning Bylaw is in under-building structures.
- 11.8** Within the Mid-Rise Residential Designation, buildings or portions of buildings that are directly adjacent to Ground Oriented Residential parcels should be a maximum of 4 storeys or step down to 4 storeys; for clarity, this does not apply where there is a public road separating the parcels.



# 12. Low- and Mid-Rise Mixed-Use

Mixed-Use designations support the development of nodes and corridors with multi-unit residential, commercial, and institutional uses serviced by active and public transportation infrastructure. As Comox grows, mixed-use development will be crucial for creating a complete community where residents can easily access daily needs such as work, education, childcare recreation, and health services without passenger vehicles.



## Policies

- 12.1** Maximum building height shall be up to 4 storeys in the Low-Rise Mixed-Use designation and 6 storeys in the Mid-Rise Mixed-Use designation.
- 12.2** Facilitate commercial, residential and institutional use development. For clarity, multiple uses or a single use are permitted except as outlined in policies 11.4 and 11.5 below.
- 12.3** Where uses are split into different buildings on large development sites, prioritize commercial/institutional buildings as street-fronting, and residential buildings on internal portions of the site as feasible where not all buildings are street-fronting.
- 12.4** Commercial or institutional uses should be provided at grade on building faces on both street frontages of corner parcels of prominent intersections, including arterial/arterial, arterial/major collector, and major collector/major collector intersections as identified on the OCP Road Network map.



- 12.5** Zoning amendments for residential-only development on sites identified in policy 11.4 will be considered where the developer can demonstrate undue financial hardship associated with the development of commercial uses as identified in a report prepared by a reputable land economist (e.g. insufficient market size to support additional commercial uses in the proposed location at point-of-time of development). In these cases, efforts should be made to activate the street corner with public open space, or the location of active, transparent building amenity features such as fitness centres on the corner at grade.
- 12.6** Commercial uses are required fronting the Downtown Road as delineated on the OCP Road Network map. Retail uses are encouraged to retain a lively, interactive street.
- 12.7** Within the Mid-Rise Mixed-Use Designation, buildings or portions of buildings that are directly adjacent to Ground Oriented Residential parcels should be a maximum of 4 storeys or step down to 4 storeys; for clarity, this does not apply where there is a public road separating the parcels.



# 13. Harbour & Marina Comprehensive Development Area

The Harbour and Marina Comprehensive Development Area designation applies to the privately-owned Comox Valley Marina and seaplane terminal. Adjacent to Marina Park, Town Hall, and Downtown Comox, the area is highly visible for residents and businesses in Comox, in addition to being visible from Royston and the City of Courtenay across the Comox Harbour. It has the potential for an exceptional contribution to economic development in the region by providing ocean-view hotel space and other tourist-oriented commercial uses, which could in turn increase the frequency of seaplane flights throughout the year. There could also be opportunities for public amenities on the parcel that would complement Marina Park.



## Policies

- 13.1** Support the development of mixed-use commercial buildings up to six storeys in height, with or without residential uses.
- 13.2** Provide tourist-oriented commercial uses at grade, such as restaurant, cafe, bar, spa, bicycle/stand-up-paddleboard/kayak rental shop, and/or boutique retail shops.
- 13.3** Development should result in a high degree of pedestrian permeability to allow pedestrians to easily connect from the waterfront walkway to Marina Park, Beaufort Avenue, and Wilcox Street.
- 13.4** Given the prominent and highly visible location of this land use designation, buildings must display exemplary and unique architectural design that weaves into the Downtown



Comox setting.

- 13.5** Attention to building design must be commensurate with the landmark location of the site and should involve early engagement with the Town.
- 13.6** Upon receipt of an OCP amendment application, consider support for buildings more than six storeys in height, where:
- a) Hotel space is a significant component of the development.
  - b) A privately owned and maintained public space is provided adjacent to the waterfront walkway on the south end of the designation.



# 14. Harbour and Marina

The Harbour and Marina area is an important cultural feature of Comox, facilitating public access to sea travel and activities. The Harbour and Marina land use designation supports the continued use of water parcels for commercial fishers, seaplane terminals, marina and ancillary uses.



## Policies

- 14.1** Continue the marina use of water parcels.
- 14.2** The potential for future expansion of the marinas should be retained subject to identification and mitigation of environmental impacts and consultation with K'ómoks First Nation given the archeological sensitivities and proximity of Goose Spit IR#3.
- 14.3** Continue to collaborate with the Comox Valley Marina to ensure safe and efficient operation with the Comox Municipal Marina.



# 15. Business Park

The Business Park designation is intended to provide more local jobs as Comox grows. In addition to light industrial uses, limited commercial uses will contribute to the efficient operation of Business Parks and the Comox Valley Airport in the Airport Corridor Business Park. All development will be sensitive to the surrounding rural context and compatible with adjacent institutional and residential uses.



## Policies

- 15.1** Encourage uses that have a high job-to-floorspace ratio, such as, but not limited to, scientific and technical development, light manufacturing, aerospace engineering and service, wholesale outlets, equipment servicing and repair, brewery and distillery, and packing and processing.
- 15.2** Support commercial uses that contribute to the efficient operation of the Comox Valley Airport, such as, but not limited to, taxi dispatch, vehicle rentals, hotel, and conference centre.
- 15.3** Discourage inefficient job-to-floorspace ratio light industrial and large-format commercial uses, such as, but not limited to self-storage, outdoor storage, truck/ trailer/RV/boat parking and salvage yard.
- 15.4** Support limited service commercial uses to contribute to the efficient operation of the Business Park, such as service stations, restaurants, cafes, showrooms, tasting rooms, and brewpubs.
- 15.5** Consider support for zoning amendments or temporary use permits that would allow for



the relocation of gravel and organics storage and sales uses within the Business Park designation to facilitate expansion of the Comox Valley Airport.



# 16. Institutional

The Institutional designation applies to existing public, assembly, non-profit, health care, and special needs housing uses. As Comox grows, there will be a need to scale up services such as healthcare, education, childcare, parks, community centres, and emergency services. Concerted efforts to combine institutional uses will be needed to improve community completeness and the efficient use of land.



## Policies

- 16.1** Prioritize long-term institutional use of existing Institutional parcels to ensure there is sufficient land within the UCB to meet community needs. Consider support for zoning amendments that incorporate affordable homeownership and/or rental-tenure dwelling units on existing assembly use parcels with building heights that are compatible with surrounding uses.
- 16.2** Encourage the provision of non-profit housing on Institutional parcels where feasible, including future Institutional use parcels such as firehalls, police stations, recreation centres, healthcare facilities, places of worship, and civic buildings.
- 16.3** Encourage the continued institutional use of Institutional parcels between Rodello Street and Gladstone Street, north of Fairbairn Avenue (Lot 1, Plan VIP40282, Section 1, Comox Land District, & Dedicated Road Covered By PL 40909R Comox Elementary (PID: 000101-354); Lot 2, Plan VIP40283, Section 1, Comox Land District (PID: 000-101-371); Plan VIP40909, Section 1, Comox Land District, Contained within said PL (PID: 000-515-132)), as a future school/park, recreation centre, or other institutional use to accommodate



residential growth in Comox.

**16.4** The development of new schools should include consideration for the following:

- a) Wherever possible, elementary schools should not be developed adjacent to arterial roads.
- b) Facilities should be designed and managed to maximize joint public use of recreational activities.
- c) Joint use agreements between the Town and the public school districts for use and maintenance of facilities are encouraged.
- d) Acquisition of land for municipal parks adjacent to schools.
- e) The provision of off-site road, sidewalk, boulevard, transit bay and utilities required to service a school use should be secured prior to rezoning or developing lands for school use.

**16.5** Encourage community gardens in the Institutional designation.



# 17. 19 Wing Comox / Comox Valley Airport

The 19 Wing Comox / Comox Valley Airport designation applies to lands owned by the Canadian Department of National Defence within the Town of Comox. The 19 Wing Comox Canadian Forces Base, Comox Airforce Museum and public Comox Valley Airport and Glacier Greens Golf Club are also located on these lands. A variety of military housing and services are within the designation, and some services have limited availability for public use, such as the 19 Wing Fitness and Community Centre. School District 71 also leases land for the public Airport Elementary School.

The Town of Comox recognizes the regional and national significance of 19 Wing Comox and the Comox Valley Airport, in addition the other current uses in the designation, and supports continued collaboration with the Department of National Defence and Comox Valley Airport Commission to enhance access and operations.

## Policies

- 17.1** Collaborate with 19 Wing Comox on the potential of shared use agreements for the public use of recreation facilities.
- 17.2** Enhance active transportation infrastructure on key routes to 19 Wing Comox and the Comox Valley Airport.



## Non-Urban Land Uses

The following land use designations are outside of the Urban Containment Boundary and not generally envisioned as supporting new development.

# 18. Agricultural

The Agricultural designation applies to Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) parcels in Comox and is intended for long-term farm use to support the local economy and food security.

## Policies

**18.1** Do not support ALR subdivision or exclusion applications, except as identified in policy 9.9.

## Actions

**18.2** Review and monitor Town bylaws, policies, plans, and procedures to ensure consistency with ALC legislation and regulations.



# 19. Detached Residential

The Detached Residential designation applies to the Point Holmes and Kye Bay areas, and one parcel at the intersection of Anderton Road and Knight Road adjacent to ALR lands and rural CVRD lands. Growth and development on these lands will be limited due to the lack of adequate sewer services and unplanned future sewer services.

The Point Holmes and Kye Bay areas are home to exceptional public beaches, and a waterfront trail runs through Point Holmes. However, these areas are functionally separate from the Town of Comox and outside of the Urban Containment Boundary. Upgraded sewer services to accommodate growth would be financially prohibitive and not in the public interest of Town taxpayers. These lands also include hazardous steep slope and sensitive marine ecosystem conditions. For these reasons, zoning amendments to permit small-scale multi-unit housing are not appropriate and the Town will seek permanent exemption from provincial legislation requiring the adoption of SSMUH zoning in Point Holmes and Kye Bay.

## Policies

- 19.1** Limit support for zoning amendment applications that would permit non-residential uses or smaller residential parcel sizes than existing zoning, except for utility use, or where the Town determines that proposed zoning amendments would be in the public interest.
- 19.2** Limit support for subdivision applications without municipal water and wastewater service.
- 19.3** Consider support for subdivision applications that propose protection of sensitive ecosystems through land dedication, land trusts, ecogifts (e.g. land dedication for park above and beyond 5% parkland dedication requirement), density transfer, restrictive covenants and similar measures to protect sensitive ecosystems as identified on OCP DPA - Sensitive Ecosystems Map.
- 19.4** Do not support further subdivision of parcels along Kye Bay Road from Knight Road up to and including 1139 Kye Bay Road (Lot 1, District Lot 93, Comox District, Plan 32578).
- 19.5** The minimum parcel size for the subdivision of land in the Point Holmes/Cape Lazo area north of 1139 Kye Bay Road (Lot 1, District Lot 93, Comox District, Plan 32578) should not be less than 5,000 square metres. Subdivision should require continuous paved road access along any parcel frontage and from each parcel to Kye Bay Road.
- 19.6** The minimum parcel size for the subdivision of land in the Point Holmes/Cape Lazo area south of Knight Road should allow for the protection of sensitive ecosystems identified on the OCP DPA – Sensitive Ecosystems map, as per the boundaries of the sensitive ecosystem determined by a Qualified Professional in accordance with the guidelines of the Sensitive Ecosystems DPA, and avoid the need for the extension of sanitary sewer to



service the area. Sites with high environmental sensitivity should be protected through land trusts, ecogifts (e.g. land dedication for park above and beyond 5% parkland dedication requirement), density transfer, restrictive covenants or similar measures that may significantly affect minimum parcel size. Subdivision should require continuous paved road access along any parcel frontage and from each parcel to Lazo Road.

## Actions

- 19.7** Consider the feasibility of amending zoning in the Detached Residential designation to permit a secondary suite and two detached dwellings (3 total dwelling units) in collaboration with Island Health and the Comox Valley Regional District to account for potential private wastewater system implications.



## 20. Commercial: Tourist

The Commercial: Tourist designation applies to existing tourist accommodation uses in Kye Bay and Point Holmes. It is intended to support continued tourist accommodation use and related accessory uses such as seasonal retail and water sports equipment rentals. This designation provides an alternative to the use of residential units for short-term accommodation in a popular tourism destination.

### Policies

- 20.1** Continue the use of Commercial: Tourist parcels based on existing zoning in the Zoning Bylaw.



# 21. Parks and Open Space

The Parks and Open Space designation applies primarily to existing parks but includes potential future parks. It includes natural conservation areas in addition to active and passive parks. The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Objectives and Policies (Section 4) provide high-level guidance to plan for a complete parks and open space network that is incrementally expanded to accommodate a growing population.

Policies that refer to the Comox Golf Club should be read with the context that the Town does not own the land or operate the course; rather the Town is the majority shareholder in Courtenay Golf Club Ltd., which owns the land that the Comox Golf Club operates on. The land is leased by Courtenay Golf Club Ltd. to the Comox Golf Club, which is a non-profit organization that owns the improvements and operates the golf course and facilities. In addition, policies related to the Comox Golf Club are complementary to those in the Parks and Trails Master Plan and Downtown Enhancement Action Plan.



## Policies

- 21.1** Ensure that community needs are met by requiring that all recreation, parkland and open space network components are identified, dedicated and constructed prior to the residential development that relies on them.
- 21.2** Encourage the development of a plan for the Comox Golf Club (Central Community Park), which may include maintaining the current 9-hole golf course, to guide its future role, form, use, and programs in the Town of Comox, considering that this property is in a prime location that should be programmed to appeal to the Town's long-term population.
- 21.3** Explore near-term opportunities to transition the southern portion of the Comox Golf Club to a public park as per Section 4.5 of the Downtown Enhancement Action Plan.



- 21.4** Where portions of a parcel are undevelopable but suitable for riparian protection, protection of the natural environment or for greenway purposes, the Town will encourage applicants to dedicate these areas in addition to any required 5% for parkland dedication.
- 21.5** Consider public ownership of parcels within significant riparian corridors to maintain their integrity, and designate Parks and Open Space.



# 22. General Land Use Policies

**The following policies apply for all land use designations.**

- 22.1** Ensure that development site layouts do not result in remnant parcels that cannot be serviced, accessed, or would be uneconomical or impractical to develop.
- 22.2** Site planning for new development should consider the character and scale of surrounding areas.
- 22.3** Building heights are subject to required senior government approvals based on the Comox Airport Zoning Regulation.
- 22.4** Encourage the provision of mid-block land dedications or statutory rights-of-way to facilitate public pedestrian circulation through development sites, especially on large sites and street blocks, and areas where roads are not in a grid pattern.
- 22.5** Building heights associated with land use designations outline the maximum intended number of storeys; however, minor variations may be considered where appropriate based on the site context, including consideration of factors such as topography, road frontage and current and future adjacencies.
- 22.6** For the purposes of future density bonus and inclusionary zoning bylaws, maximum heights outlined in OCP land use designations may be considered as base heights, with additional storeys permitted in exchange for affordable housing, or provision of or contribution to amenities that provide substantial benefits to the community.
- 22.7** Zoning Amendments to a new Comprehensive Development Zone will be strongly discouraged; where proposed, there must be a strong rationale for why an existing Zoning Bylaw zone, with or without variances, is not sufficient to facilitate development as per the OCP land use designation and Development Permit Area guidelines.
- 22.8** Where a property is adjacent to land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), ensure that development limits associated negative impacts on adjacent agricultural operations by including appropriate buffers, setbacks and site planning, consistent with the BC Ministry of Agriculture Guide to Edge Planning, or future iteration thereof.



## 23. Sand and Gravel Extraction

Section 473 (1) of the Local Government Act requires OCPs to include statements and map designations for the areas covered by the plan respecting the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction. There are sand and gravel deposits within the Town boundaries, but future sand and gravel extraction within the Town would not be in the public interest.

Previous gravel extraction took place on Lots 1-3, Block A District Lot 194 Comox District, Plan 442 (900-920 Pritchard Road) by the Ministry of Transportation. Further gravel extraction would compromise environmental values in the area and make it difficult to service these lands with a gravity sanitary sewer.

Lot 4, Block A District Lot 194, Plan 442 (890 Pritchard Road), is heavily treed and would support gravel extraction but this would have a negative environmental impact, and the aggregate potential would be limited due to its proximity to residential development to the south and servicing constraints for future residential development.

Other sand and gravel deposits are located in the Northeast Woods and near Sand Pines Drive. There are severe limitations to extracting these deposits for off-site use. Due to the high environmental values of protected ecosystems, such as Garry Oak, older growth forests, and eagle and heron nesting sites in each of these areas, the highest and best use of this aggregate resource is considered for it to remain in its natural form.



## PART 5

# Implementing the Plan

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# Implementing the Plan

Meeting long-term, community-wide plan objectives requires collective effort. In addition to residents, businesses, and workers in our community, interest holders include senior levels of government, community groups, boards and agencies. OCP policies are implemented through a range of strategies, regulations and plans that are approved through decisions of Comox Council, including area specific plans, housing strategies, infrastructure master plans, and park plans. Section 478 of the *Local Government Act* clarifies that an OCP does not commit or authorize a local government to proceed with any project specified in the plan. However, all bylaws and works must be consistent with the OCP upon its adoption.

Implementation of the OCP must include monitoring and evaluation of key indicators to determine whether the plan is meeting community needs. Many sections of the OCP include Actions the Town can take to implement the plan. A separate OCP Implementation Plan compiling all of the action items will be developed to accompany the OCP.

## OCP Reviews

The OCP must be reviewed every 5 years to consider the most recent housing needs report to ensure that at least 20-years of anticipated housing units are supported by the planned land use and housing policies in the OCP.

## OCP Amendments

The Official Community Plan is a living document that provides direction on how Comox will evolve to 2045. While policies and decisions should be consistent with the principles, objectives and the policies of the Plan, the Official Community Plan should be recognized as a flexible and adaptable document. The Town may amend the Plan in accordance with the *LGA* to adapt to new trends and changing conditions in the community at the discretion of Council.

Where such changes are consistent with the community vision and goals of the OCP, Council may wish to approve an amendment to the OCP. Where the changes are substantial or are inconsistent with the community vision and goals, Council may wish to conduct a comprehensive review and update of the OCP. The vision and goals will thus be utilized to consider and to evaluate applications for OCP amendments.

OCP amendments to the land use designations (OCP Future Land Use map) shall be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- (a) Consistency with the OCP vision, guiding principles, objectives, and policies.
- (b) Consultation with K'ómoks First Nation.
- (c) Consideration of information received through public consultation with impacted community members.



- (d) Impact on the natural environment, ecosystems and biological diversity and potential risk associated with hazardous conditions.
- (e) Demonstration of suitable transportation access and infrastructure servicing to accommodate the proposed development.
- (f) Identified community need and market demand for the proposed development.
- (g) Identification of how the public interest would be better-served by the proposed land use designation than the existing land use designation, including consideration of voluntary amenity contributions (or cash-in-lieu) above and beyond the Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw.

## Legislative Compliance

### Financial Planning

Section 477 of the *Local Government Act* requires a proposed OCP bylaw that has received first reading of Council to be considered in conjunction with the local government's financial plan. Following adoption, the Town's financial planning and budget process would then be conducted in alignment with the OCP.

### Liquid Waste Management Plan

Comox Valley Regional District is in the process of completing a Liquid Waste Management Plan under the *Environmental Management Act*. Section 477 of the *Local Government Act* requires a proposed OCP bylaw that has received first reading of Council to be considered in conjunction with any Liquid Waste Management Plan under the *Environmental Management Act*. On the next OCP update required by the *Local Government Act*, the OCP will have to be considered in conjunction with the CVRD Liquid Waste Management Plan if it is in place at that time. Alignment of the OCP with the CVRD Liquid Waste Management Plan should support the Town's broader watershed and habitat protection goals as outlined in the Environmental objectives and policies of this OCP.



## Development Approval Information

Pursuant to Section 485.1 of the *Local Government Act*, the entire Town of Comox is designated as a Development Approval Information Area in order to guide and support new development that contributes to the goals and objectives of the Official Community Plan. The Director of Development Services, or designate, may require development approval information pursuant to the *Local Government Act*. Information on the anticipated community impacts of a proposed activity or development, such as those related to transportation patterns, local infrastructure, public facilities, community services, or the natural environment requirements and procedures are set out in a separate bylaw. The conditions that justify this designation are as follows:

- Comox is a growing community and this growth will impact neighbourhoods, businesses, service provision and infrastructure. Information may be required to assess impacts on nearby and adjacent development, including shadowing, noise, visual impacts and scale, impacts on community services, such as parks, schools and protective services, socio-economic impacts, and impacts on the transportation and utility network and infrastructure.
- Comox's landscape includes hillsides, floodplains, forests and wildfire interface areas and other unique landscapes. Information may be required to assess impacts on these landscapes and to protect people, property and infrastructure.
- Comox is home to many sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, a valley-wide airshed, forested areas, agricultural lands and water bodies, including the Salish Sea. Information may be required to guide and inform protection of this land, water and air.
- Comox is located in the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, who have lived here since time immemorial. As such, the area is home to many important heritage assets. Settlement of the area by non-indigenous residents has also provided the town with many heritage assets. Information may be required to identify heritage value of these assets, including but not limited to landscapes, archaeological sites, buildings and properties, and to guide their protection and conservation.



## Temporary Use Permits

In accordance with *Local Government Act* Section 492, an Official Community Plan may designate areas where Council may consider allowing temporary uses, and may specify general conditions regarding the issuance of temporary use permits in those areas. The temporary use designation is intended to apply to operations that are temporary in nature and the designation does not in itself permit specific uses on the designated sites. Within these areas, Council may, by resolution, issue a Temporary Use Permit and specify the conditions under which the temporary use be carried on. Upon the expiration of a Temporary Use Permit, the permitted uses revert to those outlined in the Zoning Bylaw.

Temporary Use Permits may be considered on all lands within the Town of Comox. Temporary Use Permits should consider the fit within the character of the neighbourhood and surrounding uses to minimize conflicts and nuisances and as such should consider any mitigating strategies such as landscape buffering, screening and operational details. Terms and conditions of the permit should specifically address an appropriate time duration up to the maximum limit under the *Local Government Act*.

Temporary Use Permit applications shall be evaluated against the following criteria:

- a) Compatibility of the proposed use with the Land Use Designation of the subject land and the policy direction of this OCP.
- b) Completion and incorporation of any public consultation with impacted community members to address immediate concerns.
- c) Impact on the natural environment and potential destruction of valuable ecological services as a result of the development.
- d) Demonstration of impact mitigating strategies, suitable access and servicing to accommodate the proposed development.
- e) Identified community need and market demand for the proposed use.
- f) The proposed alterations to the site may be deemed temporary in nature.
- g) The proposed use is of a temporary or seasonal nature.



## PART 6

# Development Permit Area Guidelines





## Introduction

Development permit areas (DPAs) are applied to areas or land uses to manage development, reduce the potential for any negative impacts, and ensure development is compatible with its physical context. An owner of land located within a DPA must receive a development permit prior to commencing any development, including land alteration, construction, and subdivision, as further described in the following sections. However, there are circumstances and activities that are exempt from development permit requirements as outlined in each DPA.

The Town reviews applications for development permits against the guidelines outlined in this OCP for each DPA. Guidelines may reference or incorporate other policies and regulations, as well as federal and provincial legislation. Issuance of a development permit is a form of authorization to proceed with the proposed development subject to issuance of other authorizations and permits, and may be subject to conditions imposed by the Town in accordance with the applicable DPA guidelines.

## Legislative Context

Local governments have the legislative authority to designate DPAs in their OCPs under section 488 of the *Local Government Act*. Section 488 describes the purposes for which DPAs may be created, the types of activities requiring a development permit, and the requirements a local government may impose on a development permit applicant according to the type of DPA.

To designate a DPA, the conditions that justify the designation must be described. In addition, the DPA must provide guidelines that explain the special conditions or objectives to be addressed or considered in the development.

## Overlapping Development Permit Area

Where land lies within more than one DPA, or where multiple uses under differing form and character DPAs are proposed, the applicable requirements for all DPAs will apply.

Except for the Riparian Ecosystems DPA, where land lies within multiple DPAs requiring reports prepared by Qualified Professionals, the Qualified Professionals should collaborate to provide one technical report that addresses overlapping areas.

## Relevant Development Activities:

Unless otherwise stated in an individual DPA, a property owner must obtain a development permit prior to commencing the following within a DPA:

- subdivision of land;
- construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure; and
- alteration of land, including vegetation.

## Permit Exemptions

Each DPA forming part of this OCP contains a list of exemptions outlining conditions under which a development permit would not be required for lands within a DPA. The authority to exempt particular conditions or activities from requiring a development permit is granted to the Town under section 488(4) of the *Local Government Act*.

## Meaning of Language

Use of the terms “should” and “encourage” in guidelines does not indicate that compliance is at the option of the applicant. Rather, compliance will be required as a condition of issuance of a development permit unless there are exceptional reasons why the guideline should not be applied to its fullest extent.

Use of the terms “must” and “shall” indicates that compliance is mandatory. Where guidelines are emphatic without the use of a modal verb (e.g. should, encourage, must, shall), compliance is mandatory.

## Discretion of the Director of Development Services

The Town’s Director of Development Services has the discretion to interpret DPA exemption criteria and guidelines and determine whether and how they will be applied for proposals.

The Town’s procedures and authority for requiring development approval information are outlined in the Development Procedures and Delegation Bylaw.



# Variances

As per Section 490(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act*, zoning variances may be considered as part of Development Permit Applications where development is consistent with the intents of the Zoning Bylaw, OCP, and applicable Development Permit Area guidelines.

1. Minor variances to setbacks may be considered where:
  - A change would result in the retention of existing healthy mature trees in locations suitable for retention, sensitive ecosystems, or avoidance of a hazardous conditions area.
  - Variances are to accommodate desirable architectural features, such as porches, balconies, projecting design features, awnings, and canopies, provided that the building face still meets required setbacks.
  - Variances to minimum setbacks along the rear and side lot lines are used to provide a larger front yard setback to accommodate a landscaped or natural retention area along the front lot line that provides additional visual and acoustic relief for residential uses located at grade along an arterial or major collector road.
2. Variances to maximum permitted height of up to 3.1 metres, and variances to permit an appropriate building form under the same overarching land use (e.g. residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial) may be considered where parcel coverage is reduced to preserve mature tree stands or sensitive ecosystems on site.
3. Variances to landscaping requirements may be considered in cases where the proposed building locations make it difficult or impossible to incorporate all landscaping requirements, or where trees will not thrive. In cases where landscaping requirements are reduced, compensatory planting elsewhere on site or in the adjacent public realm may be required.
4. Minor variances to impermeable surface requirements may be considered where other means of managing stormwater are incorporated into the design.
5. Minor variances to off-street parking requirements may be considered to facilitate retention of healthy mature trees in locations suitable for retention.





## Development Permit Areas

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OCP DPA – Hazardous Conditions

OCP DPA – Sensitive Ecosystems

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# 1 SMALL SCALE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

## Development Permit Area

### 1.1 Area

Unless exempted (see Exemptions below), a development permit addressing design guidelines must be approved prior to the construction of, addition to or alteration of a building or other structure, and the alteration of land, for all properties that currently have, or become developed with, small scale multi-unit housing, consisting of two to four attached primary residential dwelling units on a parcel. Table 1 below indicates the small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) development scenarios that require a development permit.

**Table 1:** SSMUH DPA applicability.

SSMUH Scenario	DP Required
Single-detached dwelling*	No
Secondary suite**	No
Coach house with single-detached dwelling*	No
Coach house with duplex or townhouse	Yes
Duplex (two attached primary dwelling units)	Yes
Townhouse (3 or 4 attached primary dwelling units)	Yes

\*Includes new construction and retrofit

\*\*Includes new construction, retrofit, and building addition to accommodate secondary suite

### 1.2 Designation

This development permit area is designated pursuant to section 488 (1) (a), (e), (f), (h), (i), and (j) of the *Local Government Act*.

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development.
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential development.

### 1.3 Justification

This Development Permit Area guides all small-scale multi-unit housing development within the boundaries of the Town of Comox with an emphasis on high-quality, context-sensitive design through the following objectives:

- To establish design guidelines for small-scale multi-unit housing that maintain neighborhood character and natural features, while supporting housing diversity, gentle density, and Complete Communities.
- To promote building design that has a positive relationship with the street.
- To promote livability within the site while considering the relationship to neighbouring properties.



## 1.4 Exemptions

A Development Permit is not required for any of the following:

1. Development of single-detached dwellings, coach houses, and secondary suites as defined in the Zoning Bylaw.
2. Repair, maintenance, or construction of accessory buildings and structures.
3. Any development that does not include small scale multi-use housing development.
4. Repair or maintenance of, or renovations to, existing legal buildings, structures, or utilities within the existing building footprint, including those structures described in s. 532(1) of the *Local Government Act* (a building permit may still be required) provided that it is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development.
5. Interior alterations.
6. Maintenance or repair of existing roads, paths, parking areas, driveways, fences or landscaping provided there is no excavation or removal of trees.
7. Construction of, or regular and emergency Town maintenance of municipal infrastructure or buildings, performed by the Municipality or its authorized agents and contractors, where the proposed works are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development Services.



## 1.5 Guidelines

The following guidelines apply specifically to all residential development within the Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing development permit area.

1. For proposals that retain existing dwellings, relaxations to design guidelines and development regulations may be considered.

### Relationship to the Street

2. For buildings within the front yard, orient the primary façade to face the fronting street. Design primary entrances to include a clearly visible front door directly accessible from a public street or publicly accessible pathway and architectural features such as stoops, porches, shared landings, patios, recessed entries, and canopies.
3. On lots with multiple frontages, buildings must also be oriented and designed to address flanking streets with similar architectural and landscape treatments as the primary façade (i.e. window size and pattern, roof overhang detail, material patterns) (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Exemplary unit, oriented and designed to address fronting and flanking streets. The flanking street frontage is pictured here (Guideline 3).

4. Grade changes between sidewalks, outdoor seating areas, and other pedestrian areas should be minimized and designed to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.
5. Create a soft transition between public and private spaces. Use low fencing, landscaping, and gentle grade changes to define the transition from the public realm to private residential areas.

### Site Planning

6. Buildings and landscaping should be located and designed to suit natural topography, hydrology and vegetation. Creative, site sensitive solutions are encouraged.
7. Site planning should minimize disturbance to natural contours and existing vegetation and fit the context of surrounding development and natural environment. Designers should use site layout, building orientation, window placement,



vegetation and landscape screening to provide visual privacy between neighbouring properties.

8. Position buildings on the site to maximize access to sunlight for both interior spaces and outdoor amenity areas.
9. Position buildings to protect and retain mature trees to the greatest extent possible.
10. Encourage the redevelopment of properties while maintaining existing dwellings, if possible. Internal housing conversions, such as additional units within a structure are encouraged.

#### **Site Circulation, Parking, and Site Servicing**

11. Design walkways with durable, low-maintenance and accessible surface materials (e.g., pavers, brick, concrete) and connect to existing pedestrian networks (i.e. sidewalks, pathways).
12. Consolidate driveway and laneway access points to minimize curb cuts and impacts on the pedestrian realm or common open spaces. Shared driveways are encouraged.
13. Screen parking areas with fencing, landscaping, or other methods to reduce visual impacts on streets and neighbouring properties.
14. Place mechanical equipment (e.g., air conditioning units) and site services outside amenity areas, and reduce visual impact through siting and screening.
15. All on-site services should be underground.

#### **Landscape Design and Open Space**

16. Encourage site layouts that preserve existing mature trees and viable planting sites for medium/large trees in the adjacent public realm.
17. Design all residential units to have direct and convenient access to high-quality outdoor space.
18. Design open and landscaped areas to preserve and highlight existing mature trees wherever

feasible. Where not feasible, consider utilizing a tree spade to relocate significant vegetation.

19. Landscaping is a major, integral part of a project design and should be coordinated to create a pleasing composition and cohesive look, define and enliven public spaces, moderate building massing, emphasize and frame important building features and natural focal points, screen and buffer parking and utility areas, and provide shade for comfort.
20. Landscaped areas should primarily feature trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and similar plantings.
21. Selection of the following types of plant species is encouraged:
  - Included in the Town of Comox's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standards.
  - Native or adapted to the region
  - Supportive of habitat, nesting, foraging, or pollination.
  - Drought tolerant.
  - Adapted to anticipated future climate conditions wherever possible.
22. Landscaped areas with the capacity to infiltrate and accommodate stormwater, such as planting beds and rain gardens, are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff from surface parking lots and rooftops. The use of permeable paving materials for parking lots and other paved surfaces should also be considered.
23. Design sites to minimize water use for irrigation by using strategies such as:
  - designing planting areas and tree pits to passively capture rainwater and stormwater run-off.
  - selecting drought-tolerant species.
  - using lower water requirement systems such as drip irrigation.
  - using recycled water for drip irrigation systems.



24. Fence design should be appropriate to its function, location and context in the neighbourhood. Fences should be of a high-quality material, reflecting and extending the building details and integrated with landscaping to minimize their visual impact. The use of chain link fencing is discouraged, and such fencing should not be visible from pedestrian areas, a street or a highway.

**Building Articulation, Features, and Materials**

25. Private balconies and patios should consider sight lines into adjacent properties and use techniques such as partitions/screens, step backs and landscaping to reduce visual impact on neighbors.
26. Minimize blank walls by incorporating elements such as windows, articulating the façade with recesses or projections, building material changes and landscaping.
27. Use high-quality, durable weather resistant exterior cladding materials. Suitable materials include natural stone, masonry, metal panels, stucco, painted wood, stained wood, and fibre cement siding.
28. Infill designs should not be repetitive in nature and variation between properties is encouraged (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Infill designs should not be repetitive in nature and variation between properties is encouraged (Guideline 27).





## 2 GROUND ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL Development Permit Area

### 2.1 Area

Unless exempted (see Exemptions below), a development permit addressing design guidelines must be approved prior to the construction of, addition to or alteration of a building or other structure, and the alteration of land, for all properties that currently have, or become developed with, more than four dwelling units per parcel in buildings up to three storeys, with all units having direct access to grade without the use of a common interior corridor.:

### 2.2 Designation

This development permit area is designated pursuant to section 488 (1) (a), (e), (f), (h), (i), and (j) of the *Local Government Act*.

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development.
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

### 2.3 Justification

This development permit area guides ground-oriented residential developments and redevelopment in the Town of Comox that demonstrates a high standard of creative building design through the following objectives:

- To establish guidelines for ground-oriented residential development in both existing and new neighborhoods that preserve the neighborhood character and natural environment, while supporting the Town's goals for housing diversity, gentle density, and Complete Communities.
- To support building design that enhances streets and open spaces, encouraging walking, cycling, and social interaction, while ensuring pedestrian comfort.
- To promote new development that prioritizes environmental protection, water conservation, and energy efficiency in site planning and design.
- To ensure landscaping (both onsite and off-site frontage) enhances neighborhood livability by encouraging sidewalks and planting large trees.
- To provide meaningful outdoor spaces that offer privacy, screening, and sensitivity to neighboring properties.



## 2.4 Exemptions

A Development Permit is not required for any of the following:

1. Development that does not include Ground Oriented Residential development of less than five dwelling units on a parcel.
2. Subdivision limited to a lot line adjustment, consolidation, or road or park dedication.
3. Repair or maintenance of, or renovations to, existing legal buildings, structures, or utilities within the existing building footprint, including those structures described in s. 532(1) of the *Local Government Act* (a building permit may still be required) provided that it is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development.
4. Interior alterations.
5. Maintenance or repair of existing roads, paths, parking areas, driveways, or landscaping provided there is no excavation or removal of trees.
6. Construction of, or regular and emergency Town maintenance of municipal infrastructure or buildings, performed by the Municipality or its authorized agents and contractors, where the proposed works are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development Services.



## 2.5 Guidelines

The following guidelines apply specifically to all development within the Ground Oriented Residential development permit area.

### Relationship to the Street

1. Streetscapes should be designed to animate the street and engage pedestrians with visually appealing frontages, comfortable spaces and features such as sidewalks, bicycle parking, and street furniture.
2. Building entrances should be directly accessed from sidewalks, parking lots and pedestrian pathways as seamlessly as possible from the street. Grade changes between sidewalks, squares, outdoor seating areas, transit stops, and other pedestrian areas should also be minimized and designed to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (see Figure 3).
3. Residential units at grade should have individual entrances and transitional areas between the building façade and the public circulation. This space is encouraged to be a usable outdoor space with a hose bib and spigot to allow for gardening.
4. Minimize blank walls along the street. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should be screened with landscape treatments.
5. Create a soft transition between public and private spaces. Use low fencing, landscaping, and gentle grade changes to define the transition from the public realm to private residential areas (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Connect entrances to public pathways and create a soft transition between public and private spaces using landscaping (Guideline 2 & 5).

6. The buildings at street corners should be designed to front both the primary and secondary street frontages with consideration of window placement, roof pattern, and cladding materials and pattern, being similar on the side and front.

### Site Planning

7. Buildings and landscaping should be located and designed to suit natural topography, hydrology and vegetation. Creative, site sensitive solutions are encouraged.
8. Site planning should minimize disturbance to natural contours and existing vegetation and fit the context of surrounding development and natural environment. Designers should use site layout, building orientation, window placement, vegetation and landscape screening to provide visual privacy between neighbouring properties.
9. Position buildings on the site to maximize access to sunlight for both interior spaces and outdoor amenity areas.
10. Position buildings to protect and retain mature trees to the greatest extent possible.



### Site Circulation, Parking, and Site Servicing

11. Design internal circulation patterns (streets, sidewalks, pathways) to be integrated with and connected to existing bicycle and pedestrian networks (see Figure 4).
12. Include pedestrian circulation throughout the site to limit the need to walk on private drive-aisles when travelling throughout the site (see Figure 5). Pedestrian routes may overlap driveways only if pedestrian surface treatments signal the priority of the pedestrians in the space.
13. On-site pedestrian circulation should utilize trails, paths, and concrete sidewalks with rollover curbs adjacent to drive aisles.
14. Design walkways with decorative, durable, low-maintenance and accessible surface materials (e.g., pavers, brick, concrete) to distinguish pedestrian routes from vehicular zones.
15. Apply universal accessibility principles to primary building entries, sidewalks, plazas, mid-block connections, lanes, amenity features and courtyards through the appropriate selection of materials, stairs, and ramps as necessary, and the provision of wayfinding and lighting elements.



**Figure 4:** Design internal circulation patterns to be integrated with and connected to existing pedestrian networks (Guideline 11).



**Figure 5:** Pedestrian route to limit the need to walk on drive aisles throughout the site (Guideline 12).

16. Consolidate driveway and laneway access points to minimize curb cuts and impacts on the pedestrian realm or common open spaces. Shared driveways are encouraged.
17. Access roads to parking areas should be constructed at minimum available grade differentials.
18. Surface parking and loading areas should be situated in accordance with parking, loading and landscaping requirements. Where site conditions can accommodate rear lane access or internal drive aisles, off-street parking should not be located between the front or exterior side façade and any public street.
19. Surface parking should be screened and enhanced with landscaping.
20. Ensure utility areas and hydro kiosks are clearly identified at the development permit stage and are located to minimize impact (i.e. visual, noise etc.) on public or common open spaces. Hydro kiosks should be wrapped in decorative wraps and must be screened with landscaping.



21. Solid waste storage should be designed as an integral element of the development—contained within the building or suitably screened, complementary to overall building design and adequately sized to meet the needs of uses on site; in no cases shall solid waste storage be located within the front or exterior side yard.
22. Provide pedestrian pathways adjacent to individual unit driveways and outdoor parking stalls such that there is a clear path of travel from garages and unit entrances when the parking stall is in use.
23. All on-site services must be underground.

#### Landscape Design and Open Space

24. Encourage site layouts that preserve existing mature trees and viable planting sites for medium/large trees in the adjacent public realm.
25. Include landscaping on all areas of the site not being used for parking, circulation, buildings, and structures.
26. Provide year-round usable, public and private open spaces to create opportunities for recreation and social activity and provide buffers between uses.
27. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure good visual surveillance of all outdoor open spaces.
28. Design open and landscaped areas to preserve and highlight existing mature trees wherever feasible. Where not feasible, consider utilizing a tree spade to relocate significant vegetation.
29. Landscaping is a major, integral part of a project design and should be coordinated to create a pleasing composition and cohesive look, define and enliven public spaces, moderate building massing, emphasize and frame important building features and natural focal points, screen and buffer parking and utility areas, and provide shade for comfort.
30. Landscaped areas should primarily feature trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and similar plantings. Lawn areas should be used minimally (no more than 25 percent) of overall landscaping. Medium or large trees should be included around the perimeter of the site, and within internal areas of the site to the greatest extent possible (see Figure 6).
31. Selection of the following types plant species is encouraged:
  - Included in the Town of Comox's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standards.
  - Native or adapted to the region.
  - Supportive of habitat, nesting, foraging, or pollination.
  - Drought-tolerant.
32. Adapted to anticipated future climate conditions wherever possible. Landscaped areas with the capacity to infiltrate and accommodate stormwater, such as planting beds and rain gardens, are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff from surface parking lots and rooftops. The use of permeable paving materials for parking lots and other paved surfaces should also be considered.
33. Design sites to minimize water use for irrigation by using strategies such as:



**Figure 6:** Landscaped areas should primarily feature trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and similar plantings (Guideline 29).



- designing planting areas and tree pits to passively capture rainwater and stormwater run-off.
- selecting drought-tolerant species
- using lower water requirement systems such as drip irrigation.
- using recycled water for drip irrigation systems.

- 34.** Fence design should be appropriate to its function, location and context in the neighbourhood. Fences should be of a high-quality material, reflecting and extending the building details and integrated with landscaping to minimize their visual impact. The use of chain link fencing is discouraged, and such fencing should not be visible from pedestrian areas, a street or a highway (see Figure 7).
- 35.** Youth play features should be integrated in on-site amenity and landscape areas (see Figure 8).



**Figure 7:** Fences should be of high-quality material and integrated with landscaping to minimize their visual appearance (Guideline 33).



**Figure 8:** Youth play features should be integrated in on-site amenity and landscape areas (Guideline 34).

### Building Articulation, Features, and Materials

- 36.** Use of a variety of colours, roof lines, architectural features and building materials to create interesting façade treatments. Large areas of unvaried material are strongly discouraged (see Figure 10).
- 37.** Use high-quality, durable, weather resistant exterior cladding materials. Suitable materials include natural stone, masonry, metal, stucco, painted wood, stained wood, and fibre cement siding.
- 38.** Make material transitions at an inside corner (i.e. the return) rather than on the same plane.
- 39.** Roof forms should be modulated to reduce the apparent bulk of a building and to create more visual interest. Roof colour should be generally neutral or muted to blend with the natural landscape.
- 40.** Roof-mounted equipment should be integrated with the overall roof design and adequately screened so it is concealed to the greatest extent possible from pedestrian viewpoints.



- 41. Break up the building mass by incorporating design elements that clearly define the base, middle, and top of the structure.
- 42. Individual buildings should not exceed 60 metres in length.
- 43. Private balconies and patios should consider sight lines into adjacent properties and use architectural techniques such as partitions/screens and step backs to reduce visual and shadow impact on neighbours (see Figure 9).



**Figure 9:** Private balconies and patios should use architectural techniques such as partitions/screens and step back to reduce visual and shadow impacts on neighbours (Guideline 42).



**Figure 10:** Use a variety of colours, rooflines, architectural features and building materials to create interesting façade treatments (Guideline 35).





## 3 LOW AND MID RISE RESIDENTIAL Development Permit Area

### 3.1 Area

Unless exempted (see Exemptions below), a development permit addressing design guidelines must be approved prior to the construction of, addition to or alteration of a building or other structure, and the alteration of land, for all properties that currently have, or become developed with, multi-unit residential buildings of four or more storeys, and multi-unit residential buildings with less than four storeys with units accessed from a common interior corridor.

### 3.2 Designation

This development permit area is designated pursuant to section 488 (1) (a), (e), (f), (h), (i), and (j) of the *Local Government Act*.

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development.
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

### 3.3 Justification

This Development Permit Area guides low-rise and mid-rise housing development and redevelopment in the Town of Comox that demonstrates a high standard of creative building design through the following objectives:

- To establish guidelines for low-rise and mid-rise townhouse development in both existing and new neighborhoods that preserve the neighborhood character and natural environment, while supporting the Town's goals for housing diversity, gentle density, and Complete Communities.
- To support building design that enhances streets and open spaces, encouraging walking, cycling, and social interaction, while ensuring pedestrian comfort.
- To promote new development that prioritizes environmental protection, water conservation, and energy efficiency in site planning and design.
- To ensure landscaping (both onsite and off-site frontage) enhances neighborhood livability by encouraging sidewalks and planting large trees.
- To provide meaningful outdoor spaces that offer privacy, screening, and sensitivity to neighboring properties.



### 3.4 Exemptions

A Development Permit is not required for any of the following:

1. An application for subdivision.
2. Any development that does not include low-rise or mid-rise development.
3. Repair or maintenance of, or renovations to, existing legal buildings, structures, or utilities within the existing building footprint, including those structures described in s. 532(1) of the *Local Government Act* (a building permit may still be required) provided that it is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development.
4. Interior alterations.
5. Maintenance or repair of existing roads, paths, parking areas, driveways, or landscaping provided there is no excavation or removal of trees.
6. Construction of, or regular and emergency Town maintenance of municipal infrastructure or buildings, performed by the Municipality or its authorized agents and contractors, where the proposed works are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development Services.



### 3.5 Guidelines

The following guidelines apply specifically to all residential development within the Low-Rise and Mid-Rise Apartments development permit area.

#### Relationship to the Street

1. Streetscapes should be designed to animate the street and engage pedestrians with visually appealing frontages, comfortable spaces and features such as sidewalks, bicycle parking, and street furniture.
2. Building entrances should be directly accessed from sidewalks, parking lots and pedestrian pathways as seamlessly as possible from the street. Grade changes between sidewalks, squares, outdoor seating areas, transit stops, and other pedestrian areas should also be minimized and designed to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.
3. The primary common building entrance of buildings fronting a street should be from the public sidewalk, and should include weather protection that is complementary to the building design.
4. Residential units at grade should have individual entrances and transitional areas between the building façade and the public circulation with some soft landscaping to signal the private entrance of a dwelling unit while providing privacy. This space is encouraged to be a usable outdoor space with a hose bib and spigot to allow for gardening.
5. Minimize blank walls along the street. Where possible, locate a unit or portion of a unit in front of above-grade parking structures. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should be animated with surface treatments such as murals, green screens, or a combination of the two.

6. Create a soft transition between public and private spaces. Use low fencing, landscaping, and gentle grade changes to define the transition from the public realm to private residential areas.

#### Site Planning

7. Buildings and landscaping should be located and designed to suit natural topography, hydrology and vegetation. Creative, site sensitive solutions are encouraged.
8. Site planning should minimize disturbance to natural contours and existing vegetation, and fit the context of surrounding development and natural environment. Designers should use site layout, building orientation, window placement, vegetation and landscape screening to provide visual privacy between neighbouring properties.
9. Position buildings on the site to maximize access to sunlight for both interior spaces and outdoor amenity areas. Shadow studies may be requested to maximize access to direct sunlight for public spaces and dwelling units.
10. Position buildings to protect and retain mature trees to the greatest extent possible.

#### Site Circulation, Parking, and Site Servicing

11. Design internal circulation patterns (streets, sidewalks, pathways) to be integrated with and connected to existing bicycle and pedestrian networks.
12. Design walkways with durable, low-maintenance and accessible surface materials (e.g., pavers, brick, concrete) to distinguish pedestrian routes from vehicular zones.
13. Apply universal accessibility principles to primary building entries, sidewalks, plazas, mid-block connections, lanes, amenity features and courtyards through the appropriate selection of



materials, stairs, and ramps as necessary, and the provision of wayfinding and lighting elements.

14. Consolidate driveway and laneway access points to minimize curb cuts and impacts on the pedestrian realm or common open spaces. Shared driveways are encouraged.
15. Access roads to parking areas should be constructed at minimum available grade differentials.
16. The majority of apartment building parking should be provided in parking structures beneath the building.
17. Surface parking and loading areas should be situated in accordance with parking, loading and landscaping requirements. Off-street parking should not be located between the front or side facade of a building and any public street.
18. Surface parking should be screened and enhanced with landscaping and berms.
19. All accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to building entrances.
20. Covered short-term bicycle parking must be included and located in highly visible locations, such as near primary building entrances.
21. Ensure utility areas and hydro kiosks are clearly identified at the development permit stage and are located to minimize impact (i.e. visual, noise etc.) on public or common open spaces. Hydro kiosks should be wrapped in decorative wraps and screened with landscaping.
22. Solid waste storage should be designed as an integral element of the development—contained within the building or suitably screened, complementary to overall building design and adequately sized to meet the needs of uses on site; in no cases shall solid waste storage be located within the front or exterior side yard.
23. Conceal rooftop mechanical equipment using parapets or architectural screens integrated into the building design.
24. All on-site services must be underground.

## Landscape Design and Open Space

25. Encourage site layouts that preserve existing mature trees and viable planting sites for medium/large trees in the adjacent public realm.
26. Encourage the installation of green infrastructure such as soil cells to support recommended soil volumes for medium/large trees in the Town's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standard where sufficient softscape cannot be provided.
27. Provide year-round usable, public and private open spaces to create opportunities for recreation and social activity and provide buffers between uses.
28. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure good visual surveillance of all outdoor open spaces.
29. Design open and landscaped areas to preserve and highlight existing mature trees wherever feasible. Where not feasible, consider utilizing a tree spade to relocate significant vegetation.
30. Landscaping is a major, integral part of a project design and should be coordinated to create a pleasing composition and cohesive look, define and enliven public spaces, moderate building massing, emphasize and frame important building features and natural focal points, screen and buffer parking and utility areas, and provide shade for comfort (see Figure 11).
31. Landscaped areas should primarily feature trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and similar plantings. Lawn areas should be used minimally (no more than 25 percent of overall landscaping).
32. Selection of the following types of plant species is encouraged:
  - Included in the Town of Comox's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standards.
  - Native or adapted to the region.
  - Supportive of habitat, nesting, foraging, or pollination.



- Drought-tolerant.
  - Adapted to anticipated future climate conditions wherever possible.
- 33.** Landscaped areas with the capacity to infiltrate and accommodate stormwater, such as planting beds and rain gardens, are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff from surface parking lots and rooftops. The use of permeable paving materials for parking lots and other paved surfaces should also be considered.
- 34.** Design sites to minimize water use for irrigation by using strategies such as:
- designing planting areas and tree pits to passively capture rainwater and stormwater run-off.
  - selecting drought-tolerant species.
  - using lower water requirement systems such as drip irrigation.
  - using recycled water for drip irrigation systems.
- 35.** Fence design should be appropriate to its function, location and context in the neighbourhood. Fences should be of a high-quality material, reflecting and extending the building details and integrated with landscaping to minimize their visual impact. The use of chain link fencing is discouraged, and such fencing should not be visible from pedestrian areas, a street or a highway.

**Figure 11:** Landscaping is a major, integral part of a project design and should be coordinated to create a pleasing composition and cohesive look, define and enliven public spaces, moderate building massing, emphasize and frame important building features and natural focal points, screen and buffer parking and utility areas, and provide shade for comfort (Guideline 28).



## Building Articulation, Features, and Materials

**36.** Innovative and interesting façade treatments are strongly encouraged on all buildings, to create identifiable, attractive developments. For example (see Figure 12):

- Stepping back or providing balcony and terrace areas on the building above the ground floor.
- Use of a variety of colours, roof lines, architectural features and building materials. Large areas of unvaried material are strongly discouraged.

**37.** Floors above the fourth storey should be stepped back by 0.3 metres or more to minimize shadow impacts on both public and private spaces. Other architectural features to reduce the perceived height and massing of buildings taller than four storeys may be considered in place of step-backs to the satisfaction of the Director of Development Services.

**38.** For buildings fronting Buena Vista Avenue, floors above the fourth must be stepped back a minimum of 2.0 metres from the building face of the fourth storey on the side of the building fronting Buena Vista Avenue.

**39.** Roof forms should be modulated to reduce the apparent bulk of a building and to create more visual interest. Roof colour should be generally neutral or muted to blend with the natural landscape.

**40.** Large development sites with more than two buildings must substantially vary the design of buildings through variation in architectural features including but not limited to materials, articulation, fenestration, and roof line.



**41.**

**Figure 12:** Innovative and interesting façade treatments are strongly encouraged on all buildings to create identifiable, attractive developments (Guideline 34).

**42.** Roof-mounted equipment should be integrated with the overall roof design and adequately screened so it is concealed to the greatest extent possible from pedestrian viewpoints.

**43.** Break up the building mass by incorporating design elements that clearly define the base, middle, and top of the structure (see Figure 13).

**44.** Use high-quality, durable weather resistant exterior cladding materials. Suitable materials include natural stone, painted wood, stained wood, masonry, metal panels, stucco, and fibre cement siding.

**45.** Use higher quality (smaller scale, fine grained) materials at the pedestrian level (see Figure 13).

**46.** Make material transitions at an inside corner rather than on the same plane.

**47.** Buildings should be limited to a maximum of roughly 100 metres in length, and all buildings longer than 80 metres should include architectural treatments such as recesses, material and fenestration changes, articulation, or a combination of treatments to reduce the perceived length of the building.

**48.** Private balconies and patios should consider sight lines into adjacent properties and use architectural techniques such as



partitions/screens and step backs to reduce visual and shadow impact on neighbors (see Figure 13).

49. The primary entrance to upper-level residential units from the fronting street should be architecturally significant and differentiated.



**Figure 13:** Break up the building mass by incorporating design elements that clearly define the base, middle, and top of the structure (Guideline 38). Private balconies should consider sightlines into adjacent properties and consider step backs to reduce visual and shadow impact on neighbours (Guideline 43).





## 4 COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE Development Permit Area

### 4.1 Area

Unless exempted (see Exemptions below), a development permit addressing design guidelines must be approved for all properties that are currently, or become developed as, commercial and mixed-use parcels.

### 4.2 Designation

This development permit area is designated pursuant to section 488.1 (1) (a), (d), (f), (h), (i), and (j) of the *Local Government Act*.

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.
- Revitalization of an area in which commercial use is permitted.
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development.
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

### 4.3 Justification

This Development Permit Area guides commercial and mixed-use development in the Town of Comox to support a vibrant, walkable, and attractive community that is sensitive to environmental conditions, including within Downtown Comox and the Harbour.

Downtown Comox is primarily designated Mid-Rise Mixed Use, and is characterized by small-town charm, a coastal setting, and human-scale buildings. The area features a mix of local businesses, public gathering spaces, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes framed by views of the ocean and mountains. Architectural styles are generally modest and west coast-inspired, with natural materials, varied rooflines, and an emphasis on outdoor spaces like patios, balconies, and plazas.

The following objectives guide this development permit area:

- To encourage buildings that reflect the small-town coastal character of Comox, and include a mix of uses such as shops, services, and housing to provide active and welcoming streets.
- To establish guidelines for commercial and mixed-use development in both existing and new neighborhoods that preserve the neighbourhood character and natural environment.
- To support building design that enhances streets and open spaces, encouraging walking, cycling, and social interaction, while ensuring pedestrian comfort.



- To promote development that considers environmental protection, water conservation, and energy efficiency in site planning and design.
- To ensure landscaping (both onsite and off-site frontage) enhances neighborhood livability by encouraging sidewalks and planting large trees.
- To provide meaningful outdoor spaces that offer privacy, screening, and sensitivity to neighbouring properties.
- To support interactions with the waterfront with developments that are cohesive, interactive, and contribute to a vibrant Downtown Comox and Harbour.

## 4.4 Exemptions

A Development Permit is not required for any of the following:

1. An application for subdivision.
2. Any development that does not include commercial or mixed-use development.
3. Repair or maintenance of, or renovations to, existing legal buildings, structures, or utilities within the existing building footprint, including those structures described in s. 532(1) of the *Local Government Act* (a building permit may still be required) provided that it is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development.
4. Interior alterations.
5. Maintenance or repair of existing roads, paths, parking areas, driveways, or landscaping provided there is no excavation or removal of trees.
6. Construction of, or regular and emergency Town maintenance of municipal infrastructure or buildings, performed by the Municipality or its authorized agents and contractors, where the proposed works are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development Services.



## 4.5 Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all development within the Commercial and Mixed-Use development permit area, including the Downtown and Harbour areas.

### Relationship to the Street

1. Streetscapes should be designed to animate the street and engage pedestrians with visually appealing frontages, comfortable spaces and features such as sidewalks, patios, plazas, bicycle parking, and street furniture.
2. Building entrances should be directly accessed from sidewalks, parking lots and pedestrian pathways as seamlessly as possible from the street. Grade changes between sidewalks, squares, outdoor seating areas, transit stops, and other pedestrian areas should also be minimized and designed to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.
3. The most active elements of a commercial use should be located near the windows fronting the street (e.g. the dining area of a restaurant as opposed to the food preparation area).
4. Residential units at grade should have individual entrances and transitional areas between the building façade and the public circulation with landscape screens to signal the private entrance of a dwelling unit and provide privacy. This space is encouraged to be a usable outdoor space with a hose bib and spigot to allow for gardening (see Figure 14).
5. The primary pedestrian entrance to commercial units at grade should be from the fronting street (see Figure 15).
6. Building façades that front streets should be developed with active ground floors to ensure businesses are easily identifiable and to promote pedestrian-friendly streets.
7. Design shop façades as individual entities to strengthen their character and interest to the pedestrian. Inviting entrances and clear window glazing offering visibility into a store are especially important to enhance indoor/outdoor connections. Interior renovations that close in storefront windows with display walls and cabinets that impede views into a store are discouraged. Avoid excessive window signage and the use of tinted or colored glass at grade.



**Figure 14:** Residential units at grade should have transitional areas between the building façade and public circulation with landscape screens (Guideline 4).





**Figure 15:** The primary pedestrian entrance to commercial units at grade should be from the fronting street (Guideline 5).

8. Minimize blank walls along the street. Where possible, locate a unit or portion of a unit in front of above-grade parking structures. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should be animated with surface treatments such as murals, green screens, or a combination of the two.
9. Provide an entrance to upper level residential units from the fronting street, in addition to any other secondary entrances.

### Site Planning

10. Buildings and landscaping should be located and designed to suit natural topography, hydrology and vegetation. Creative, site sensitive solutions are encouraged.
11. Site planning should minimize disturbance to natural contours and existing vegetation, and fit the context of surrounding development and natural environment. Designers should use site layout, building orientation, window placement, vegetation and landscape screening to provide visual privacy between neighbouring properties.
12. Position buildings on the site to maximize access to sunlight for both interior spaces and outdoor amenity areas. Shadow studies may be

requested to maximize access to direct sunlight for public spaces and dwelling units.

13. Position buildings to protect and retain mature trees to the greatest extent possible.
14. For sites with multiple buildings, ensure that outdoor amenity spaces at grade between buildings are spacious, inviting, and comfortable.

### Site Circulation, Parking, and Site Servicing

15. Design internal circulation patterns (streets, sidewalks, pathways) to be integrated with and connected to existing bicycle and pedestrian networks.
16. Design walkways with durable, low-maintenance and accessible surface materials (e.g., pavers, brick, concrete) to distinguish pedestrian routes from vehicular zones.
17. Apply universal accessibility principles to primary building entries, sidewalks, plazas, mid-block connections, lanes, amenity features and courtyards through the appropriate selection of materials, stairs, and ramps as necessary, and the provision of wayfinding and lighting elements.
18. Consolidate driveway and laneway access points to minimize curb cuts and impacts on the pedestrian realm or common open spaces. Shared driveways are encouraged.
19. Access roads to parking areas should be constructed at minimum available grade differentials.
20. The majority of apartment building parking should be provided in parking structures beneath the building.
21. Surface parking and loading areas should be situated in accordance with parking, loading and landscaping requirements. Off-street parking should not be located between the front or side facade of a building and any public street.
22. Surface parking should be screened and enhanced with landscaping and berms.



23. All accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to building entrances.
24. Encourage covered short-term bicycle parking in highly visible locations, such as near primary building entrances; and provide long-term bicycle storage facilities within buildings for residents' use.
25. Ensure utility areas and hydro kiosks are clearly identified at the development permit stage and are located to minimize impact (i.e. visual, noise etc.) on public or common open spaces. The wrapping of hydro kiosks in decorative wraps is encouraged.
26. Solid waste storage should be designed as an integral element of the development—contained within the building or suitably screened, complementary to overall building design and adequately sized to meet the needs of uses on site; in no cases shall solid waste storage be located within the front or exterior side yard.
27. Conceal rooftop mechanical equipment using parapets or architectural screens integrated into the building design.
28. All on-site services must be underground.

### Landscape Design and Open Space

29. Encourage site layouts that preserve existing mature trees and viable planting sites for medium/large trees in the adjacent public realm.
30. Encourage the installation of green infrastructure such as soil cells to support recommended soil volumes for medium/large trees in the Town's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standard where sufficient softscape cannot be provided.
31. Provide year-round usable, public and private open spaces to create opportunities for recreation and social activity and provide buffers between uses (see Figure 16).



**Figure 16:** Provide year-round usable, public and private open spaces to create opportunities for recreation and social activity and provide buffers between uses (Guideline 29).

32. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure good visual surveillance of all outdoor open spaces.
33. Design open and landscaped areas to preserve and highlight existing mature trees wherever feasible. Where not feasible, consider utilizing a tree spade to relocate significant vegetation.
34. Landscaping is a major, integral part of a project design and should be coordinated to create a pleasing composition and cohesive look, define and enliven public spaces, moderate building massing, maximize views into stores, emphasize and frame important building features and natural focal points, screen and buffer parking and utility areas, and provide shade for comfort.
35. Landscaped areas should primarily feature trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and similar plantings. Lawn areas should be used minimally (no more than 25 percent) of overall landscaping.
36. Selection of the following types of plant species is encouraged:
  - Included in the Town of Comox's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standards.
  - Native or adapted to the region.
  - Supportive of habitat, nesting, foraging, or pollination (see Figure 17).



- Drought tolerant.
- Adapted to anticipated future climate conditions wherever possible.



**Figure 17:** Select plant species that are supportive of habitat, nesting, foraging, or pollination (Guideline 34).

- 37.** Landscaped areas with the capacity to infiltrate and accommodate stormwater, such as planting beds and rain gardens, are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff from surface parking lots and rooftops. The use of permeable paving materials for parking lots and other paved surfaces should also be considered.
- 38.** Design sites to minimize water use for irrigation by using strategies such as:
  - designing planting areas and tree pits to passively capture rainwater and stormwater run-off.
  - selecting drought-tolerant species.
  - using lower water requirement systems such as drip irrigation.
  - using recycled water for drip irrigation systems.
- 39.** Fence design should be appropriate to its function, location and context in the neighbourhood. Fences should be of a high-quality material, reflecting and extending the building details and integrated with landscaping to minimize their visual impact. The use of chain link fencing is discouraged, and such fencing should not be visible from pedestrian areas, a street or a highway.

## Building Articulation, Features, and Materials

- 40.** Large development sites with more than two buildings must substantially vary the design of buildings through variation in architectural features including but not limited to materials, articulation, fenestration, and roof line.
- 41.** Innovative and interesting façade treatments are strongly encouraged on all buildings, to create identifiable, attractive developments. For example:
  - Stepping back or providing balcony and terrace areas on the building above the ground floor.
  - Use of a variety of colours, roof lines, architectural features and building materials. Large areas of unvaried material are strongly discouraged.
- 42.** Floors above the fourth storey should be stepped back by 0.3 metres or more to minimize shadow impacts on both public and private spaces. Other architectural features to reduce the perceived height and massing of buildings taller than four storeys may be considered in place of step-backs to the satisfaction of the Director of Development Services (see Figure 18).
- 43.** Roof forms should be modulated to reduce the apparent bulk of a building and to create more visual interest. Roof colour should be generally neutral or muted in order to blend with the natural landscape.
- 44.** Roof-mounted equipment should be integrated with the overall roof design and adequately screened so it is concealed to the greatest extent possible from pedestrian viewpoints.
- 45.** Break up the building mass by incorporating design elements that clearly define the base, middle, and top of the structure.



46. Use high-quality, durable, weather resistant exterior cladding materials. Suitable materials include natural stone, masonry, metal, stucco, painted wood, stained wood, and fibre cement siding. Where flat panel fibre cement siding is used, it should be an accent and not comprise more than approximately one third of a building face, and flashing colour around the panels should not contrast significantly with the panel colour (see Figure 18).
47. Use higher quality (smaller scale, fine grained) materials at the pedestrian level.



**Figure 18:** Upper storey step backs; variety of colours, roof lines, building materials and architectural features that reduce perceived height and massing (Guidelines 38-39). Flat panel siding used as accent on building rather than dominant material, and seams blend in due to use of flashing that is same colour as panels (Guideline 43).

48. Make material transitions at an inside corner rather than on the same plane.
49. Buildings should be limited to a maximum of roughly 100 metres in length, and all buildings longer than 80 metres should include architectural treatments such as recesses, material and fenestration changes, articulation, or a combination of treatments to reduce the perceived length of the building.

50. Private balconies and patios should consider sight lines into adjacent properties and use architectural techniques such as partitions/screens and step backs to reduce visual and shadow impact on neighbors.
51. The primary entrance to upper-level residential units from the fronting street should be architecturally significant and differentiated from commercial units.

### Sunlight Access & Seasonal Design

52. Prioritize pedestrian comfort through weather-protective features such as canopies, awnings, and overhangs in locations such as primary building entrances, street corners, above store fronts and display windows, other areas where people frequently gather or wait. Ensure weather protection features are architecturally integrated and reflect the building's design and fenestration patterns (see Figure 19).



**Figure 19:** Prioritize pedestrian comfort through weather protective features such as canopies, awnings, and overhangs in locations such as primary building entrances, street corners, above store fronts and display windows, other areas where people frequently gather or wait. Ensure weather protection features are architecturally integrated and reflect the building's design and fenestration patterns (Guideline 49).



- 53. Utilize architectural and landscape elements to block high summer sun while allowing winter sun penetration.

### Signage and Lighting

- 54. Develop signage as an integral element of the building's façade, and to be compatible in scale and design with the design, colour, and material of the building.
- 55. Address signs must be visible from the street.
- 56. Signs should be scaled for pedestrians rather than vehicles, except along major arterials.
- 57. Encourage front-lit or halo-lit signs that illuminate the sign surface without excessive glare. Avoid the use of internally lit plastic box signs and mast mount freestanding signs.
- 58. Provide shielded, full cut-off down lighting to provide security and ambient lighting while minimizing light pollution and spill over lighting into adjacent properties.
- 59. Ensure that parking, walking, loading, and corridor areas have lighting.
- 60. Aside from light fixtures integrated into canopies, lighting of off-street parking and loading areas should be arranged that no part of any fixture is more than 4.5 metres above finished ground level and not overhang manoeuvring aisles or loading spaces.

### Tourist Commercial Uses

Tourist commercial uses in the Kye Bay/Lazo area (OCP DPA – Form and Character – Commercial:Tourist) are in a unique setting adjacent to rural residential uses, and the following design guidelines should take precedence over any of the forgoing guidelines.

- 61. Building design should reflect the scale and nature of single-detached housing.

- 62. Primary materials should be masonry, fibre-cement siding, wood, or a combination of these. Use of metal should be limited to an accent material comprising not more than 10% of the building facade.
- 63. Except for masonry and metal accents, materials patterns should be board and batten, shingle, lap, shiplap, tongue-and-groove, or a combination.
- 64. A muted colour palette should be used so that buildings blend into the natural surroundings.
- 65. The Waterfront should be viewed as the primary frontage and buildings should be designed to front the ocean.
- 66. Fencing along the waterfront should be limited to 1.2 metres in height with some transparency. Solid metal fences are not permitted in any circumstances.
- 67. Parking and vehicle access should not be located adjacent to a side lot line to minimize the impacts of vehicular traffic on adjacent parcels. Parking areas should ideally be located on a central area of the site.

### Harbour

In addition to the above guidelines, the following guidelines apply specifically within the Harbour areas as shown on OCP DPA – Form and Character – Harbour / Marina:

- 68. Building character should be commercial or residential in nature and not industrial or utilitarian (see Figure 20).
- 69. A Marine Theme is encouraged for buildings and structures.
- 70. Generous provision of windows (i.e. bay windows, dormers) is encouraged.





**Figure 20:** Building character should be commercial or residential in nature and not industrial or utilitarian (Guideline 65).

### Downtown Comox

In addition to the above guidelines, the following guidelines apply within Downtown Comox as shown on OCP DPA – Form and Character - Downtown.

- 71.** Encourage the creation of patios and plazas within Downtown Comox adjacent to the sidewalk to facilitate pedestrian use and street activation (see Figure 21).



**Figure 21:** Encourage the creation of patios and plazas within Downtown Comox adjacent to the sidewalk to facilitate pedestrian use and street activation (Guideline 68).

- 72.** Built form and siting should maintain view corridors to and from the waterfront to the greatest extent possible.
- 73.** Design shall complement the scale and character of the Downtown area, harmonizing with the height, setbacks, and massing of adjacent buildings.
- 74.** Along Comox Avenue, narrow storefronts that integrate with the existing pattern are strongly encouraged.
- 75.** Notwithstanding guideline 43, within Downtown Comox, high-quality, timeless materials and patterns, such as masonry, stucco, painted wood, stained wood, and fibre cement siding in wood siding styles such as lap, shiplap, shingle, v-groove/tongue and groove, and board and batten, are strongly encouraged.
- 76.** Buildings on sloped sites are encouraged to utilize tiered building forms that step up/down with the slope.
- 77.** Storeys above the fourth must integrate minimum 0.3-metre step-backs to integrate with existing character.
- 78.** Sidewalk improvements and hardscape areas adjacent to sidewalks shall utilize decorative surface treatments such as exposed aggregate concrete, coloured concrete, stamped concrete, and/or pavers, which may be combined with smooth or broom-finished concrete.





## 5 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK Development Permit Area

### 5.1 Area

Unless exempted (see Exemptions below), a development permit addressing design guidelines must be approved for all properties that are currently, or become, developed for light industrial/business park development.

### 5.2 Designation

Pursuant to Section 488 (1)(f) of the *Local Government Act*, this designation establishes objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development within the boundaries of the Town of Comox.

This development permit area is designated pursuant to section 488.1 (1) (a), (f), (h), (i), and (j) of the *Local Government Act*.

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development.
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation.
- Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

### 5.3 Justification

This Development Permit Area guides the design and character of employment-focused development to realize functional, safe and attractive industrial and business park environments in Comox, through the following objectives:

- To encourage buildings and sites that are functional, tidy, safe, and efficient.
- To ensure that light industrial/business park development is designed in a manner that is functional and compatible with surrounding land uses, and contributes positively to its neighbourhood, context, and industry.
- To minimize impacts on neighbouring properties and the public realm.



## 5.4 Exemptions

A Development Permit is not required for any of the following:

1. An application for subdivision.
2. Any development that does not include light industrial/business park development.
3. Repair or maintenance of, or renovations to, existing legal buildings, structures, or utilities within the existing building footprint, including those structures described in s. 532(1) of the *Local Government Act* (a building permit may still be required) provided that it is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development.
4. Interior alterations.
5. Maintenance or repair of existing roads, paths, parking areas, driveways, or landscaping provided there is no excavation or removal of trees.
6. Construction of, or regular and emergency Town maintenance of municipal infrastructure or buildings, performed by the Municipality or its authorized agents and contractors, where the proposed works are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit Guidelines, and endorsed by the Director of Development Services.



## 5.5 Guidelines

The following guidelines apply specifically to all development within the Light Industrial/Business Park DPA.

### Relationship to the Street

1. Building entrances should be directly accessed from sidewalks, parking lots and pedestrian pathways as seamlessly as possible from the street. Grade changes between sidewalks, squares, outdoor seating areas, transit stops, and other pedestrian areas should also be minimized and designed to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (see Figure 22).



**Figure 22:** Building entrances should be directly accessed from sidewalks, parking lots and pedestrian pathways as seamlessly as possible from the street (Guideline 1).

2. Building façades that front streets should be developed with active ground floors to ensure businesses are easily identifiable and to promote pedestrian-friendly streets. Inviting entrances and clear window glazing offering visibility into a commercial/office space are especially important to enhance indoor/outdoor connections (see Figure 23).



**Figure 23:** Building façades that front streets should be developed with active ground floors to ensure businesses are easily identifiable and to promote pedestrian-friendly streets. Inviting entrances and clear window glazing offering visibility into a commercial/office space are especially important to enhance indoor/outdoor connections (Guideline 2).

3. Building elevations fronting and visible to the street should not include loading areas or service doors (i.e. an overhead loading door).
4. Minimize blank walls along the street. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should be animated with surface treatments such as murals, green screens, or a combination of the two.



### Site Circulation, Parking, and Site Servicing

5. Design internal circulation patterns (streets, sidewalks, pathways) to be integrated with and connected to existing bicycle and pedestrian networks.
6. Design walkways with durable, low-maintenance and accessible surface materials (e.g., pavers, brick, concrete) to distinguish pedestrian routes from vehicular zones.
7. Apply universal accessibility principles to primary building entries, sidewalks, plazas, mid-block connections, lanes, amenity features and courtyards through the appropriate selection of materials, stairs, and ramps as necessary, and the provision of wayfinding and lighting elements.
8. Consolidate driveway and laneway access points to minimize curb cuts and impacts on the pedestrian realm or common open spaces. Shared driveways are encouraged.
9. Access roads to parking areas should be constructed at minimum available grade differentials.
10. Surface parking and loading areas should be situated in accordance with parking, loading and landscaping requirements.
11. All accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to building entrances.
12. Encourage short-term bicycle parking in highly visible locations, such as near primary building entrances.
13. Ensure utility areas and hydro kiosks are clearly identified at the development permit stage and are located to minimize impact (i.e. visual, noise etc.) on public or common open spaces.
14. Solid waste storage should be designed as an integral element of the development—contained within the building or suitably screened, complementary to overall building design and adequately sized to meet the needs of uses on site.
15. Conceal rooftop mechanical equipment using parapets or architectural screens integrated into the building design.
16. All on-site services must be underground.

### Landscape Design and Open Space

17. Encourage site layouts that preserve existing mature trees and viable planting sites for medium/large trees in the adjacent public realm.
18. Encourage the installation of green infrastructure such as soil cells to support recommended soil volumes for medium/large trees in the Town's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standard where sufficient softscape cannot be provided.
19. Provide public and private open spaces to create opportunities for social activity and provide buffers between uses.
20. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure good visual surveillance of all outdoor open spaces.
21. Design open and landscaped areas to preserve and highlight existing mature trees wherever feasible. Where not feasible, consider utilizing a tree spade to relocate significant vegetation.
22. Landscaping is a major, integral part of a project design and should be coordinated to create a pleasing composition and cohesive look, define and enliven open spaces, moderate building massing, emphasize and frame important building features and natural focal points, screen and buffer parking, utility areas and neighbouring properties, and provide shade for comfort.
23. Landscaped areas should primarily feature trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and similar plantings. Lawn areas should be used minimally (no more than 25 percent) of overall landscaping.
24. Selection of the following types of plant species is encouraged:



- Included in the Town of Comox's Climate Resilient Landscaping Standards.
- Native or adapted to the region.
- Supportive of habitat, nesting, foraging, or pollination.
- Drought-tolerant.
- Adapted to anticipated future climate conditions wherever possible.

**25.** Landscaped areas with the capacity to infiltrate and accommodate stormwater, such as planting beds and rain gardens, are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff from surface parking lots and rooftops. The use of permeable paving materials for parking lots and other paved surfaces should also be considered (see Figure 24).



**Figure 24:** Landscaped areas with the capacity to infiltrate and accommodate stormwater, such as planting beds and rain gardens, are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff from surface parking lots and rooftops (Guideline 23).

- 26.** Design sites to minimize water use for irrigation by using strategies such as:
- designing planting areas and tree pits to passively capture rainwater and stormwater run-off.
  - selecting drought-tolerant species.
  - using lower water requirement systems such as drip irrigation.
  - using recycled water for drip irrigation systems.
- 27.** Fences should be designed to be visually appealing and compatible with adjacent developments. Chain link fences are not permitted.

### Building Articulation, Features, and Materials

- 28.** Avoid presenting blank or unarticulated facades to the street. Use projections, recesses, plantings, awnings, colour, and texture to break up large unglazed wall surfaces and reduce their visual impact.
- 29.** Differentiate building components—such as warehouses, offices, or sales areas—by using a variety of exterior materials.
- 30.** Use high-quality, durable exterior cladding materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible.
- 31.** Painted or unpainted concrete may be used but must be combined with at least two other exterior materials visible from the public realm, such as wood, stone, brick, masonry, or metal.

### Signage and Lighting

- 32.** Provide shielded, down lighting to provide security, illuminate entries, and illuminate vehicular and pedestrian access while minimizing light pollution and spill over lighting into adjacent properties.





## 6 HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

### Development Permit Area

#### 6.1 Area

As per section 489 of the *Local Government Act*, unless exempted under section 1.5 below, a Development Permit addressing hazardous conditions guidelines must be approved for those properties shown as Hazardous Condition Development Permit Areas (DPA) before:

- Subdivision of land;
- Alteration of land, including vegetation; and
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure.

#### 6.2 Designation

Pursuant to section 488(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act*, these lands are hereby designated a development permit area for protection of development from hazardous conditions.

#### 6.3 Justification

Hazardous conditions, including but not limited to, flooding, bank instability, erosion, groundwater seepage, land slip, rock falls, subsidence, and sea level rise, may in some cases be abated by using appropriate precautionary measures as part of site and building design, construction, and long-term maintenance.

#### 6.4 Objectives

Minimize risks to people and property from natural hazards including:

- Steep slope hazards
- Flood hazards

Manage development and construction practices in natural hazard areas to protect structures from damage.

Promote activities to reduce hazards while addressing environmental issues.



## 6.5 Exemptions

A Hazardous Conditions Development Permit will not be required for any of the following:

### All Hazard Conditions:

1. The proposed development will not be impacted by, and will not result in impacts to surrounding properties, in relation to the identified hazardous condition(s). For the Town to determine whether the proposed development qualifies for this exemption, applicants may be required to provide a letter on the development and hazardous conditions, prepared by a Qualified Professional (QP), registered in British Columbia.
2. Proposed actions and activities are necessary to prevent immediate threats to life or property.
3. Renovation or alteration to existing buildings or structures that do not require an extension of the foundation and will not result in additional risks in relation to the identified hazardous conditions. For the Town to determine whether the proposed development qualifies for this exemption, applicants may be required to provide a letter on the development and hazardous conditions, prepared by a QP, outlining that the proposed development will not increase risks to people or property.
4. Cutting down a hazardous tree that presents an immediate danger to life or property, provided that the stump remains undisturbed. This must be confirmed by an ISA Certified Arborist as outlined in the Tree Management and Protection Bylaw as amended from time to time, or any future iteration thereof.
5. A technical subdivision for lot consolidation, lot line adjustment, or road dedication.
6. The Director of Development Services determines and confirms in writing that proposed activities will not increase hazard condition risks to people or property. The Director may request that the applicant provide a letter from a QP outlining that proposed activities will not increase hazard condition risks to people or property.
7. On the properties shown shaded on Figure 24 - Kye Bay Properties, pruning of trees provided that a written opinion prepared and executed by an ISA Certified Arborist states that:
  - 7.1. the proposed pruning did not undermine the tree's health;
  - 7.2. the proposed pruning was conducted under the supervision of an ISA Certified Arborist;
  - 7.3. the proposed pruning was in accordance with the ANSI Standard A-300;
  - 7.4. all tree parts greater than 5 cm in diameter were removed from the slope at time of pruning in a manner that does not create channelized pathways; and,
  - 7.5. any disturbances to the existing ground cover or soil were remediated with replanting, repacking, or regrading.
8. Pruning, topping or cutting down trees or plants located below the toe of the slope on properties shown shaded on Figure 25 below:



Figure 25: Windslow Road and Wireless Road parcels.



9. Cutting down or pruning a hazardous tree that presents an immediate danger to human safety or to property. This must be confirmed by an ISA Certified Arborist. If the property owner cuts down or prunes a tree pursuant to this section, the Owner will advise the Parks Manager that it has done so in writing within one (1) business day of cutting down the tree.
10. On the properties shown shaded on Figure 26 Kye Bay Properties below, cutting down or pruning a hazardous tree provided that a written opinion prepared and executed by an ISA Certified Arborist states that the tree presents a danger to human safety or to property.
11. On the properties shown shaded on Figure 26: Kye Bay Properties below, re-topping of trees provided that a written opinion prepared and executed by an ISA Certified Arborist states that the tree has been previously topped and re-topping did not undermine the tree's health.
12. On the properties shown shaded on Figure 26 Kye Bay Properties below, pruning of plants provided that a written opinion prepared and signed by a Red Seal Landscape Horticulturalist or executed by an ISA Certified Arborist states that:
  - 12.1. the pruning did not undermine the plant's health or substantially reduce existing ground cover;
  - 12.2. all plant parts greater than 5 cm in diameter were removed from the slope at time of pruning in a manner that does not create channelized pathways; and,
  - 12.3. any disturbances to the existing ground cover or soil were remediated with replanting, repacking, or regrading.
13. On Lot 1, District Lot 93, Comox District, Plan 25746, pruning of plants within 30 cm horizontal distance from the edge of an existing trail to a height 2.5 metres above grade.

### Flood Risk Only

14. The construction of accessory buildings less than 10 square metres in area.
15. Landscape enhancement projects, such as planting new trees and shrubs.
16. Gardening and yard maintenance activities within an existing landscaped area, such as mowing lawns, pruning trees and shrubs, planting vegetation.

### Steep Slopes Only

17. The construction of accessory buildings less than 10 square metres in area that does not require any ground disturbance.
18. Landscape enhancement projects, such as planting new trees and shrubs, that are undertaken or authorized in writing by the Town of Comox.
19. Gardening and yard maintenance activities within an existing landscaped area, such as mowing lawns, and pruning trees and shrubs.

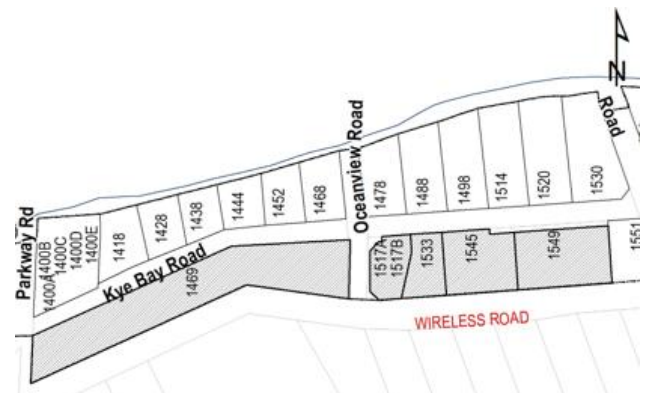


Figure 26: Kye Bay Properties



## 6.6 Guidelines

The general guidelines for issuing Development Permits in a Hazardous Condition Development Permit Areas are below; however, not all guidelines will be applicable to all developments. Typically, an assessment report which has been prepared by a professional qualified in the relevant discipline and licensed to practice in British Columbia will be required. Where a report has been accepted by the Town of Comox, recommendations will be used to establish conditions for the Development Permit. Care will need to be taken to ensure that guidelines intended to mitigate hazardous conditions are implemented in a manner sensitive to the environmental protection and preservation guidelines as outlined in the Sensitive Ecosystems and Riparian Ecosystems Development Permit Areas.

### General

The following general guidelines apply to all Hazardous Condition areas, except that guidelines specific to Steep Slope and Flood Hazards take precedence if there is conflict with the general guidelines.

1. A report prepared by a QP must be provided to the Town, outlining the risks of development to the subject parcel and other parcels impacted by the immediate hazard area, measures that will be used to mitigate risks, and statements that:
  - 1.1. The proposed development will not increase hazard risks to people or property and will reduce risks compared to pre-development conditions as feasible.
  - 1.2. The proposed development will be safe for the intended use.
2. QP Reports must be in accordance with the Town's Report Terms of Reference for flood and steep slope hazards.
3. All development must be in accordance with the QP report outlined in guidelines 1 and 2.
4. Do not excavate, fill, place, erect or construct any building or permanent structure in areas subject to hazardous conditions that cannot be mitigated by the recommendations of a QP.
5. Site buildings and structures in accordance with setbacks determined by a QP.
6. Avoid encroaching into the critical root zones of those trees being retained.

### Steep Slope Hazards

7. The geotechnical report shall be coordinated with an environmental report or riparian area assessment report as required by other Town Development Permit Areas, if applicable, to create a combined solution that mitigates both hazard and environmental impacts and protects environmentally valuable resources.
8. Maintain existing vegetation to absorb water, minimize erosion and protect slopes.
9. Design the development to minimize alterations to the steep slope to reflect the site rather than altering the site to reflect the development, notwithstanding site alterations that will mitigate hazards.
10. Preserve areas with natural slopes of 30 percent or more as natural open space.
11. Construct accesses such as pathways and stairways to minimize slope disturbance.
12. Avoid placing fill, excavated material, sand or soil near the top of the slope.
13. Slope stabilization must address bioengineering solutions prior to hard engineering solutions, designed by QPs.
14. Revegetate disturbed slopes where gullied or bare soil is exposed as per a QP's report, which must include a planting plan to stabilize the slope.



15. Where possible, design the site to avoid the need for retaining walls. Where this is not possible, retaining walls should be tiered to retain a gradual slope as close to the natural slope as feasible.

#### **Flood Hazards**

16. Building foundations must be designed by a Professional Engineer and include a safe for intended use statement.
17. All buildings for residential occupancy shall require the underside of the floor system for living space to be above the flood construction level.
18. Floor space ancillary to residential occupancies (such as underground or grade level parking), and floor space for commercial and industrial occupancies, may be permitted below the identified flood construction level if all electrical and mechanical equipment is located above the identified flood construction level or where a Professional Engineer has confirmed they may be safely located below it.





## 7 SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS

### Development Permit Area

#### 7.1 Area

As per section 489 of the *Local Government Act*, unless exempted, a Development Permit addressing Sensitive Ecosystem guidelines must be approved for those properties shown to contain lands generally identified on the OCP DPA – Sensitive Ecosystems Map, and all lands within Town boundaries that include sensitive ecosystems or wildlife habitats prior to:

- Subdivision of land;
- Alteration of land, including vegetation; and
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure.

#### 7.2 Designation

In accordance with section 488(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act*, the Town of Comox Sensitive Ecosystems Development Permit Area has been established to protect the natural environment, its ecosystems and biodiversity. These lands are also designated under section 485 of the *Local Government Act* as areas in which the municipality may require applicants to provide information on the anticipated impact of development activities on the natural environment of the area affected.

#### 7.3 Justification

The Sensitive Ecosystems DPA is established to protect Comox's sensitive ecosystems, including species at risk, from the effects of development and, where possible, to restore and enhance degraded sensitive ecosystems. Species at-risk are species or

populations that are listed under Schedule 1, 2 and 3 of the *Species at Risk Act* (S.C. 2002, c.29), are Red- or Blue-listed by the BC Conservation Data Centre, are considered regionally important, or are protected by the BC *Wildlife Act*. Known sensitive ecosystems in the Town include, but are not limited to:

- Arbutus/Garry Oak
- Coastal bluffs
- Heron nesting sites
- Raptor nesting sites, including but not limited to eagle, owl, and peregrine falcon
- Marine ecosystems
- Older forests
- Wildlife corridors

There may be other sensitive ecosystems in the Town that are identified during development processes that should be protected or should have development impacts mitigated.



## 7.4 Objectives

- Protecting, restoring and enhancing environmentally sensitive areas as functioning ecosystems.
- Protecting biodiversity, as well as wildlife habitats, features and functions.
- Avoiding negative impacts to environmentally sensitive areas over mitigation or compensation.
- Managing the introduction and spread of invasive species.

## 7.5 Exemptions

A Development Permit is not required for the following:

1. Works, not including the removal of trees, within an area of human disturbance, provided the area of human disturbance is not expanded. Areas of human disturbance include:
  - 1.1. Footprints of buildings and structures,
  - 1.2. Areas where soil or vegetation has been added, removed, or altered, and
  - 1.3. Without limiting (a) and (b), the following areas:
    - 1.3.1. areas modified for agricultural use, including, without limitation, for crops, pasture, range, hayfields and normal farm practices,
    - 1.3.2. areas that are or have been used for resource extraction and have not been restored to their natural conditions, and
    - 1.3.3. areas occupied by invasive plant species to an extent that precludes the unassisted reestablishment of native plant species.
2. Ecological restoration or enhancement projects, including urban forest management, that are undertaken or authorized by the Town of Comox.
3. Emergency responses or works required by the Town of Comox, Provincial Emergency Program or the Comox Valley Regional District.
4. Hand removal of noxious weeds, as identified in the BC Weed Control Regulation and known invasive species, provided that measures are taken to prevent soil or debris being discharged into the watercourse, and subject to immediate replanting with native vegetation suitable to local conditions.
5. Cutting down a hazardous tree that presents an immediate danger to life or property as confirmed by an ISA Certified Arborist.
6. If a site inspection and letter has been completed and submitted by a Qualified Professional (QP) stating that there are no sensitive ecosystems on or near the parcel, or no mitigation measures are required to avoid negative impacts of proposed development on sensitive ecosystems on or near the parcel, and the report has been accepted by the Town.
7. The Director of Development Services determines and confirms in writing that proposed activities are unlikely to negatively impact a sensitive ecosystem. The Director may request that the applicant provide a letter from a QEP outlining that proposed activities are unlikely to impact a sensitive ecosystem.
8. Landscaping projects completed by hand, including the creation of gardening beds and the planting of trees and shrubs, subject to no existing trees being removed.



## 7.6 Guidelines

1. Site design and development should be consistent with an Environmental Report prepared in accordance with the Town's Report Terms of Reference and guidelines contained in this section.
2. Applicants must provide an Environmental Report prepared by a Registered Professional Biologist together with other qualified professionals as the project warrants, including:
  - 2.1. Assessment from an environmental perspective of the proposed drainage, sediment and erosion control, storm drainage systems, and slope stability.
  - 2.2. Identification and assessment of sensitive ecosystems on the site and the impacts of development on sensitive ecosystems adjacent to the site, including marine ecosystems on waterfront sites, and recommendations to avoid or mitigate impacts of proposed development.
  - 2.3. Mechanisms for the protection of significant trees, vegetation or other sensitive ecosystem components during and post construction.
  - 2.4. Identification of the location of buffers required to protect sensitive ecosystems, including recommendations for fencing along buffers where adjacent development and activity is anticipated.
  - 2.5. Identification of, and measures required to protect active bird nests, including minimum buffers in accordance with the Provincial Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development.
  - 2.6. A plan for restoration of sensitive ecosystems that will be retained where they have been disturbed or where invasive weeds have intruded.
  - 2.7. Considerations for variances that could facilitate better protection and mitigation of impacts to sensitive ecosystems on the site.
  - 2.8. The timing of site work and rehabilitation.
  - 2.9. Where fencing may be installed, recommendations for fencing that allows for wildlife movement.
  - 2.10. An environmental monitoring plan.
3. Restoration plans prepared by a QP will be required where an environmentally sensitive area has been disturbed through unauthorized activities.
4. Garry Oak ecosystems should be undisturbed at all costs given their rarity and ecosystem diversity as a condition for all DPs issued under this DPA.
5. Where a sensitive ecosystem identified in the Environmental Report cannot be fully retained, habitat compensation areas should be provided at minimum 1:1 ratio.





## 8 RIPARIAN ECOSYSTEMS

### Development Permit Area

#### 8.1 Area

As per section 489 of the *Local Government Act*, unless exempted, a Development Permit addressing Sensitive Ecosystem guidelines must be approved for those properties shown to contain lands generally identified on the OCP DPA – Riparian Ecosystems Map, and all lands within Town boundaries that include streams or wetlands, prior to:

- Subdivision of land;
- Alteration of land, including vegetation; and
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure.

#### 8.2 Designation

Pursuant to section 488(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act*, these lands are hereby designated a development permit area for protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biodiversity, and in particular riparian ecosystems. These lands are also designated under section 485 of the *Local Government Act* as areas in which the municipality may require applicants to provide information on the anticipated impact of development activities on the natural environment of the area affected.

#### 8.3 Justification

Local governments are obliged by the *Riparian Areas Protection Act* and *Riparian Areas Regulation* to protect water bodies and riparian areas from the effects of residential, commercial and industrial development.

Riparian ecosystems represent areas of high biodiversity and a range of habitat features. They are an important connection between land and water, are important components of the hydrological cycle, function in natural erosion, deposition, and flood mitigation processes, and function as wildlife corridors. Riparian ecosystems also provide a natural setting and visual assets to Comox residents. As a result, riparian ecosystems warrant protection from development, in addition to revitalization of areas that have been degraded by human disturbance.

There are several well-known, important riparian assessment areas in the Town. There may be other riparian assessment areas that are independent of, or connected to the following riparian assessment areas.

- Brooklyn Creek
- Golf Creek
- Carthew Creek
- Hilton Springs
- Lazo Marsh
- Queen's Ditch drainage channel
- the ditches along and north side of Knight Road and south of Salmonberry Drive that discharge into Queen's Ditch



- the ditches located within and west of the road dedication of Military Row and south of Oceanspray Drive that discharge into Little River
- the ditch that travels along Ryan Road and Military Row north of Ocean Spray Drive that discharges into Little River

## 8.4 Definitions

Any terms used in this Development Permit Area that are defined in the *Riparian Areas Protection Regulation [B.C. Reg. 32/2023]* (Regulation) are as defined in the Regulation as amended from time to time, or any future iteration thereof.

Major Development means the construction of five or more dwelling units on a parcel, the construction of commercial and industrial buildings that require new or extended foundations, or subdivision to create three or more parcels.

## 8.5 Exemptions

A Development Permit will not be required for the following:

1. A development where the developer provides a copy of an authorization issued under section 35 (2) (b) or (c)[serious harm to fish — exception] of the *Fisheries Act* (Canada) for the development.
2. Repairs or other non-structural alterations or additions to a building or other structure, if:
  - 2.1. the structure will remain on its existing foundation and footprint, and
  - 2.2. The use of a building or structure conforms with uses permitted by the Zoning Bylaw on the parcel, and the building or structure is not damaged or destroyed to the extent of 75% or more of its value above its foundations.
3. Maintenance of an area of human disturbance, other than a building or structure, if the area is not extended and the type of disturbance is not changed.
4. Farming activities as defined in the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act.
5. Development outside of a riparian assessment area. Where development is not clearly outside of a riparian assessment area, the Town may require a site plan completed by a BC Land Surveyor to identify that development is taking place outside a riparian assessment area.
6. Works in or about a stream approved under the *Water Sustainability Act*.



## 8.6 Guidelines

Unless exempted, a development permit will not be issued unless the Ministry of Environment has provided the Town with a copy of an assessment report prepared by a QEP, and development will take place as per the recommendations of the assessment report.

1. The minimum setback from the stream boundary as identified by a QEP and incorporated into a BC Land Surveyor certified site plan is 30 metres, unless an assessment report prepared by a QEP identifies a narrower SPEA as per the simple assessment, or a varying setback as per the detailed assessment, as outlined in Regulation Technical Assessment Manual.
2. The minimum setback from the top of a ravine bank for ravines that are 60 metres wide or more is 10 metres from top of ravine bank, as identified by a qualified QEP and incorporated into a BCLS certified site plan, unless an assessment report prepared by a QEP identifies a different setback as per the detailed assessment outlined in the Regulation Technical Assessment Manual. For clarity, the setback may need to be larger than 10 metres under another Development Permit Area.
3. Subdivision, including bare land subdivision, must result in parcels that are entirely outside of the SPEA, unless the SPEA is restored to a naturalized state, fenced, and protected through covenants on title of each parcel that includes a portion of a SPEA.
4. In addition to the minimum requirements of an assessment report as per the Regulation Technical Assessment Manual, assessment reports for Major Development must include the following measures that should be implemented for the development, including where a simple assessment is completed as per the Regulation Technical Assessment Manual, but except where a stream is classified by the QEP as a ditch as defined in the Regulation Technical Assessment Manual:
  - 4.1. measures to improve the health of the SPEA in areas of previous human disturbance within the SPEA.
  - 4.2. any potential hazards posed by the proposed development to natural features, functions or conditions in the SPEA that support the life processes of protected fish, and recommended measures to be taken to avoid the hazards.
  - 4.3. recommendations from the QEP for fencing and signage that prevents human disturbance of the SPEA but allows for movement of animals, and that complies with any form and character development permit area guidelines that apply to the type of development.
  - 4.4. recommended measures to protect and enhance natural features on the parcel that are outside of, but integral to the SPEA, including tree cover and vegetation, drainage patterns, aquifer protection, and topography.
  - 4.5. recommended measures for windfirm edge and stand stability.
5. Without limiting the Regulation Technical Assessment Manual, where a permanent structure is proposed to be demolished to facilitate development, the assessment report must identify the SPEA as if the permanent structure does not exist, and all development should take place outside the SPEA.





## 9 NORTH EAST COMOX

### Development Permit Area

#### 9.1 Area

As per section 489 of the *Local Government Act*, unless exempted, a Development Permit addressing North East Comox guidelines must be approved for those properties shown on the OCP DPA – North East Comox map prior to:

- Subdivision of land;
- Alteration of land, including vegetation; and
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure.

#### 9.2 Designation

In accordance with sections 488(1) (a), (b), (c), (i) of the *Local Government Act*, these lands are hereby designation a development permit area for:

- the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biodiversity.
- protection of development from hazardous conditions.
- protection of farming.

#### 9.3 Objectives

- Protect the integrity of the ground water supply for the Lazo Wildlife Management Area, Hilton Springs, and adjacent ALR lands to the north.
- Manage drainage and prevent flooding on lands downstream and down-slope of this DPA.

#### 9.4 Justification

Protecting the integrity of ground water supply and drainage control for the Lazo Wildlife Management Area, Hilton Springs and ALR land, mitigating impacts to ecological vitality and productive capability respectively.

#### 9.5 Exemptions

A development permit is not required for the following actions:

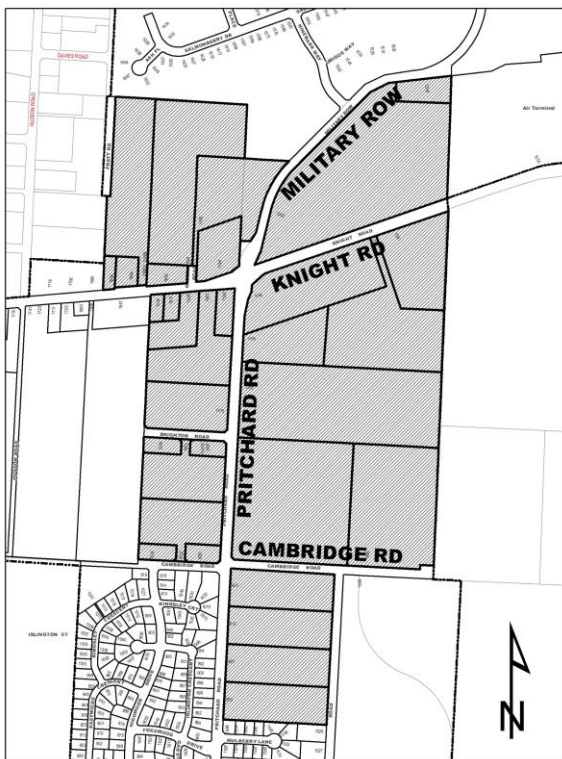
1. Subdivision limited to a lot line adjustment, consolidation, or road or park dedication.
2. Subdivision of land; alteration of land, including vegetation; or construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure on a parcel within the area shown shaded in figure 27, for which a subdivision has been approved or a building permit issued in compliance with Town of Comox Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, Schedule 7 (North East Comox Special Requirements).
3. Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a single detached dwelling and accessory buildings thereto.
4. Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a coach house.
5. Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a multi-unit building and accessory buildings thereto located on Lot 33 District Lot 156 Comox District Plan VIP64775 (1260 Noel Avenue).
6. Alteration of land, including removal of vegetation, on parcels that are 2500 square metres or less in area.



## 9.6 Guidelines

Unless exempted, no subdivision of land, alteration of land including vegetation, or construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure is to occur unless the applicant first obtains a development permit.

1. The quantity and quality of ground water flows to Lazo Marsh, Hilton Springs and ALR lands to the north of Lazo Marsh, east of Pritchard Road and south of Knight Road, should be maintained in relation to existing site conditions.
2. The impact of surface and ground water flows on flood frequency and duration on lands downstream and down-slope of this DPA for up to and including the 100-year storm event should be the same or less than existing site conditions.
3. A 15-metre undisturbed natural state buffer must be provided from the Natural Boundary of Hilton Springs and the Top of Bank of the conveyance ditch located along the road dedication for Cambridge Road, as identified on a BCLS certified by a British Columbia Land Surveyor (BCLS) certified site plan.
4. A report by a professional engineer with expertise in geotechnical engineering or hydrology and a professional agrologist may be required in accordance with Comox Planning Procedures Bylaw 1780 addressing measures necessary to ensure:
  - the quality and quantity of ground water flows are maintained in relation to existing site conditions; and
  - the impact of surface and ground water flows on flood frequency and duration on lands downstream and down-slope of this DPA for up to and including the 100-year storm event should be the same or less than existing site conditions.
5. The subdivision of land; alteration of land including vegetation; or construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure should be in accordance with any required professional engineer and professional agrologist impact assessment report, including any works or protective measures specified.



**Figure 26:** North East Comox Sub-catchment Area





# TOWN OF COMOX



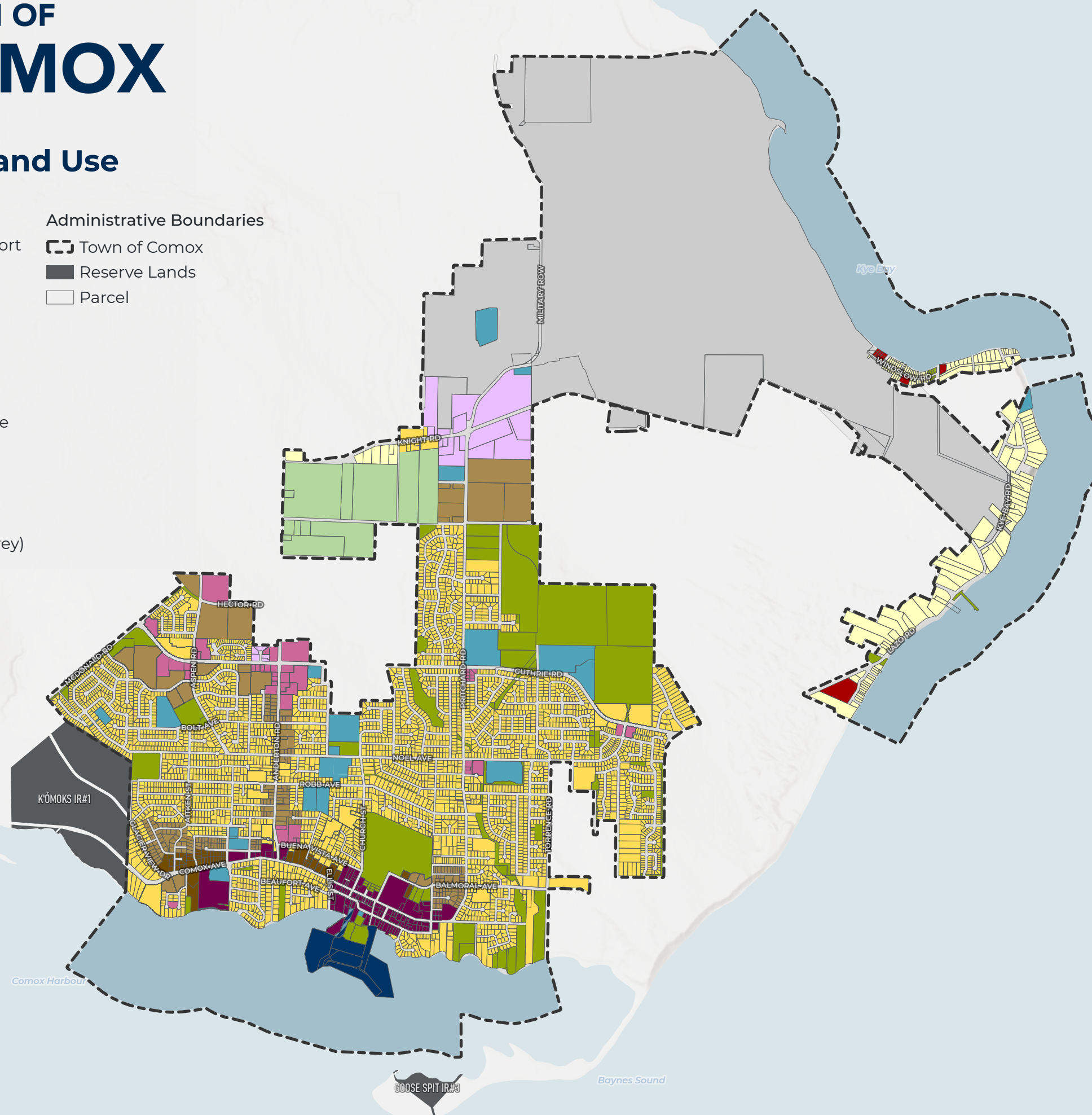
## OCP Future Land Use

### OCP Land Use (2025)

- 19 Wing Comox / Comox Valley Airport
- Agricultural
- Business Park
- Commercial: Tourist
- Parks, Greenways and Open Space
- Institutional
- Harbour and Marina
- Harbour and Marina Comprehensive Development Area (6-storey)
- Low-Rise Mixed-Use (4-storey)
- Mid-Rise Mixed-Use (6-storey)
- Detached Residential
- Ground Oriented Residential (3-storey)
- Low-Rise Residential (4-storey)
- Mid-Rise Residential (6-storey)

### Administrative Boundaries

- Town of Comox
- Reserve Lands
- Parcel



Salish Sea

Strait of Georgia

Comox Harbour

Baynes Sound

GOOSE SPIT IR#3

K'OMOKS IR#1

1,000  
Meters

Scale: 1:30,000  
(When Printed at 11 x 17")



# TOWN OF COMOX



## OCP Growth Areas

### Town of Comox Growth Areas

#### Priority Growth Areas

- Downtown Centre
- Guthrie-Anderton Corridor
- Harbour View Corridor

#### Secondary Growth Areas

- Airport Corridor

#### Infill Areas

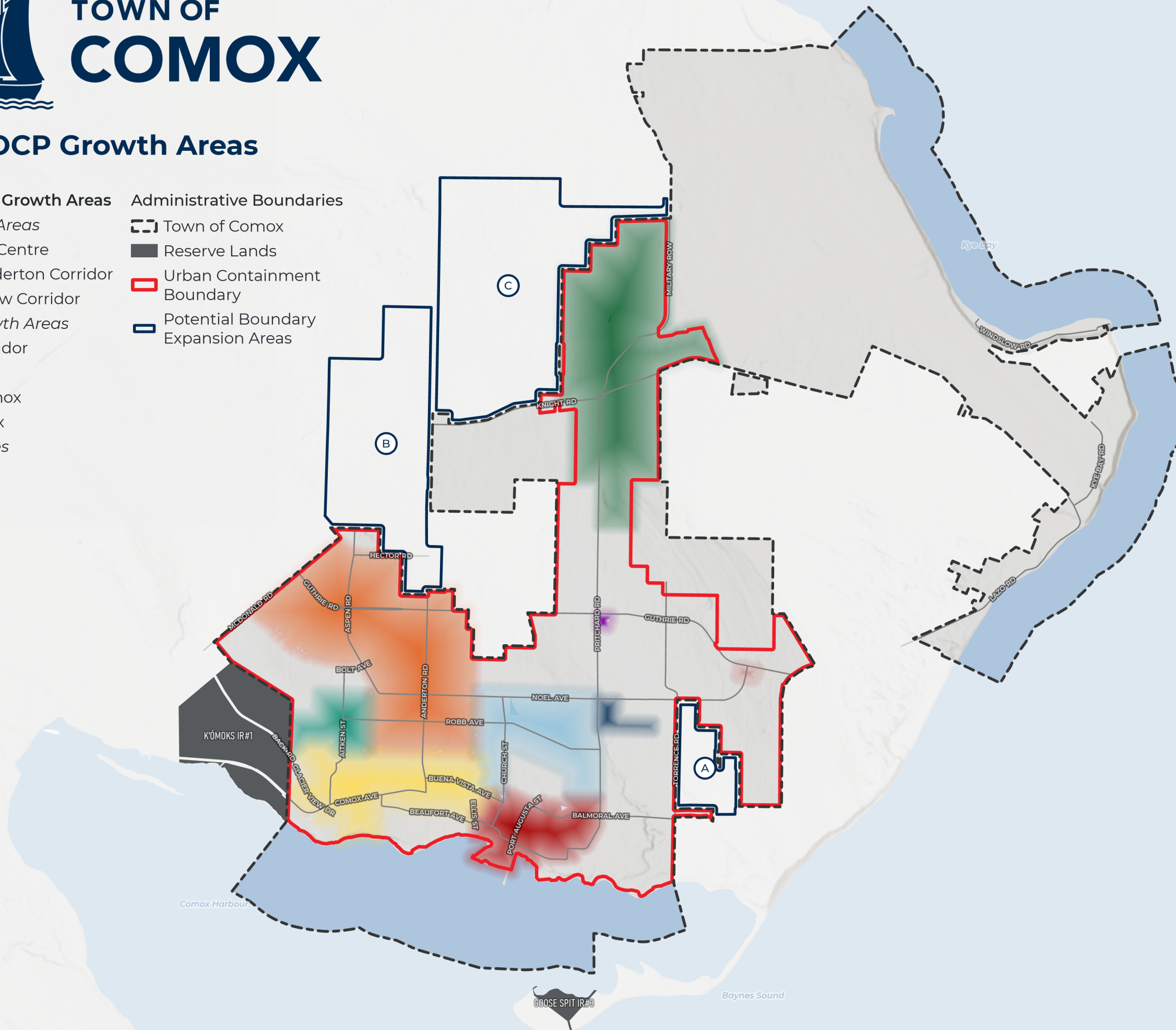
- Central Comox
- West Comox

#### Mixed-Use Nodes

- Beckton
- Highland
- Dogwood

### Administrative Boundaries

- Town of Comox
- Reserve Lands
- Urban Containment Boundary
- Potential Boundary Expansion Areas





# TOWN OF COMOX

## OCP Active Transportation Network

### Active Transportation Network

- Existing Trail / Multi-Use Pathway
- Future Trail / Multi-Use Pathway
- CVRD AT Network

### Existing Cycling Network

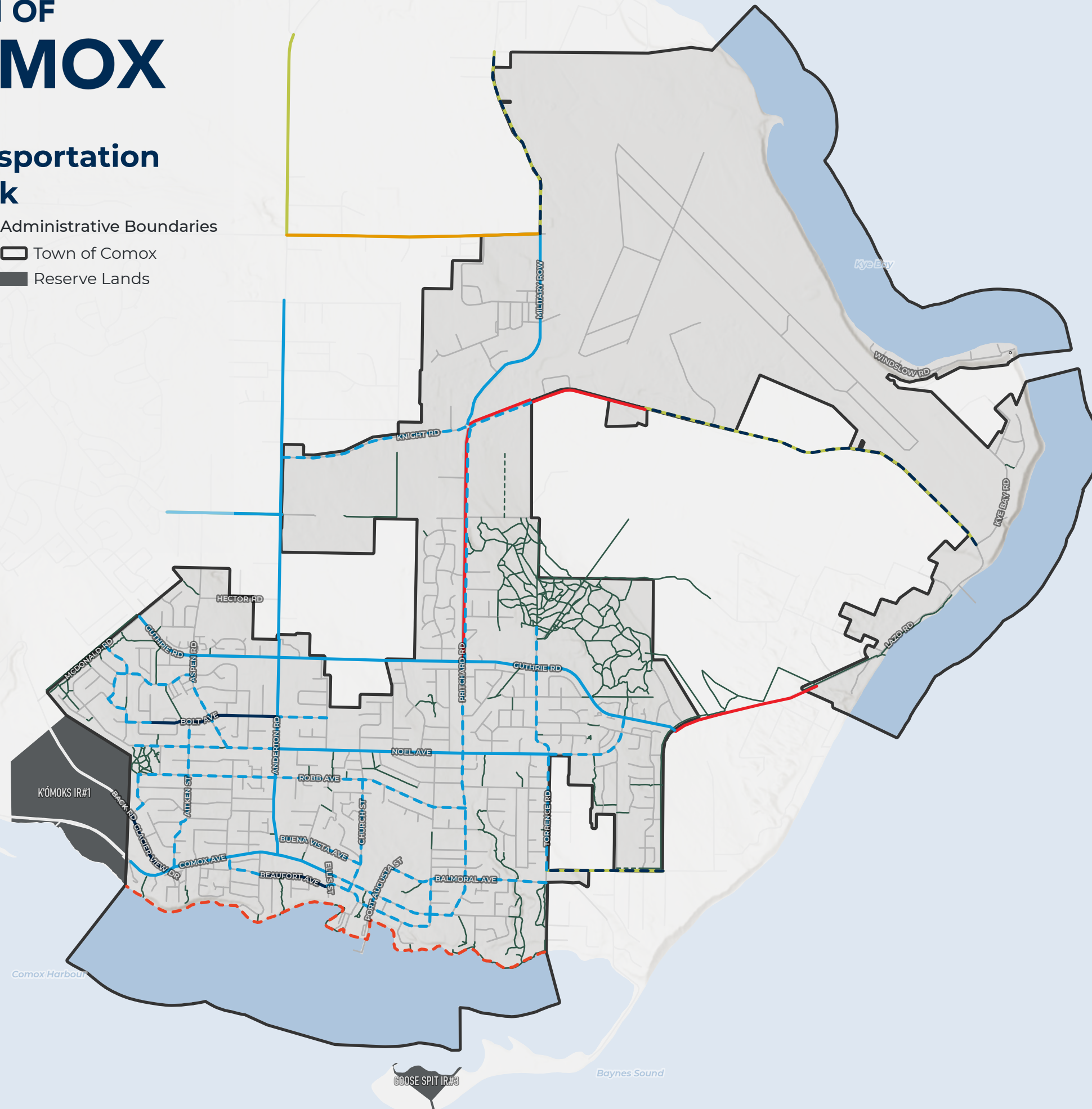
- Existing Bicycle Lane
- Existing Shared Lane
- Existing Shoulder
- MOTT Buffered Accessible

### Future Cycling Network

- Future Bicycle Lane
- Future Multi Use Shoulder
- Future Waterfront Pathway

### Administrative Boundaries

- Town of Comox
- Reserve Lands



Salish Sea

Strait of Georgia

Comox Harbour

Baynes Sound

GOOSE SPIT IR#3

K'OMOKS IR#1

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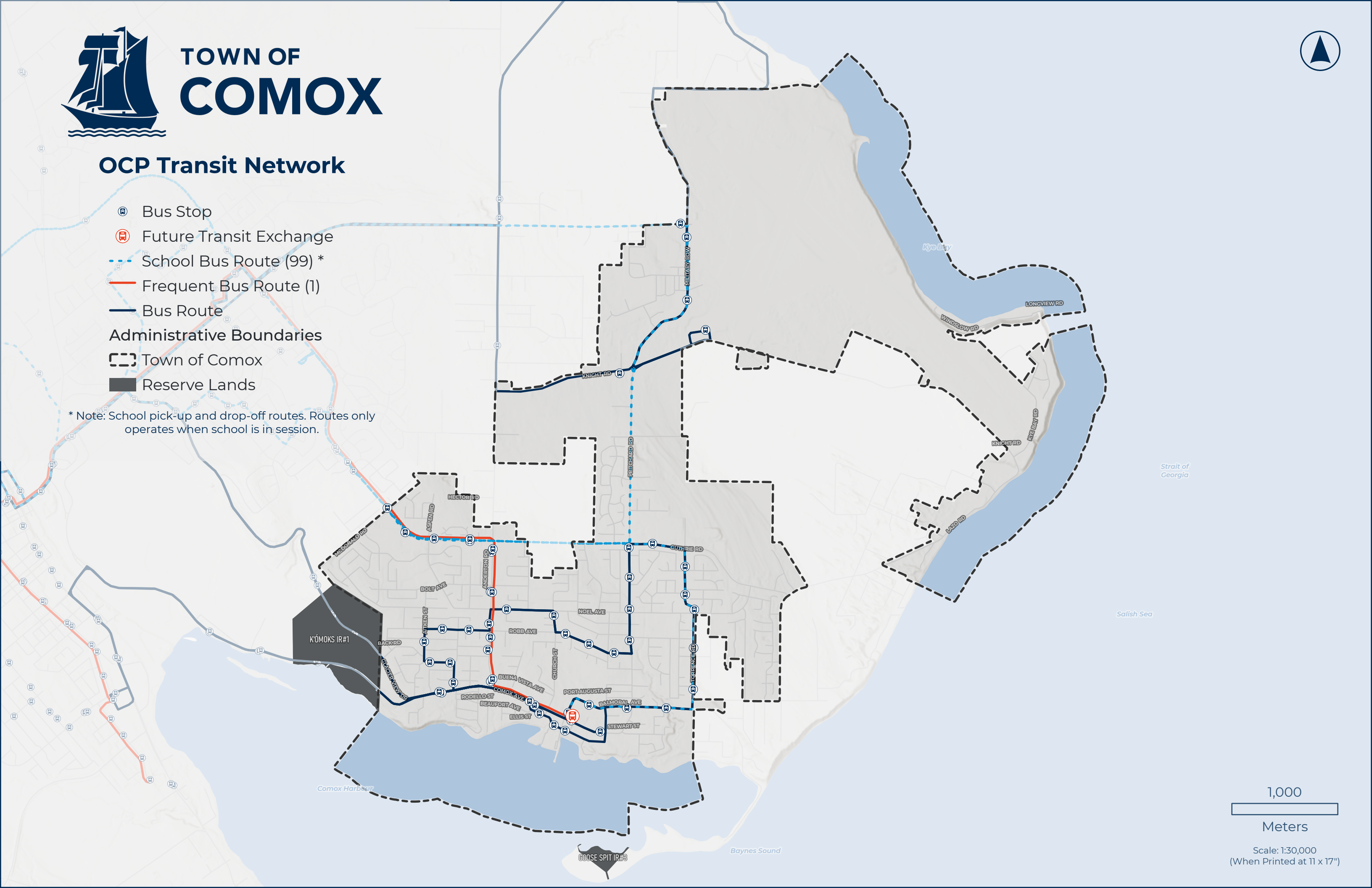
# TOWN OF COMOX



## OCP Transit Network

- Bus Stop
- Future Transit Exchange
- School Bus Route (99) \*
- Frequent Bus Route (1)
- Bus Route
- Administrative Boundaries**
- Town of Comox
- Reserve Lands

\* Note: School pick-up and drop-off routes. Routes only operates when school is in session.



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Meters

Scale: 1:30,000  
(When Printed at 11 x 17")



# TOWN OF COMOX



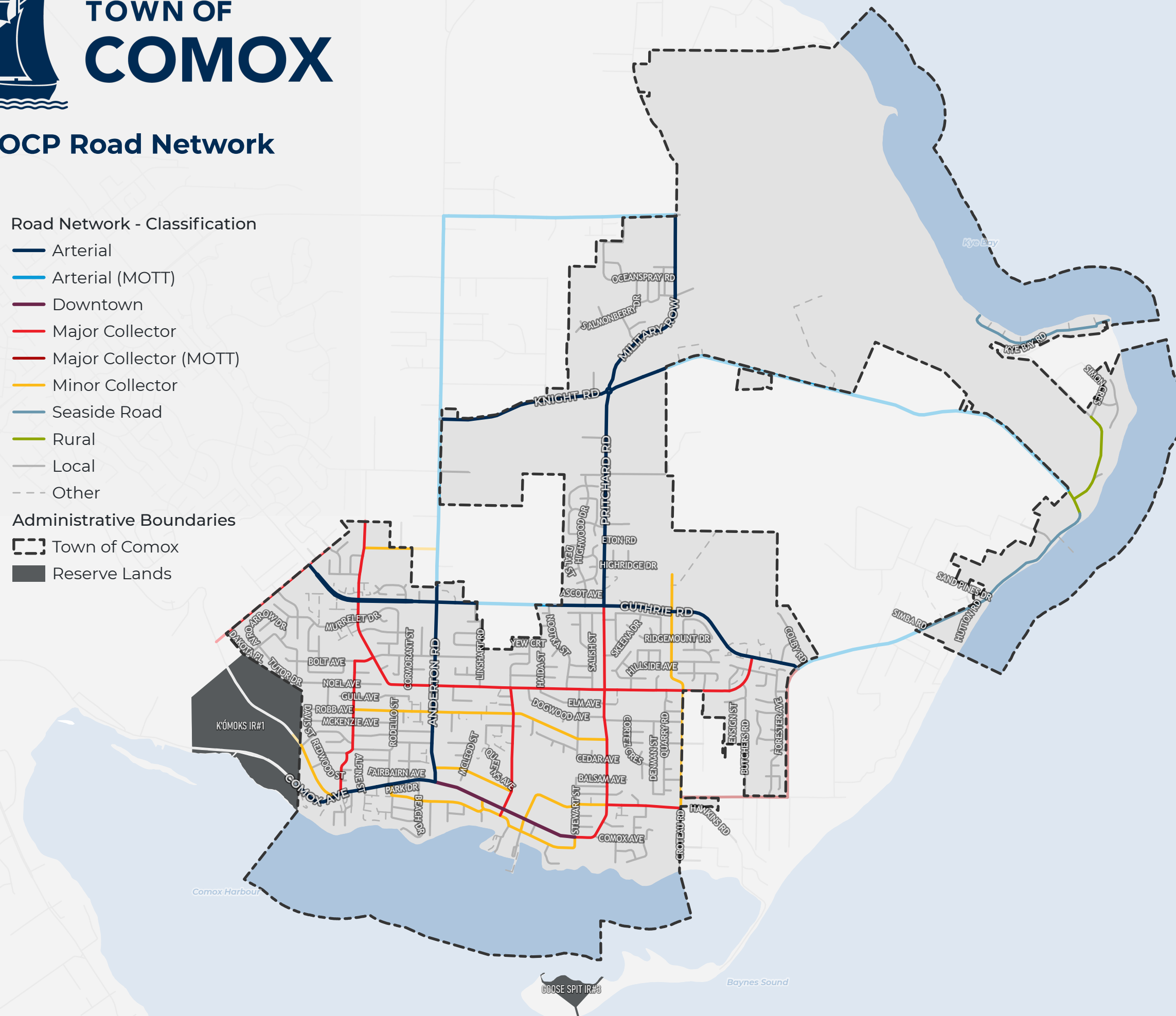
## OCP Road Network

### Road Network - Classification

- Arterial
- Arterial (MOTT)
- Downtown
- Major Collector
- Major Collector (MOTT)
- Minor Collector
- Seaside Road
- Rural
- Local
- Other

### Administrative Boundaries

- Town of Comox
- Reserve Lands



Salish Sea

Kye Bay

Strait of  
Georgia

Comox Harbour

Baynes Sound

GOOSE SPIT IR#3

K'OMOKS IR#1

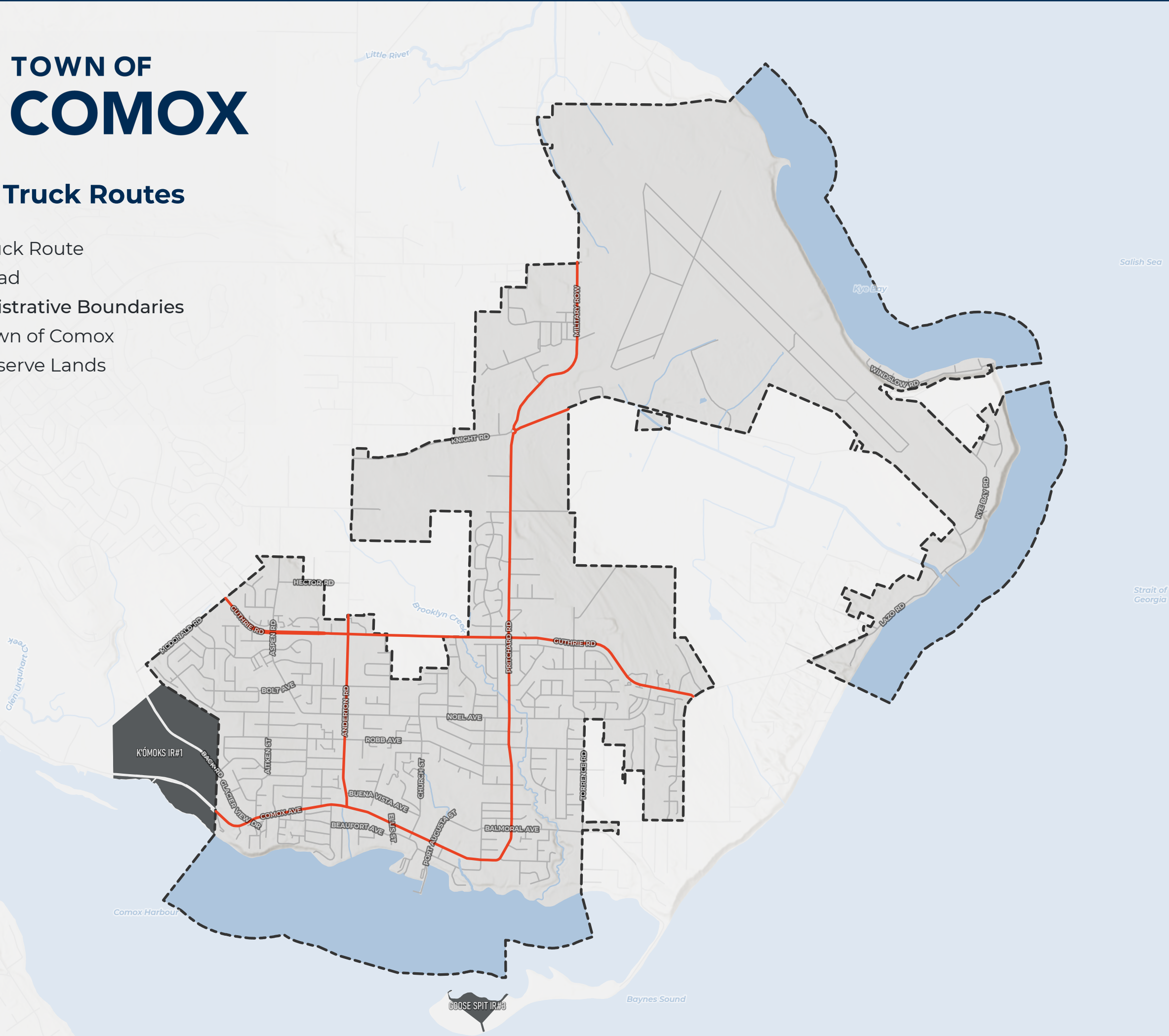


# TOWN OF COMOX



## OCP Truck Routes

- Truck Route
- Road
- Administrative Boundaries
  - ⋯ Town of Comox
  - Reserve Lands





# TOWN OF COMOX



## OCP Water Infrastructure

### Water Infrastructure

— Town of Comox Watermain

— CVRD Watermain

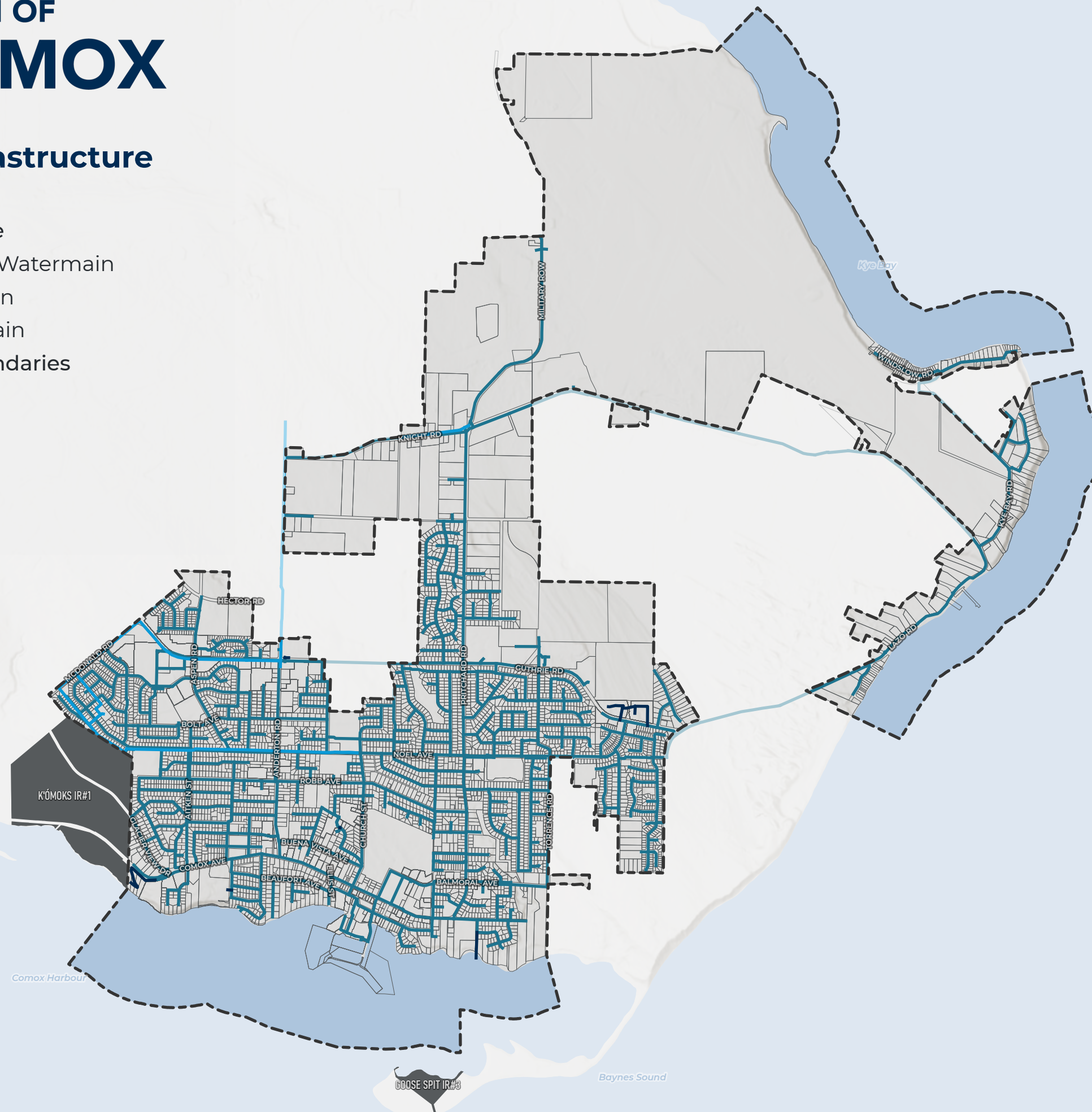
— Private Watermain

### Administrative Boundaries

--- Town of Comox

□ Parcel

■ Reserve Lands



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(When Printed at 11 x 17")



# TOWN OF COMOX



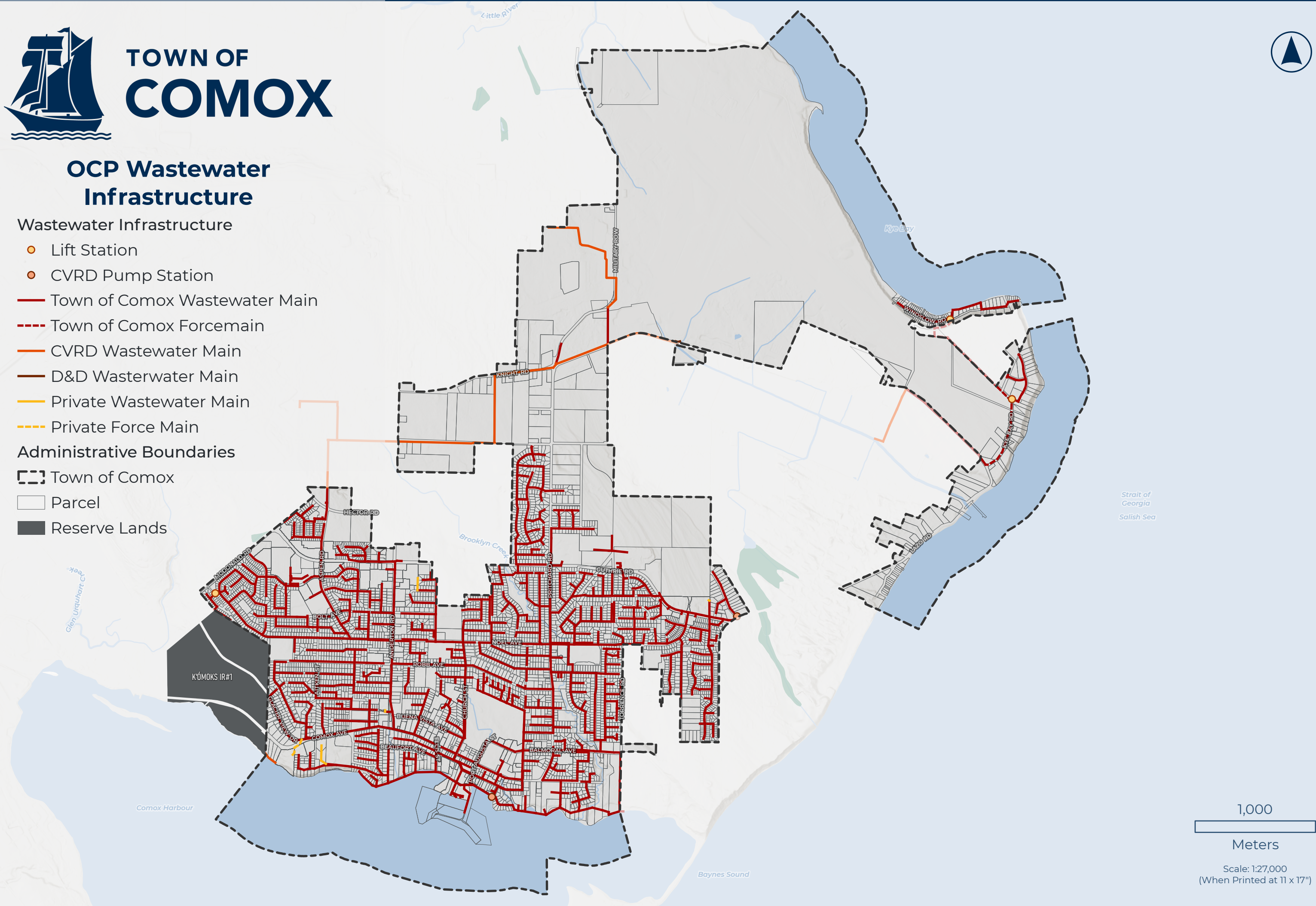
## OCP Wastewater Infrastructure

### Wastewater Infrastructure

- Lift Station
- CVRD Pump Station
- Town of Comox Wastewater Main
- - - Town of Comox Forcemain
- CVRD Wastewater Main
- D&D Wastewater Main
- Private Wastewater Main
- - - Private Force Main

### Administrative Boundaries

- ▭ Town of Comox
- ▭ Parcel
- ▭ Reserve Lands



1,000

Meters





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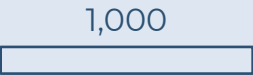
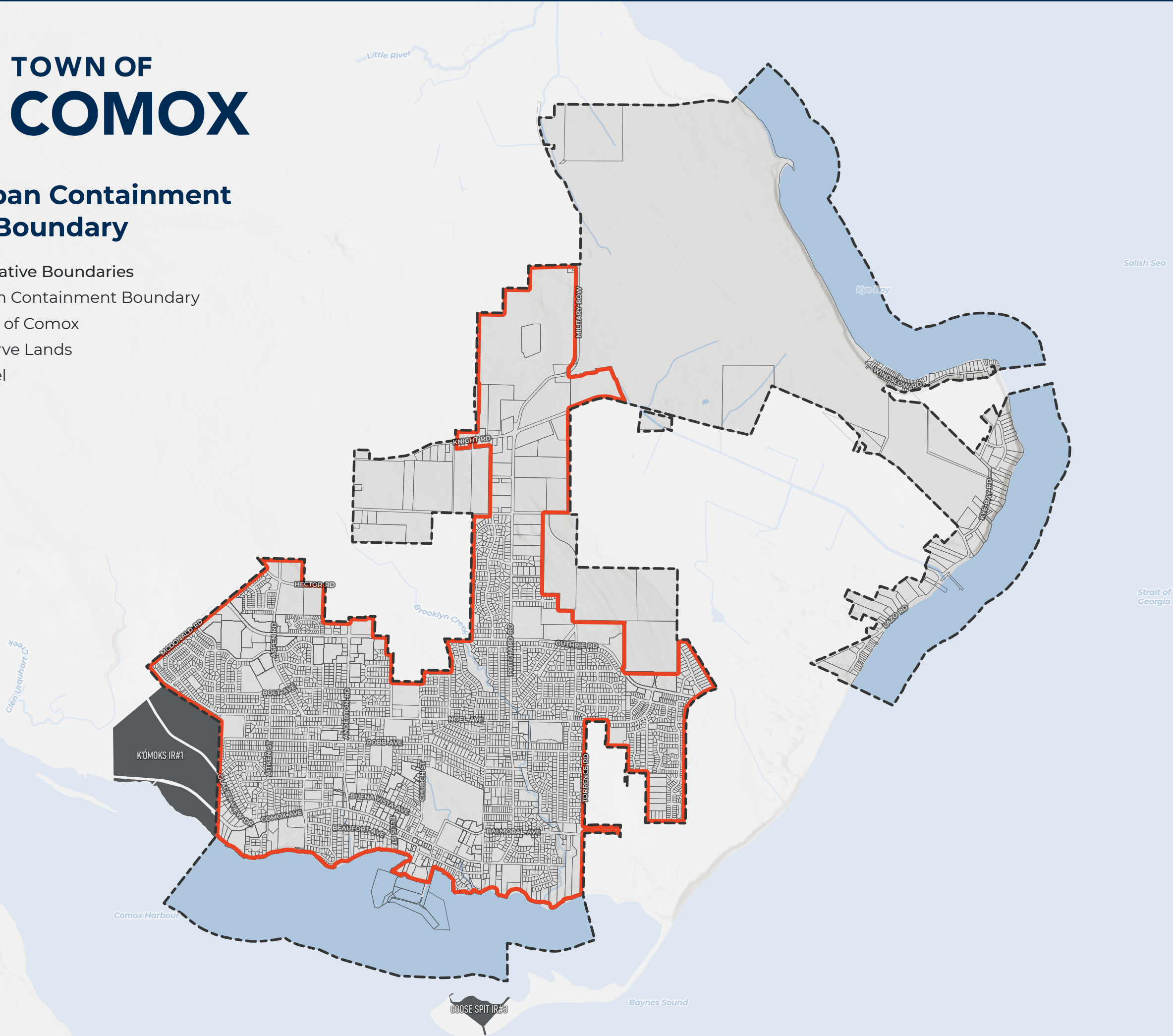


# TOWN OF COMOX

## OCP Urban Containment Boundary

### Administrative Boundaries

-  Urban Containment Boundary
-  Town of Comox
-  Reserve Lands
-  Parcel



Meters








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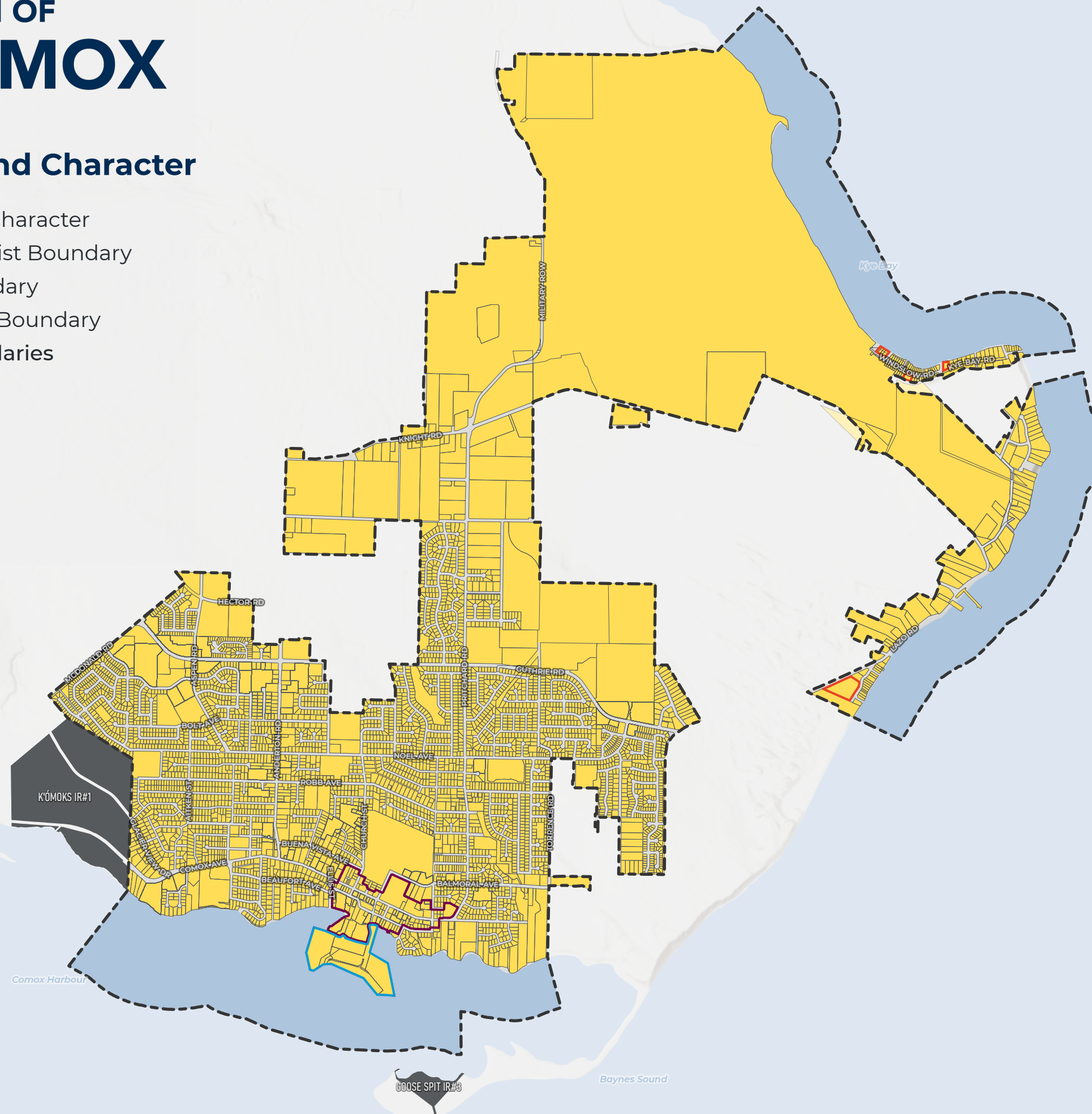


# TOWN OF COMOX



## OCP DPA - Form and Character

-  DPA - Form and Character
-  Commercial: Tourist Boundary
-  Downtown Boundary
-  Harbour / Marina Boundary
- Administrative Boundaries
  -  Town of Comox
  -  Reserve Lands
  -  Parcel



Salish Sea

Strait of Georgia

Comox Harbour

Baynes Sound

GOOSE SPIT IR#3

K'OMOKS IR#1

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TOWN OF  
**COMOX**



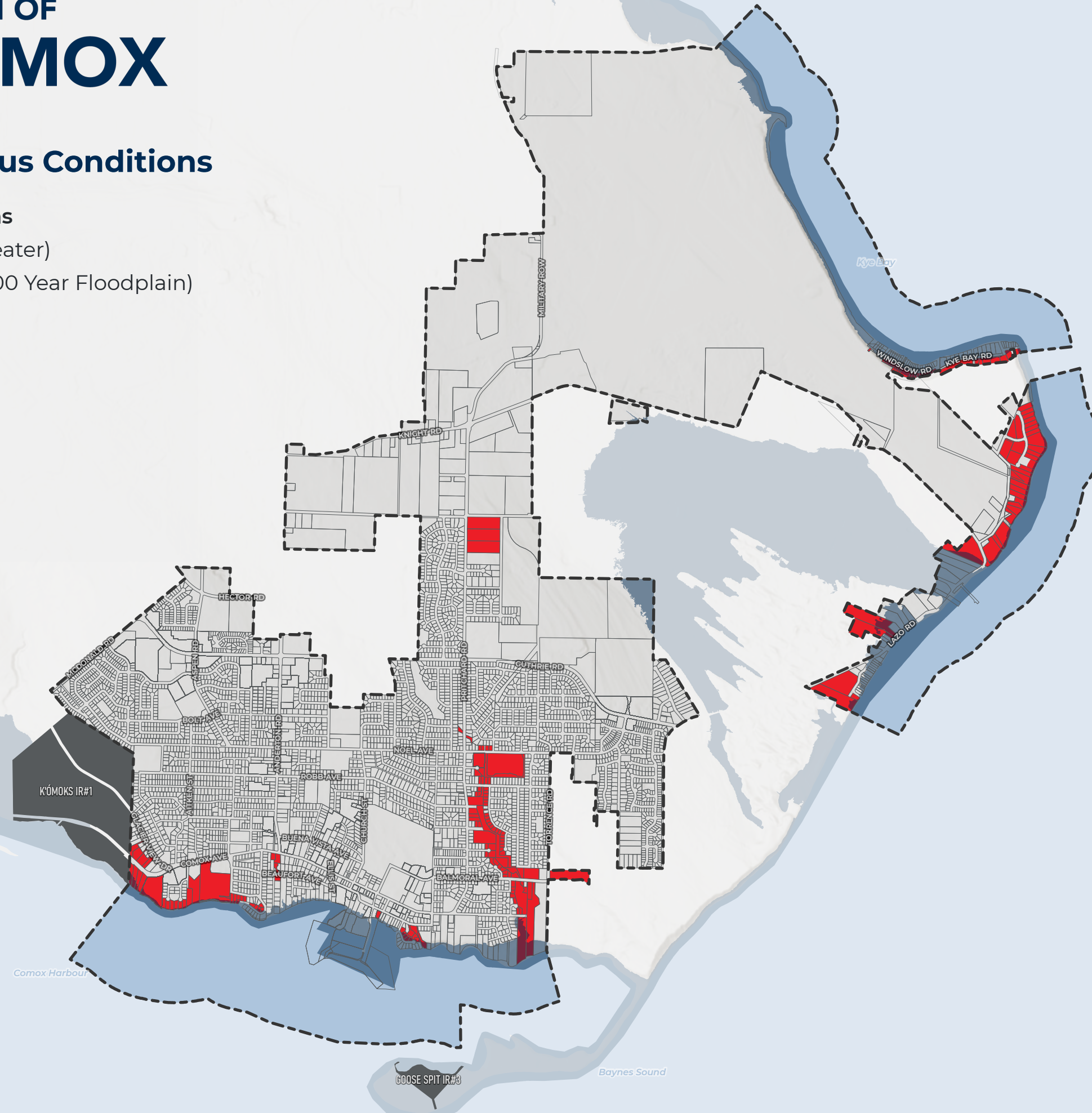
## OCP DPA - Hazardous Conditions

### DPA - Hazardous Conditions

-  Steep Slope (20% or Greater)
-  Flood Extents (CVRD-200 Year Floodplain)

### Administrative Boundaries

-  Town of Comox
-  Reserve Lands
-  Parcel



Salish Sea

Strait of  
Georgia

Comox Harbour

Baynes Sound

GOOSE SPIT IR#3

K'OMOKS IR#1

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Scale: 1:30,000  
(When Printed at 11 x 17")




TOWN OF  
**COMOX**




## OCP DPA - Sensitive Ecosystems

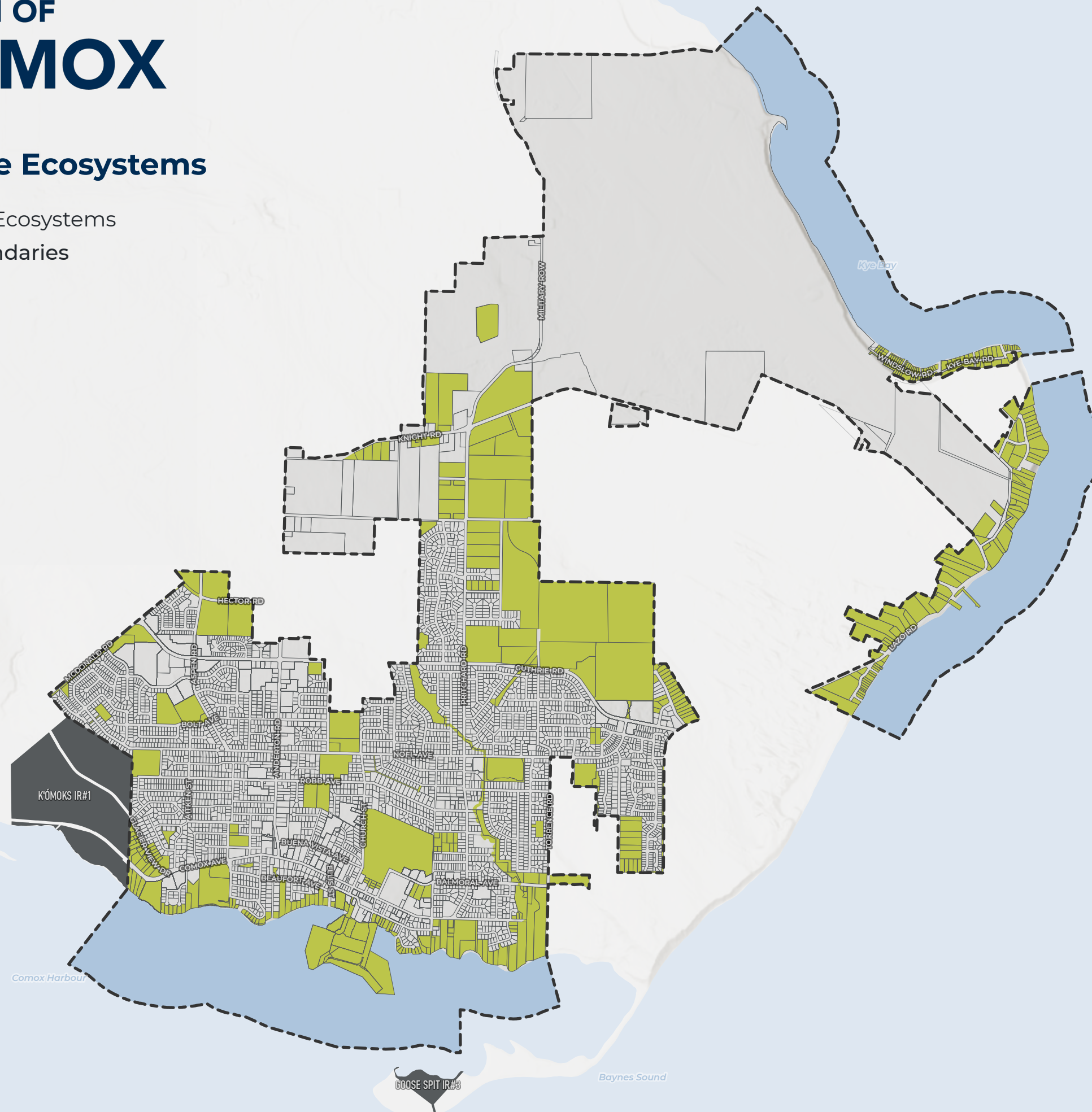
 DPA - Sensitive Ecosystems

Administrative Boundaries

 Town of Comox

 Reserve Lands

 Parcel



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Meters


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(When Printed at 11 x 17")



# TOWN OF COMOX





## OCP DPA - Riparian Ecosystems

 DPA - Riparian Ecosystems


### Environmental Features

 Wetland

 Waterbody

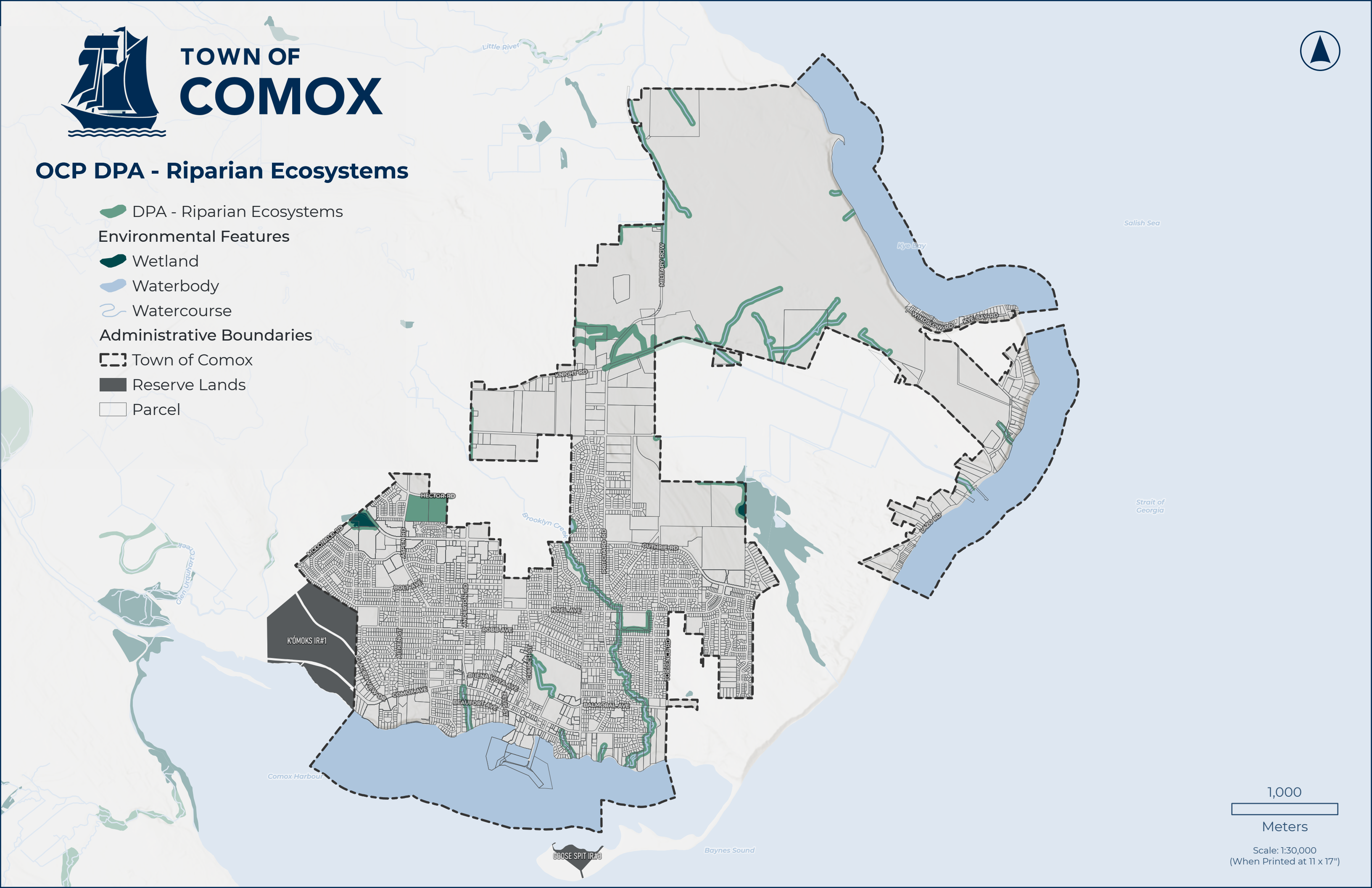
 Watercourse

### Administrative Boundaries

 Town of Comox

 Reserve Lands

 Parcel



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Meters


Scale: 1:30,000  
(When Printed at 11 x 17")




# TOWN OF COMOX





## OCP DPA - North East Comox

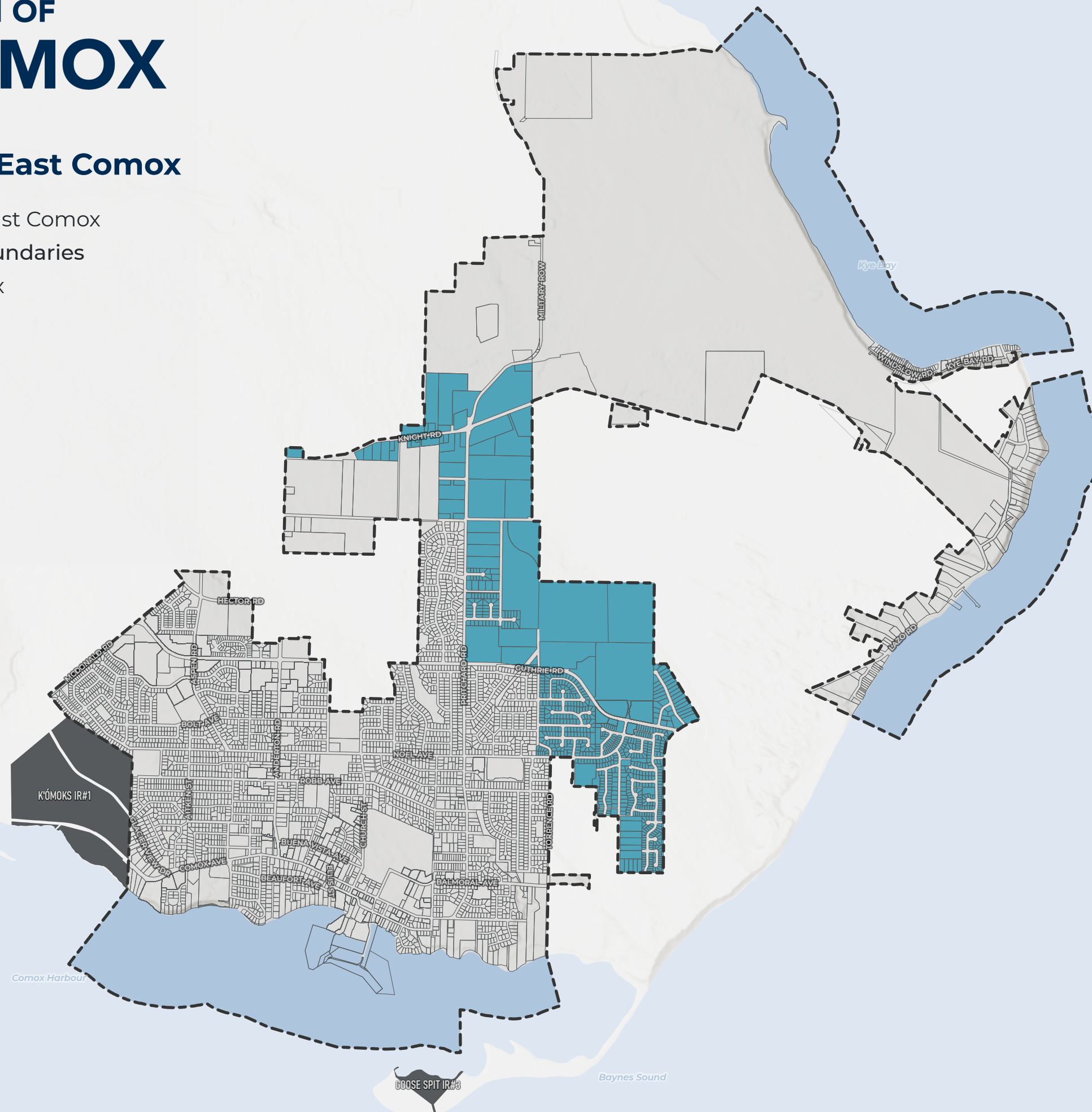
 DPA - North East Comox

Administrative Boundaries

 Town of Comox

 Reserve Lands

 Parcel



Salish Sea

Strait of Georgia

Comox Harbour

Baynes Sound

GOOSE SPIT IR#3

K'OMOKS IR#1

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(When Printed at 11 x 17")

## Appendix A - Regional Context Statement

The *Local Government Act* requires OCPs to include regional context statements where a regional growth strategy applies to a municipality with an OCP. Regional context statement requirements are also identified in the *Local Government Act*, and the regional context statement must identify how the OCP is consistent with the regional growth strategy or will be made consistent over time. The OCP is considered to be consistent with the RGS.

The RGS Vision is a comprehensive statement on the future of the region and the RGS Goals identify how the Vision will be achieved. The Comox OCP includes objectives, policies, and actions that align with the RGS Goals as identified in Table 1.

### RGS Vision

***The Comox Valley will continue to evolve as a region of distinct, well-connected and well-designed urban and rural communities. As stewards of the environment, local governments, the K'ómoks First Nation, public agencies, residents, businesses and community and non-governmental organizations will work collaboratively to conserve and enhance land, water and energy resources and ensure a vibrant local economy and productive working landscapes.***



**Table 1 - RGS Goals**

RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
<b>Housing:</b> Ensure a diversity of housing options to meet evolving demographics and needs.	Section 1 – Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This section identifies the Town’s 5- and 20-year housing needs and how the land use designations of the OCP can accommodate housing needs.</li> <li>Policies in Section 1 aim to facilitate housing diversity to meet evolving demographics and focus on under-represented housing forms in Comox, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market and non-market rental, including consideration of rental protection, replacement, and tenant protection bylaws and policies.</li> <li>Subsidized, supportive, co-op, special needs, and supportive housing forms.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Section 1 includes actions the Town intends to take to achieve the objectives of Section 1 by adopting and amending bylaws, policies and practices.</li> </ul>
	Part 4 – Growth and Land Use Policies OCP Future Land Use map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three residential and two mixed-use land use designations provide for a diversity of housing options within the Town’s Urban Containment Boundary, from single-detached houses to mid-rise buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Ecosystems, Natural Areas, and Parks:</b> Protect, steward and enhance the natural environment and ecological connections and systems.	Guiding Principle 6	<i>Protect, restore and enhance the natural environment and urban forest.</i>
	Guiding Principle 7	<i>Provide a connected and diverse network of parks, trails, and open spaces.</i>
	Guiding Principle 8	<i>Enhance the Urban Forest and contribute to achieving emissions targets and risk management objectives of the Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment.</i>
	Section 4 – Parks, Trails and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 4 includes objectives and policies to maintain a variety of park types including passive parks, integrate green infrastructure in parks, and enhance the urban forest on Town lands. These initiatives will enhance the natural environment and ecological connections and systems in Comox, which connect to broader ecological networks in the region.</li> </ul>



RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
<b>Ecosystems, Natural Areas, and Parks:</b> Protect, steward and enhance the natural environment and ecological connections and systems.	Section 7 – Environment and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 7 includes objectives, policies, and actions aimed at fulfilling Guiding Principles 6 and 8. It includes partnership policies to collaborate with K'omoks First Nation, local governments including CVRD, and other interest holders in the Comox Valley to work towards this RGS Goal and OCP Guiding Principles.</li> </ul>
	Sensitive Ecosystems DPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The objectives of this Development Permit Area are aligned with this RGS goal. Specific objectives include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting, restoring and enhancing environmentally sensitive areas as functioning ecosystems.</li> <li>Protecting biodiversity, as well as wildlife habitats, features and functions.</li> <li>Avoiding negative impacts to environmentally sensitive areas over mitigation or compensation.</li> <li>Managing the introduction and spread of invasive species.</li> </ul> </li> <li>This DPA applies to known sensitive ecosystems and natural areas that may contain sensitive ecosystems. It aims to ensure that all relevant federal and provincial legislation is followed in relation to development proposals on parcels containing known or potential sensitive ecosystems. It also aims to go beyond senior government environmental protection legislation in some cases.</li> </ul>
	Riparian Ecosystems DPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This DPA is focused on protecting and enhancing riparian areas in the Town.</li> <li>Though this DPA primarily implements the <i>Riparian Areas Protection Act</i> and <i>Riparian Areas Protection Regulation</i>, it exceeds minimum standards for development with higher potential impacts, including the construction of 5 or more dwelling units on a parcel, commercial and industrial buildings, and subdivision to create three or more new parcels.</li> </ul>



RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
<b>Economic Development:</b> Achieve a sustainable, resilient and dynamic local economy that supports businesses and the region's entrepreneurial spirit.	Guiding Principle 3	<i>Enhance Downtown Comox in partnership with Comox Business in Action (BIA) and other interested community partners.</i>
	Guiding Principle 9	<i>Enhance employment and economic development for the Town of Comox.</i>
	Section 3 – Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 3 includes objectives and policies that can contribute to achieving this RGS goal, with focuses on vitalizing and enhancing the Downtown Centre, facilitating industrial/business park development, supporting the tourism sector, and working with the BIA, regional partners, and major employers in Comox.</li> <li>Section 3 references the Town's Economic Development Strategy (2024) and Downtown Enhancement Action Plan (2024) and includes policies and actions to implement the strategies outlined therein.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation:</b> Develop an accessible, efficient and affordable multi-modal transportation network that connects Core Settlement Areas and designated Town Centres, and links the Comox Valley to neighbouring communities and regions.	Guiding Principle 1	<i>Prioritize integrated community planning, and neighbourhood nodes, with strong links between land use, infrastructure, active transportation, and community amenities.</i>
	Guiding Principle 2	<i>Plan Comox to be a complete community with convenient access to services and amenities linked by multi-modal transportation options for all abilities.</i>
	Guiding Principle 5	<i>Expand and enhance partnerships with agencies, organizations, and regional partners.</i>
	Guiding Principle 7	<i>Provide a connected and diverse network of parks, trails, and open spaces.</i>
	Section 2 – Transportation	The Transportation objectives, policies, and actions align with the RGS by focusing on improvements to active and public transportation networks while acknowledging the importance of maintaining a safe and efficient vehicular transportation network.



RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
<b>Transportation:</b> Develop an accessible, efficient and affordable multi-modal transportation network that connects Core Settlement Areas and designated Town Centres, and links the Comox Valley to neighbouring communities and regions.	Policy 2.10	This policy is focused on working with community partners, including the CVRD, to ensure that active transportation networks are well-integrated.
	Policy 2.32	This policy is focused on working with the CVRD and BC Transit to identify land requirements for future transit stops so that this land can be secured on development site frontages where applicable.
	Policy 2.33	This policy aims to facilitate collaboration with CVRD and BC Transit to implement the Transit Future Plan as it relates to the Town of Comox.
	Policy 2.34	This policy focuses on advocating for regional incentives for the use of public transit in the Comox Valley to reduce parking demands, which could help reduce barriers to development of the Downtown Centre in the long-term.
<b>Infrastructure:</b> Provide affordable, effective and efficient services and infrastructure that conserves land, water and energy resources.	Guiding Principle 1	<i>Prioritize integrated community planning, and neighbourhood nodes, with strong links between land use, infrastructure, active transportation, and community amenities.</i>
	Section 5 - Infrastructure	This section includes objectives, policies, and actions that focus on improving infrastructure in Comox to effectively and efficiently accommodate growth while ensuring that “growth pays for growth”. There are also objectives and policies to focus on conservation of natural resources. Recognizing the infrastructure linkages of local governments in the region, partnerships are also integrated into Section 5.
	Section 8 – Future Growth Concept	An Urban Containment Boundary has been added to the OCP. This serves as a boundary beyond which significant servicing improvements will not be considered.



RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
<b>Food Systems:</b> Support and enhance the agricultural and aquaculture sectors and increase local food security.	Policy 3.8	This policy supports the continuation of a Comox Valley Farmer's Market location in Comox to support local food security, agriculture, and community gathering.
	Policies 18.1 and 18.2	These Agricultural land use designation policies ensure that lands designated Agricultural in the ALR remain in the ALR, and subdivision does not reduce parcel sizes in a manner that would negatively impact agricultural viability, except where there is a significant lack of future agricultural viability, and exclusion or subdivision is accompanied by significant benefits to the community..
	Policy 22.8	This general land use policy requires non-agricultural parcels that are developing adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve to incorporate appropriate buffers, setbacks and site planning consistent with the BC Ministry of Agriculture Guide to Edge Planning to limit any negative impacts of development on agricultural operations.
	Sensitive Ecosystems DPA and Riparian Ecosystems DPA	These Development Permit Areas are intended to maintain sensitive ecosystems, including the elimination or mitigation of negative impacts to marine ecosystems and the fresh water that enters them. This can help conserve aquacultural potential in the Comox Valley.
	Northeast Comox DPA	Two key goals of this DPA are to (1) reduce risks of flooding ALR lands in the CVRD east of Northeast Comox, and (2) to ensure that rainwater is managed within Northeast Comox to maintain the aquifer that ALR lands rely on for agricultural operations.



RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
<b>Public Health and Safety:</b> Support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being.	Guiding Principle 2	<i>Plan Comox to be a complete community with convenient access to services and amenities linked by multi-modal transportation options for all abilities.</i>  This Guiding Principle can improve public health outcomes by making it more convenient to use active transportation to access daily needs.
	Section 6 – Community Connection and Wellness	Section 6 includes policies to enhance community health, safety and well-being by focusing on providing new services and scaling up existing services in step with growth, improving accessibility, and working with community partners to maintain or expand programming and events. There is also an action to work with K’omoks First Nation to identify areas that could incorporate their history, language and culture in public spaces.
	Section 2 – Transportation	The Transportation objectives, policies, and actions include focus on improving the active transportation network and public transportation service to make it easier and safer to travel without a vehicle, creating the conditions to improve public health outcomes.
	Section 7 – Environment and Climate Change	Policies in this section that focus on protection and enhancement of the urban forest and sensitive ecosystems, and climate change mitigation, can contribute to a healthier urban environment by reducing urban heat island conditions, carbon sequestration, and potentially improving well-being through biophilic effects.
	Policy 4.25	This policy requires the maintenance of existing matures trees as buffers on potential development parcels fronting Pritchard Road between Guthrie and Knight Road. These buffers are intended to enhance public health and well-being by reducing noise and pollution for future residents living adjacent to this arterial road and truck route.



RGS Goal	OCP Reference	Comox OCP Supporting Objectives/Policies/Actions
	Temporary Use Permits (p. 81)	The OCP requires impact mitigation strategies for Temporary Use Permit applications, which can include uses that may impact the health and well-being of surrounding residents (e.g. truck and trailer parking).
<b>Climate Change:</b> Minimize regional greenhouse gas emissions and plan for adaptation.	Section 7 – Environment and Climate Change	This section includes objectives, policies, and actions that focus on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and planning for adaptation, including through collaboration with regional partners.
	Action 7.18	<p>The RGS includes Greenhouse Gas Emissions targets that aligned with provincial targets at the time of RGS adoption, which have since been updated by the province.</p> <p>The Town’s 2024 Climate Action Plan and Risk Assessment includes GHG emissions reduction targets that align with current provincial emissions reduction targets. OCP Action 7.18 is a commitment to continue tracking progress towards these GHG emissions reduction targets. Transportation and land use policies are focused on targeting growth to walkable areas to reduce reliance on passenger vehicles.</p>
	Objective 4 (C.)	This policy is within the Parks, Trails, and Open Space section, and identifies the intention to consider strategically locating future park lands in locations that can increase community resilience to climate change (e.g. lands with hazardous condition risks such as flooding).



## ***RGS Growth Management Principles***

Part 4 of the RGS addresses Growth Management, including 16 growth management principles that are supported in the Comox OCP where applicable, primarily in Section 8 – Future Growth Concept. These reinforce the RGS Goals identified Table 1 above, which are identified in Part 3 – Regional Policies, of the RGS.

The RGS requires OCPs to identify areas of existing development on the fringes of municipal areas that should eventually be incorporated through boundary extensions and provided with publicly owned water and sewer services to address existing public health and environmental issues. There are no known existing public health or environmental issues on the fringe of Town of Comox that meet these criteria.

The RGS allows member municipalities to identify fringe areas that could eventually be incorporated through boundary expansions and provided with publicly owned water and sewer services to allow for new long-term growth opportunities in a phased and orderly manner that does not detract from compact growth options within existing boundaries. The Comox OCP can likely accommodate growth needs without expanding Town boundaries. However, some factors that are out of the Town's control may impact the pace of new development, warranting consideration of boundary expansions to provide greenfield development areas as identified on *Figure 7 - OCP Growth Areas* within the next ten to twenty years. Section 8 – Future Growth Concept, includes objectives and policies to guide boundary extensions in compliance with the RGS if they are considered within the life of the OCP, consistent with RGS MG Policies 1E-1 to 1E-5.

**RGS MG Policy 1.2** is that a minimum of 90 % of growth within the Comox Valley will be directed to *Core Settlement Areas*. The Town of Comox is a *Core Settlement Area* and primary location for accommodating growth. This OCP aims to increase the pace of growth and accommodate most growth within the Urban Containment Boundary. Land use designations in the OCP on lands that are likely to redevelopment can accommodate approximately 7,760 new units, which exceeds 20-year housing need of 3,358 units. As a result, the land use designations within the OCP can support more than the Town's share of projected regional growth.

**RGS MG Policy 1.3** requires the designation of Town Centres in all *Core Settlement Areas*, with the Town of Comox being identified as a *Core Settlement Area*. The Town Centre for Comox as identified in RGS MG Policy 1.3 consists of the Downtown Centre as shown on *Figure 7 – OCP Growth Areas*. All of the Downtown Town Centre is designated Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, which supports residential,



commercial, and institutional buildings up to 6-storeys in height (including mixed uses), with a density of approximately 400 persons and jobs per hectare when built out, supporting the RGS target of 100-150 combined residents and jobs per hectare. In addition to the Downtown Centre, Corridors are identified to support mixed-use development close to transportation infrastructure and existing services and amenities. The OCP also identifies Mixed-Use Nodes that can function as small-scale neighbourhood centres that incorporate daily needs in existing single-detached neighbourhoods further from the Downtown Centre and growth Corridors.

RGS MG Policy 2B-1 requires OCPs to contain policies for agricultural areas that are consistent with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and regulations established under the Act, including the establishment of adequate buffers that ensure abutting farm and non-farm uses do not conflict and that non-farm uses do not impede agricultural activity within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

- Policy 9.9 outlines that the Town will not support Agricultural Land Reserve subdivision and exclusion applications unless it is demonstrated that there is a significant lack of future agricultural viability, in which case the Town may consider forwarding ALR subdivision applications to the ALC for evaluation and decision, or applying to the ALC for exclusion if warranted.
- Action 18.2 is to review and monitor Town bylaws, policies, plans and procedures to ensure consistency with ALC legislation and regulations.
- Policy 22.8 requires developing properties adjacent to the ALR to ensure that development limits associated negative impacts on adjacent agricultural operations by including appropriate buffers, setbacks and site planning, consistent with the BC Ministry of Agriculture Guide to Edge Planning, or any future iterations thereof.

## ***Population and Employment Projections***

This section identifies the relationship between the OCP and RGS regarding population and employment projections as required by the *Local Government Act*, and the relationship of housing growth to these projections.

### **Housing Growth**

The RGS identifies 34% growth of dwelling units in the region from 2010-2030. Comox's 2024 Housing Needs Report identifies the need for 3,358 new housing units from 2021 to 2041, representing a 50% increase in total private dwellings, whereas BC Stats



household projections identify growth of 29% from 2021 to 2041. OCP policies aim to achieve the 3,358 targeted housing units from 2021 to 2041.

The land use designations in the OCP can accommodate more than 20 years of housing need. A likelihood of redevelopment analysis was completed for the Comox Complete Communities Growth Assessment. After filtering out land that is not statistically likely to redevelop, the OCP land use designations provide capacity for 7,760 net new units as identified in Table 3 of the OCP (Section 1 – Housing Needs). Dwelling unit growth in Comox will likely continue to be similar to the 34% regional projection identified in the RGS.

## **Population**

The RGS identifies regional population growth of 31% from 2010 to 2030. The OCP identifies that population growth from 2021 to 2041 will likely be around 4,700 to 5,000 persons, representing 31% to 33% population growth.

The RGS identifies regional population growth of 31% from 2010 to 2030. The Town's population grew by 33% from 2001 to 2021, the most recent 20-year period for which Census data is available. BC Stats population projections for Comox indicate slower population growth of 22% from 2021 to 2041; however, BC Stats projections outside of Census Metropolitan Areas are primarily based on the cohort-component methods. Cohort-component population projections may not consider factors that are outside of historical and projected fertility, migration, and mortality rates. An example would be increasing rates of development as a response to increasing demand from intra-provincial migrants that are struggling to afford housing in larger urban centres in BC. If 20-year housing need is fulfilled in Comox from 2021 to 2041, population growth will take place faster than BC Stats population projections, in the range 40-48% depending on average persons per new unit.

The Town is committed to improving the efficiency of development approval processes to increase growth rates and fulfill its role in accommodating housing needs. Work completed and underway for the Development Approval Process Review and Housing Accelerator Fund will optimize the Town's processes. Comprehensive updates to the OCP, Zoning Bylaw, and Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw are also intended to increase development approval efficiency and the land amount of land available for different forms of development.



## **Employment**

RGS employment projections identify a potential range of 29% to 53% growth from 2010 to 2030. 19 Wing Comox / Canadian Forces Base Comox are major regional employers located in the Town. Further, OCP Economic Development Objective 3(A.) is to increase the ratio of jobs to residents in Comox. Objective 3(A.) is intended to diversify the tax base, reduce the residential tax burden, and provide local jobs for residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commuting. The Comox OCP designates approximately 30 gross hectares of vacant land for Business Park use, supporting a variety of employment options. Additional Economic Development policies identify the Town's intention to collaborate with the Department of National Defense and Comox Valley Airport Commission to facilitate expansion if desired by those organizations.

In addition to expansion of the Business Park land use designation, the 2026 OCP increases the amount of land designated for Mixed-Use compared to the 2012 OCP. Mixed-Use designations support a variety of commercial and institutional uses that can increase local jobs in Comox. Policies throughout the OCP aim to facilitate mixed-use growth in the Downtown Centre to provide new employment opportunities, services, and amenities in a location that is accessible by public transportation.

## **RCS Update Process**

Legislation at the time of writing this OCP requires the Town to review the RCS at least once every five years after its latest acceptance by the CVRD Board, and if amendments are not proposed, submit the RCS to the Board for continued acceptance. Where an RCS is being amended, it must also be submitted for acceptance by the Board.

