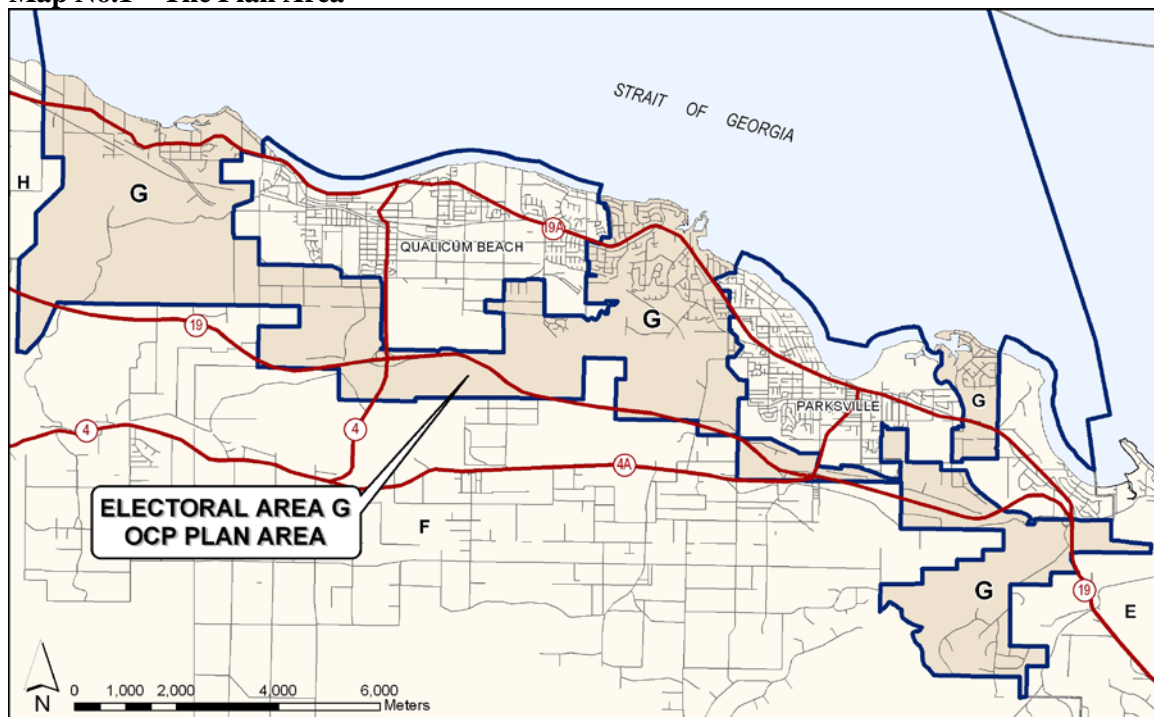


1.0 - Introduction

1.1 The Plan Area

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan Area is bound on the north by the Strait of Georgia and surrounds the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach and includes the communities of Dashwood, French Creek, and San Pareil. The size of the Plan Area is approximately 5,073 hectares.

Map No.1 – The Plan Area



Electoral Area 'G' has experienced significant growth since the early 1990's. The population of Electoral Area 'G' grew from 4,665 persons in 1991 to 7,023 persons in 2006.¹ This was an overall growth rate of approximately 50 percent during that time period. Since 2001, a significant portion of Electoral Area 'G' was incorporated into the Town of Qualicum Beach, yet the population for Area 'G' still grew significantly. This reflects the higher growth rates in the coastal areas of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) over the past few years. This growth trend is expected to continue at a high rate, and it is anticipated that as many as 12,000 people could reside in Area 'G' by 2026.²

This Plan Area is designated a 'development approval information area' pursuant to the RDN's Development Approval Information Bylaw No. 1165, 1999. This bylaw outlines information requirements for Zoning Amendments Applications and Temporary Use Permits.

¹ RDN Electoral Area Statistics, Statistics Canada.

² RDN Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends Report, May 2001, adjusted to exclude newly incorporated areas and reflect estimated build out.

1.2 Purpose of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan

The *Local Government Act* defines an Official Community Plan (OCP) as a general statement of the broad objectives and policies respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land uses and servicing requirements in the geographic area covered by the Plan. It is reflective of local interests as well as regional, provincial and, in some cases, federal interests.

The purpose of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan is to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and policies for managing existing and future uses of land and water surfaces within the Plan Area. The objectives and policies contained in this OCP are a reflection of community values and the regulations of the local, provincial and federal agencies with interests in the Plan Area.

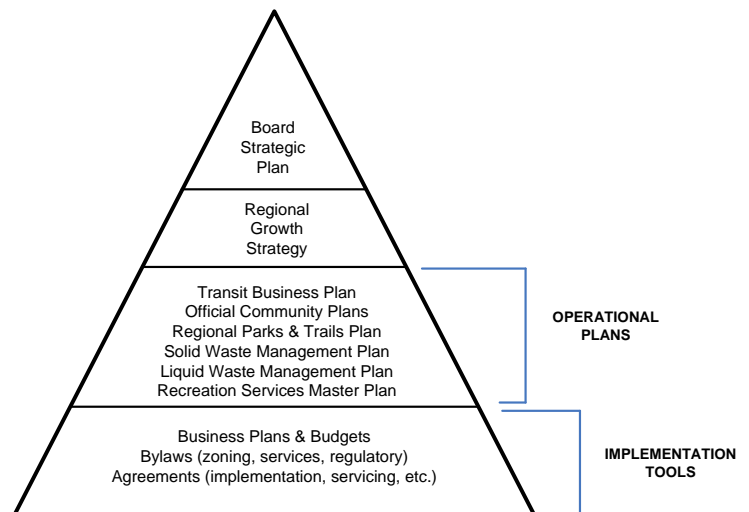
The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan has been developed with participation, consultation, and evaluation by the community through many hours of community involvement in the public workshops and other public events. In addition, this OCP has benefited from the community's work completed on the previous Shaw Hill, Deep Bay, Englishman River, and French Creek Official Community Plans and the Regional District of Nanaimo's Regional Growth Strategy.

The intent of this OCP is to provide direction on the evolution of land use and development in Electoral Area 'G' over the next five to ten years.

This OCP recommends that amendment applications to amend this Official Community Plan prompted by new development proposals not be considered until a review of the Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy is complete. A general review of this Official Community Plan is not contemplated for at least another five years or until it no longer serves community and regional needs.

However, it is recognized that changes to the Official Community Plan may be required to address new legislation, new planning issues, and new information. The community will have opportunities to participate in making any potential changes to the Official Community Plan.

The diagram to the right illustrates the hierarchy of Regional District of Nanaimo plans and strategies. The 2006-2009 Board Strategic Plan provides direction to the Regional Growth Strategy which in turn provides direction to a full spectrum of operational plans including Official Community Plans. All RDN land use bylaws must comply with the intent and direction provided by the policies in the OCP.



1.3 Community Involvement

The Regional District of Nanaimo recognizes that the residents of Electoral Area 'G' wish to be informed of and contribute input towards resolving planning issues which affect their community.

Public awareness and understanding of neighbourhood and community issues and the contents of this Plan, as well as various methods of its implementation are important to the success of the Plan. A broadening of public understanding and participation in decision making will lead to lasting benefits for the community and the RDN as a whole. Residents of the Plan Area, through their support of the Community Plan and participation in the planning and public hearing process are the final arbiters of community values.

Residents of Electoral Area 'G' have had a direct influence on this Plan through a broad-based public consultation process. In order to ensure that the Official Community Plan reflects community and neighbourhood interests a series of community workshops were held where participants discussed and provided input towards a variety of land use planning issues. Upon completion of a draft OCP, it was presented to the community through a series of public meetings and open houses where the community had an opportunity to discuss the draft OCP and recommend changes.

Prior to the adoption of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan as a bylaw by the Regional Board, the OCP is formally referred to various senior agencies. Additionally, the Ministry of Community Services must grant approval to the OCP prior to its adoption.

Community involvement in the preparation of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan does not end with the completion and adoption of this OCP. Ongoing community involvement will be required in the implementation of the OCP – the real test of an OCP's success. As such, the residents of Electoral Area 'G' will play a key role in determining the success of the OCP through their support and initiatives to implement the policies contained in the Plan. Resident participation in the implementation of the Electoral Area 'G' OCP will be early and ongoing, as the RDN works with residents, and other interested groups, towards implementing the policies contained in the OCP.

1.4 Community Values

Throughout the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan review process, open dialogue and discussions revealed that Electoral Area 'G' residents share a number of common community values. The following outlines the community values of Electoral Area 'G' residents based on the response received throughout the Official Community Plan review process:

- i) ***The community values the preservation of the natural environment;***
 - this means identifying and protecting the natural environment including surface and groundwater resources, natural features, flora and fauna and their ecological systems, and natural resources by ensuring that development respects the natural environment and contributes to the way we conduct our private and public business to be more environmentally responsible.

- ii) ***The community values the current amount of green space and outdoor recreational opportunities within Electoral Area 'G';***
 - this means recognizing existing green space and outdoor recreational opportunities and identifying new opportunities for green space preservation and acquisition through comprehensive parks and green space management policies in this Official Community Plan.

- iii) ***The community values the rural way of life and the protection of rural integrity;***
 - this means protecting rural areas from rural and urban sprawl and the protection and efficient use of agricultural, forestry and aggregate resource lands in the Plan Area.
- iv) ***The community values the recognition and protection of the distinct neighbourhoods within Electoral Area 'G';***
 - this means protecting the distinct characteristics of existing neighbourhoods to ensure that changes in land use which may adversely affect the quality of life for existing neighbourhoods will be avoided.
- v) ***The community values the management of growth and change through comprehensive land use policy and zoning regulations;***
 - this means creating a more complete community by focusing new growth into specific and acceptable locations within the community and guiding the form and character of development, thereby promoting sustainable growth and avoiding rural and urban sprawl.
- vi) ***The community values implementation of the communities vision through action;***
 - this means the establishment of realistic and attainable community policies and action plans to achieve its objectives.
- vii) ***The community values involvement in the planning process;***
 - this means encouraging and enhancing public understanding, education, interest, and participation in the ongoing review of the community's goals, objectives, policies and action plans.

1.5 Electoral Area 'G' Regional Context Statement

Regional Context

While the Official Community Plan and the Regional Growth Strategy are separate documents, their content is inter-related. The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for the RDN (Bylaw No. 1309, 2002) describes a vision of a desirable future region and a strategy for attaining that vision.

Official Community Plans are the means of implementing the RGS. Through the integration of the RGS goals into Official Community Plans and the translation of the RGS policies into Official Community Plan policies, residents can work together towards attaining the future desired for the region.

The eight goals of the RGS are to:

1. contain urban sprawl;
2. create complete, liveable communities;
3. protect rural integrity;

4. protect environmentally significant features and ecosystem functions and other biologically sensitive ecosystems;
5. improve mobility options;
6. create a vibrant and sustainable economy;
7. improve servicing and resource use efficiency; and
8. encourage cooperation among jurisdictions.

Regional Context Statement:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan works to achieve consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy through the incorporation of regional goals and policies into the Official Community Plan's objectives and policies. It is recognized that any additions, deletions or amendments to the policies in this OCP may result in inconsistencies with the Regional Growth Strategy. Inconsistencies requiring amendment of the RGS must have the consensus of all member municipalities and electoral areas.

All policies in the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan are consistent with or complementary to the goals and policies of the RGS, except where this Plan recommends that the RGS be amended. The Official Community Plan's response to the RGS is outlined below.

Goal 1: Strong Urban Containment:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan designates Urban Containment Boundaries (UCB) which defines the limits of urban areas and limits to the expansion of servicing outside of these designated urban areas. The community supports the development of more sustainable and economically efficient servicing enabled by these UCBs. This OCP proposes an expansion of the Urban Containment Boundary contiguous with the boundary of the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre. It is anticipated that an enlarged boundary will assist in attracting a greater mix of residential housing forms and densities as well as neighbourhood commercial uses to serve the community. This boundary adjustment will require a Regional Growth Strategy Amendment.

In response to the community's request, this OCP supports a study looking at the feasibility of establishing a new Urban Containment Boundary in Dashwood. It is thought that an Urban Containment Boundary in Dashwood may be appropriate as the area is currently serviced with community water from the Little Qualicum Waterworks District. Although there is no community sewer system at this time, Dashwood, for the most part, is located within the Regional District of Nanaimo engineered sewer servicing area.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan restricts new residential development on lands located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary to a maximum of one dwelling per hectare although it is recognized that there are existing dwelling units located on parcels smaller than 1 hectare. Other than what is supported by this Plan, the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan prohibits the creation or expansion of new commercial and industrial land use designations outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan only supports amendments to be submitted annually during the late fall that are considered according to the process and criteria of the Urban Containment and Fringe Area Management Implementation Agreement or its replacement.

Goal 2: Nodal Structure:

The urban area in Electoral Area 'G' is generally concentrated north of the railway tracks surrounding French Creek and located between the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville. Within the urban areas, this OCP identifies one neighbourhood centre and one mixed use area which are intended to be the focal points for growth in the Plan Area. This Plan supports the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre, which supports a range of housing types and limited neighbourhood commercial that is within walking distance from, and is complementary to, the existing commercial services located in the City of Parksville. This Plan also supports the French Creek Mixed Use Area, which supports a range of residential and commercial uses and builds upon the existing commercial zoned lands around the French Creek Harbour.

It is intended that the neighbourhood centre and the mixed use area develop through collaboration with the local communities and adjacent municipalities to determine the size, scale and design features, with an appropriate scale and range of retail, residential, employment opportunities, public amenities and travel alternatives.

Goal 3: Rural Integrity:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the preservation of large rural holdings and maintaining the rural land base in Electoral Area 'G' to protect rural integrity and also to encourage forestry, agriculture, and other resource uses. In addition, the Plan is consistent with and fully supports the mandate and policies of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (PALC).

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan designates land considered to be rural into five designations:

- 1) Rural Residential 1;
- 2) Rural Residential 2;
- 3) Rural Residential 3;
- 4) Rural, and
- 5) Rural Resource.

The minimum parcel size supported in each of these land use designations is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Policies are included for each land use designation to protect and enhance the rural characteristics of these lands and to ensure that uses which occur on these lands do not negatively affect resource uses. Citizens in Electoral Area 'G' place a high value on protecting the quality of life in the area and keeping growth focused away from rural lands.

Goal 4: Environmental Protection:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan includes mapping of environmentally sensitive areas and features, natural hazard areas, and designates Development Permit Areas to protect these important features. The Plan also contains policies for the protection of groundwater resources, rain water management, coastal zone management, greenways, and natural areas. In addition, the Plan encourages sustainable development practices in order to improve the efficiency of the built environment, conserve resources, and minimize the ecological footprint of development.

Goal 5: Improved Mobility:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the RGS policies to encourage non-automobile modes of transportation along safe pathways and trails. In addition, the OCP recommends a new connector route linking Church Road to Stanhope Road as a more desirable truck route. The continuing need for automobile transportation is recognized in the OCP through the Road Network Plan. Citizens in the area maintain a high level of interest in development in their community and wish to be included in issues that affect Electoral Area 'G'.

Goal 6: Vibrant and Sustainable Economy:³

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the provision and improvement of infrastructure within the UCB to accommodate the development supported by this Plan. The intent is to attract desirable economic development geared towards serving the needs of Electoral Area 'G' residents primarily within the French Creek Mixed Use Area and the Wembley Neighbourhood Centre. This Plan generally does not support the development of regionally significant industrial or commercial uses within Electoral Area 'G' thereby encouraging economic development opportunities in the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach.

This Plan supports tourism related economic development by permitting tourist commercial uses, both within the UCB and on sites with historical commercial zoning located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary.

Although aggregate extraction goes beyond the jurisdiction of the RDN, the Official Community Plan generally supports aggregate resource development on lands designated by the Regional Growth Strategy as Resource Lands and Open Spaces. Although this Plan does not limit the scale of aggregate removal on land designated by the RGS as rural residential, suburban residential, or urban area, this Plan supports zoning amendments⁴ to permit primary resource processing, asphalt batch plant, yard waste chipping, or composting on parcels 4 hectares or larger in order to reduce the impacts of these uses on surrounding lands.

Goal 7: Efficient Services:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan supports the provision of community water and sewer services to all parcels located within the UCB to support future growth. The extension of community services outside of the Urban Containment Boundary is only supported to service existing development on lands with demonstrated environmental and public health hazards and not to allow additional development beyond what is permitted without community services.

Goal 8: Cooperation Among Jurisdictions:

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan fully supports the interjurisdictional cooperation of electoral areas, member municipalities, First Nations, and provincial and federal agencies in advancing the shared goals of the RGS. The policies and goals of this OCP are intended to be consistent with the collective efforts of these parties in creating a liveable, vibrant region.

³ Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

⁴ Bylaw No. 1540.02, adopted December 4, 2018

1.6 Plan Organization

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan is divided into a number of sections oriented around the eight goals of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for the RDN. Each section of the Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan pertains to one of the eight RGS goals including: strong urban containment, nodal structure, rural integrity, environmental protection, improved mobility, vibrant and sustainable economy, efficient services, and cooperation among jurisdictions.

Each section of the Official Community Plan (with the exception of the section of the Plan pertaining to Development Permit Areas) is further divided into subsections and is comprised of specific objectives and policies.

Objectives are an expression of the community's values and long-term aspirations. They are the community's statement of what is important and its vision of the future.

Policies represent the community's position and response to community values and regional goals and policies. Policies establish the framework that guides decision making by the RDN. Each of these policies relate directly to stated objectives. Some policies may be highly specialized and address specific issues, situations or conditions while others may have a more generalized applicability.