



## SECTION 6 – FIRST NATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

6.1 Partnerships and Economic Opportunities

6.2 Heritage Site Protection

## 6.1 Partnerships and Economic Opportunities

### INTRODUCTION

For at least 8,000 years, the area covered by this Plan has been home to Aboriginal people and is part of their traditional territory. Traditional territory describes the ancestral and contemporary connections of Indigenous peoples to a geographical area. Territories may be defined by kinship ties, occupation, seasonal travel routes, trade networks, management of resources, and cultural and linguistic connections to place.

There are several First Nations who assert Aboriginal rights in this area, and who the Regional District engages with on land use planning initiatives. Aboriginal rights are practices, customs or traditions integral to a distinctive culture of a First Nation and they may be historically connected to a particular area of land. Examples may include hunting, fishing, plant gathering and use of wood for domestic purposes. More than one First Nation may have rights in the same area and the types of rights may vary across communities. An important sub category of Aboriginal rights is Aboriginal title. Aboriginal title refers to Aboriginal rights to land based on long-standing land use and occupancy by contemporary Indigenous peoples and their ancestors as the original peoples in Canada.

The Qualicum First Nation has a federally-designated Reserve at the mouth of the Big Qualicum River where their home community is located today. The Plan Area does not include Federal lands such as this Reserve, but it surrounds these lands. For the purposes of community planning and this OCP, the Qualicum First Nation community is recognized as part of the fabric of the Plan Area. The Qualicum First Nation operates a large campground on their Reserve lands which is a significant portion of the tourist accommodation in the area.

In 2016, the Qualicum First Nation and the Regional District signed a cooperation protocol. The Qualicum First Nation is seeking economic development opportunities in the area.

### OBJECTIVES

1. ***Recognize*** that First Nations assert Aboriginal title and rights within the Plan Area.
2. ***Encourage*** Qualicum First Nation's economic development initiatives.
3. ***Seek*** partnerships with Qualicum First Nation related to Regional District servicing.

### POLICIES

1. The Regional District will engage with First Nations on land use planning initiatives and amendments to this Plan.
2. The Regional District will continue to provide street numbering service to the Qualicum First Nation.
3. The Regional District will work with Qualicum First Nation to explore the coordination of community services. These areas may include recreation programming, infrastructure services such as water and liquid waste, and public transit.
4. The Regional District encourages economic development initiatives of the Qualicum First Nation to advance the process of reconciliation at the local level.
5. In accordance with Board commitment to reconciliation, the Regional District supports economic development initiatives of the Qualicum First Nation on lands that are added or intended to be added to Reserve, without amendment to this Plan.

## 6.2 Heritage Site Protection

### INTRODUCTION

First Nations heritage sites include archaeological sites as well as other places of cultural importance that do not necessarily have any physical marker. Archaeological sites consist of the physical remains of past human activity and are essential to understanding and appreciating the cultural history of the region.

Archaeological sites are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*, and it is illegal to disturb them without a permit. The Regional District contributes to protection of archaeological site by informing property owners who make land use application or enquiry if their proposed development is on or near an identified archaeological site, or if it is within an area of high potential to encounter an unrecorded archaeological site.

In 2017 the Regional District undertook an Archaeological Overview Assessment for the Plan Area. This Assessment will be used to inform a property owner if a proposed development is in an area of high archaeological potential. In this area, high archaeological potential is mainly found close to water bodies including the sea, lakes, and rivers as well as between Horne Lake and Port Alberni which is a historic travel route.

### POLICIES

1. All development applications will be reviewed for the presence of recorded archaeological sites, and for having high potential to contain unrecorded archaeological sites. Applicants will be notified if the proposed development is in conflict with a recorded archaeological site or in an area with significant potential to contain an unrecorded, protected archaeological site. Notification may include direction to contact the BC Archaeology Branch for more information, or direction to engage a professional consulting archaeologist to determine if an archaeological impact assessment is necessary to manage development related impacts.
2. In order to protect and preserve archaeological sites or a First Nations heritage site when planning for development, this Plan supports measures available to property owners and the Board including applications to change or vary zoning, setbacks or parking requirements.
3. When considering applications to amend this Plan or the zoning bylaw for land with a known archaeological site, other First Nations heritage site, or area of high archaeological potential, the Regional District may require development approval information to assess the impacts of the proposal. This Plan does not support proposed development where there are unavoidable conflicts with significant archaeological sites, unless measures are required to manage the impacts.
4. Where possible, applicants should modify or revise development proposals to avoid archaeological site impacts as the best means of preserving archaeological resources. Alteration of an archaeological site requires a Provincial Heritage Alteration Permit prior to land altering activities.
5. The Regional District should, in cooperation with the Qualicum First Nation and relevant agencies, develop improved methods of determining and assessing impacts on potential archaeological sites, or other First Nations heritage sites, when it is considering development applications.

### OBJECTIVES

1. ***Encourage* protection of archaeological sites and other sites of First Nations significance.**
2. ***Improve* public awareness of the importance of protecting archaeological sites.**