



RI

# input

SPRING 2015

VOL. 43 NUMBER 2

## Planning to Save Paradise

By Jason Youmans, Islands Trust Local Planning Services

## For the Better? Zoning, Density Bonusing, and CACs

By Courtney Miller, City of North Vancouver

## Our City Plan: Land Use Planning and Belonging

By Lynn Roxburgh and Jackie Teed, City of New Westminster

## Advancing Sustainability in the Context of Regional Planning

By Ting Pan, Regional District of Nanaimo





# From the EO's Desk

As real estate professionals, our members engage with land, land use planning, zoning, subdivision, and development—either directly or indirectly—every day. We figured it was time, therefore, to dedicate an issue of *Input* to the topic.

We begin with a little help from columnist John McLachlan, who frames the conversation with some background on the *Local Government Act*. Our guest authors then explore land use planning in municipal and regional contexts, diving into discussions about truck routes, official community plans and regional growth strategies, the specific challenges of planning in the Islands Trust Area, and how sustainability policies can be implemented in a regional district setting. Readers will also explore how land use planning can help residents experience a sense of belonging in their city, and will gain insight into the concept of *betterment* through zoning, density bonusing, and community amenity contributions.

LGMA is a resource for real estate professionals and we're pleased to be able to profile the association in this issue. "On the Job" is a new column that we hope will shine a light on the many professional positions held by RIs and what these jobs look like from the inside.

Upcoming is our AGM and Recognition Dinner on June 11, 2015. We've outgrown the usual venue and will host it this year at the Four Seasons Hotel. We look forward to having you join us.

Summer is almost here, which means our year is almost complete. Please join me in thanking President Jason Grant for his support and dedication during this exciting year of change and growth for the Institute.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Southam".

Brenda Southam, CAE  
Executive Officer

## Drop us a line!

We want to hear from you. Please let us know your ideas for articles and how you like the magazine—and check out our LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter pages for up-to-the-minute information on REIBC activities.

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Recognition Dinner 2014

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Most of the advertising suggests how easy or trouble-free the lifestyle choice of owning a strata property can be. The truth of the matter is that however “carefree” a lifestyle it is for most people, it cannot be allowed to become a “care-less” lifestyle. There is a lot to consider and a great deal to learn and apply that doesn’t necessarily get into strata property ownership advertising materials.

A strata property is shared ownership in a corporation. You have partners, so to speak, and you’re living together for the most part with legal obligations between you. Strata owners must realize that when problems arise, and they will, it can be quite a house party. Understanding that strata property ownership can be a bed of roses has to be tempered with the realization that it can also become a can of worms. The difference between it becoming a “bed” or a “can” is being vigilant: understanding the *Strata Property Act*, being aware and current about all strata council activities, and becoming, as much as possible, an active rather than a passive participant. That involvement can be as simple as reading the minutes on a regular and timely basis and attending and participating in AGMs and special general meetings.

This is why I am so encouraged to hear that REIBC is preparing to launch its Strata Governance Training program targeted at strata council members. It is an excellent place to start.

Sincerely,  
Richard Wood

Dear Editor,

We were pleased to read that REIBC is developing a Strata Governance Training program and will be rolling it out later this year. There is a real need for more and affordable educational opportunities about strata management and law, both for those who live in or own stratas and those who serve on their strata councils. Many people who move to our strata are new to strata living. It takes time for them to understand how a strata is managed, what they can and can’t do, when they need to request permission from the strata, and how to propose changes and get involved in the governance of the strata. Those who become strata council members must learn even more about these matters, especially if they are in a self-managed strata such as ours. The list of items council members must understand and deal with is virtually endless, including financial planning and oversight, short- and long-term maintenance, responding to correspondence and requests, addressing bylaw infractions, resolving disputes if they arise, rental issues, ensuring appropriate and adequate insurance, keeping appropriate policies and plans updated (such as a personal information protection policy or fire plan), filing annual tax returns, dealing with emergencies or illegal activities, and so forth.

As strata corporations are ultimately self-managing, there is no one to easily turn to if and as questions arise short of seeking legal advice. More opportunities to receive education about the *Strata Property Act* and how to follow it in managing stratas would thus be very helpful. The training program you are developing sounds as if it will meet some of this need. We look forward to learning more about your pilot program.

Sincerely,  
Strata Council VIS 2700

**Write to us!**

We promise to read all letters submitted. Letters will be considered for printing based on space constraints. Thank you for taking the time to share your ideas, kudos, opinions, and concerns with us.

Submit your letter to the editor: [info@reibc.org](mailto:info@reibc.org)



## President's Message

It has been a busy few months for the Board and staff and it is exciting to see progress on the 2014–2015 strategic initiatives. Our March in-person Board meeting reviewed strategic progress and brought into focus work that needs to be completed during the current Board term. Given the scope and significance of our current strategic initiatives, it is likely that some of them may take several years to fully implement.

Our brand-new area of relevance and revenue, strata council governance training, is moving along nicely and has entered the curriculum-writing phase with pilot sessions expected later this spring. Our digital presence and branding review is nearing completion and has greatly benefitted from member input. Preliminary work on the review of education requirements for Professional membership continues.

This spring I've attended various industry events hosted by other organizations, networking with professionals in our diverse industry. We've been busy with our own events too. REIBC's webinar in March, with speaker Ryan Berlin, provided a refreshing look at the housing market in BC and was a great way for members to use technology to participate in an education session.

As President of our 55-year-old organization, I have found it extremely rewarding to share in the responsibility of shaping the future of the Institute. We are fortunate to have a such a strong Board, dedicated to ensuring that REIBC continues to provide the same high level of professional relevance and opportunity for others as it has provided for them. It has been a pleasure to work with this Board and the hard-working and dedicated staff during my term as President. I know members will continue to be served well by them in the future.

Jason Grant, RI  
President

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**Q:** *How is land use planning managed in British Columbia and what are the differences, if any, between regional and local government powers?*

**A:** Land use planning in British Columbia occurs at three levels: provincial, regional, and local. Each of these levels have specific powers allocated to them. Municipalities and regional districts are creatures of statute with no inherent power or authority. The majority of municipal and regional powers come from the *Local Government Act*, RSBC 1996, c. 323 (the "Act") and the Community Charter, SBC 2003, c. 26.

The City of Vancouver derives its planning and land use management powers from the Vancouver Charter, SBC 1953, c. 55.

## HISTORY

The enactment of the Act in 2000 was in response to changing views surrounding the governance of municipal powers and municipal autonomy. Prior to the enactment of the Act, municipal powers had been governed under the *Municipal*

Act, which had expanded over the course of the 1900s to over 1,000 sections.

It was felt that the *Municipal Act* had become far too cumbersome and was based on close provincial supervision of local government affairs, which was no longer consistent with the views held in other provinces across the country. As a result, the Act was implemented to enable municipalities and regional districts to have broad powers with regard to implementing their legislative objectives. The effect of the Act was to give municipalities more flexibility and to recognize municipalities as an independent, responsible, and accountable order of government.

## PURPOSES OF THE ACT

The purpose of the Act is to give municipalities more autonomy over the operation of municipal affairs to ensure that the powers conferred on local governments are interpreted broadly while still ensuring cooperation and consistency between local governments.

*John A. McLachlan, RT, BA, LLB*  
Lex Pacifica Law Corporation

John McLachlan is a lawyer at Lex Pacifica Law Corporation in Vancouver, British Columbia. His practice is focused on civil litigation with an emphasis on real property matters. John has appeared as counsel before the British Columbia Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the Provincial Court of British Columbia, the Federal Court, and various Administrative Tribunals, including the Employment Standards Tribunal, the Property Assessment Appeal Board, the BC Human Rights Tribunal, and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board.

John represents and advises clients in a variety of areas, including labour and employment, real property assessment, real estate litigation, construction litigation, and commercial disputes.





## REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGIES

The *Act* enables the creation of regional districts, which are composed of either municipalities or a combination of municipalities and electoral areas. Regional districts are governed by a board of directors composed of representatives from each member municipality and each electoral area within the district. These directors are not chosen by electors but rather appointed by their respective council and serve at pleasure.

At a regional level, land use planning comes in the form of a regional growth strategy and is governed under Part 25 of the *Act*. The development and adoption of the regional growth strategy is subject to specific procedures including consultation with members of municipalities and a mandatory settlement procedure where voluntary adoption of the regional growth strategy by a municipality is not achieved. Once adopted, the regional growth strategy applies to the entire regional district.

The purposes of a regional growth strategy, as set out in section 849 of the *Act*, is to promote human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land, and other resources.

A regional growth strategy is designed to be of long-term duration and must cover a period of at least 20 years from the time of its initiation. It must include the following:

- a comprehensive statement on the future of the region, including the social, economic, and environmental objectives of the board in relation to the regional district
- population and employment projections for the period covered by the regional growth strategy

- to the extent that these are regional matters, actions proposed for the regional district to provide for the needs of the projected population in relation to:
  - housing
  - transportation
  - regional district services
  - parks and natural areas
  - economic development
- to the extent that these are regional matters, targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the regional district, and policies and actions proposed for the regional district with respect to achieving those targets

The scope of a regional growth strategy is primarily restricted to those matters that require coordination between or that affect more than one municipality, more than one electoral area, or at least one municipality and one electoral area in a regional district.

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANS

Part 26 of the *Act* grants municipalities the power to enact bylaws to create zones and to regulate the parcel sizes of land, density of land use, and permitted uses of each zone. They also engage in long-term land use planning through the adoption of an official community plan (OCP). Much like a regional growth strategy, an OCP is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management. While the objectives of an OCP are long term, unlike a regional growth strategy that requires 20 years of coverage, an OCP is only required to cover a period of five years.

OCPs create and designate development permit and heritage conservation areas and set out a description of the special conditions or objectives that justify the designation and the guidelines for the issuance of development permits.

The next layer of land use control is the ability conferred under section 903 of the *Act* to create zoning regulations to regulate the use, density, siting, size, and dimensions of land and buildings within each zone. This includes the ability to prohibit or limit any use or uses in a zone and to vary the zoning regulations depending on use, location, and siting within the zone. The zoning power under the Vancouver Charter is even broader and it allows the City of Vancouver to regulate the external design of buildings and confers a broader discretion under which the City may approve development.



Section 884 of the Act prohibits the adoption of bylaws or the undertaking of any works that are inconsistent with the OCP. The OCP or the zoning bylaw set out the guidelines for applicants to follow when preparing their development permit applications.

## COORDINATION

Because the same piece of land can be subject to competing interests and pressures from regional districts and municipalities, the Act emphasizes the coordination and integration of the various planning objectives to promote cooperation between regional districts and municipalities. Section 865(1) requires consistency between a regional district's bylaws and that district's regional growth strategy. Section 884 requires that municipal bylaws be consistent with the OCP. There is a requirement that the OCP must include a regional context statement that identifies the relationship between the OCP and the regional district and identifies how the OCP will become consistent with the regional growth strategy.

Though the Act encourages coordination and integration of the planning documents to promote cooperation between

Because the same piece of land can be subject to competing interests and pressures from regional districts and municipalities, the Act emphasizes the coordination and integration of the various planning objectives to promote cooperation.

local governments, that cooperation does not detract from the limitations placed on regional district and municipal powers to manage land. Regional districts, through the implementation of a regional growth strategy, have the ability to shape and guide land use planning across various municipalities; however, they do not have the ability to dictate a municipality's decisions on local developments. Section 873 of the Act restricts the exercise of authority under Part 26 (Planning and Land Use Management) to the municipality or to a regional district only where that part of the regional district is not in a municipality.

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# Land Use Planning in Regional Districts

Why some land becomes industrial, residential, or some other use is the result of a process that has many considerations. Venturing into the rural areas outside municipalities, there is often a very low density of development, usually matched with little infrastructure. This land use pattern, along with the form and character of development, is a reflection of community interests and values. How is that coordinated?

In the rural areas, beyond the municipal boundary, regional districts are the local government authorities that administer land use regulations on private land. Today, this is principally done through official community plans (OCPs) and zoning. It is the OCP that broadly identifies areas for residential development, or alternatively for agricultural, industrial,

commercial, institutional, or any other use. The zoning bylaw, as a companion document, contains the specific and enforceable regulations that implement the OCP policies.

Official community plans are future-looking documents. BC's *Local Government Act* requires that OCPs anticipate housing needs for at least the next five years and express that in terms of identifying land for residential development and specifying density. Likewise, the *Act* requires the OCP to identify all present and proposed land uses.

Numerous inputs feed into the decision making behind allocating land to particular land use categories. Studies on local and regional demographic and economic trends result

PHOTO, ABOVE: Construction of a light industrial subdivision south of the City of Fort St. John. This land was excluded from the Agricultural Land Reserve and designated for light industrial development in the official community plan. Being developed outside of the municipality, the subdivision will have its road constructed to rural standards and water or sewer infrastructure is not available.



in demand projections for each category. Other technical considerations can include the extent and standards of existing infrastructure, geographical constraints, and the current supply of land use categories.

The goals and objectives of the OCP direct how new development will be accommodated. Stakeholder engagement during the writing of the OCP results in goals that the OCP should be achieving and objectives on how to accomplish those goals. The values expressed by the public during this engagement can lead to certain features being protected, like views and environmental or heritage features. Likewise, in the regional district context, if a community expresses a desire to retain an agricultural or rural way of life, then the OCP may direct new development elsewhere. The willingness of a community to make infrastructure upgrades can lead to more development.

Nearby municipalities also influence land use allocation within the rural areas. Municipalities often provide services to rural residents and changing land use can impact that service provision. For example, it is common for municipalities to extend their fire protection services into the rural areas and be compensated accordingly through a local service area agreement. In the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), where water wells are not common, most rural residents haul drinking water from municipal tank loaders. There are even some municipal services, like libraries, roads, and some recreational facilities, that rural residents use but do not contribute toward through taxation. From these service provision perspectives, municipalities are important stakeholders. Agricultural land being reallocated to industrial use affects fire protection service delivery. Increases in rural population levels affect how many new people will be entering the municipality seeking some of these other services. Regional growth strategies are used in some regional districts to help coordinate this process.

Regional districts must also account for superseding legislation such as the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Any subdivision or non-farm use within the areas designated by the province as ALR must be agreed to by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), which is tasked with preserving farmland. In the face of



Studio TGP Inc. & Peace River Regional District

Pipeline riser in foreground, drilling rig being assembled in the background, surrounded by agriculture. Rural area between the City of Dawson Creek and the District of Chetwynd. Due to superseding legislation, resource extraction and utilities are often exempt from local bylaws or permitted in all designations.

development pressures, local governments and the ALC work together to plan for non-agricultural land uses in such a way that they do not infringe upon productive agricultural lands. In the PRRD, the local governments worked with the ALC to create Comprehensive Development Strategies, around the major municipalities of Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, which identified lands suitable for non-agricultural uses that could be incorporated into the new OCPs.

Coordination with other government agencies also occurs. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure sets rural road standards, prioritizes (and funds) rural road improvements, and regulates road access. The Ministry of Natural Gas Development and the BC Oil and Gas Commission regulate the wells, pipelines, and associated oil and gas facilities that may affect where residential developments occur. Similar resource-extraction or rural-residential interface considerations occur in the forestry and mining sectors. School districts maintain population projections reflecting who will be attending what school, and cope with opening or closing schools.

Once it is all accounted for, an official community plan should anticipate for all the expected development for the foreseeable future. Whether that is five years from now or 20 depends on a number of factors. A change in the pace of development could

*Jodi MacLean, RPP, MCIP*

Assistant Manager of Development Services, Peace River Regional District

Jodi MacLean has been working as a professional planner for the last 10 years in Northern BC for both the Peace River Regional District and the City of Dawson Creek. In addition to helping implement other official community plans, he has been responsible for drafting two new OCPs and is currently working on one more. He is a member of the Planning Institute of BC and the Canadian Institute of Planners.

force an early review of an OCP (or a slower than expected pace could extend the OCP's life), as could significant changes in demographics, economies, social values, or superseding regulations. However, more fundamentally, the most important trigger is whether or not the community and decision makers have faith in the OCP.

Official community plans are adopted by a regional district's board of directors (or a municipality's council) as bylaws. They exist to provide staff with direction on dealing with development issues and to provide the board (or council) with guidance and rationales for land use decisions. When those decision makers start seeing gaps between what the OCP recommends and the direction in which their constituents want to go, or as applications to amend the OCP become more frequent, confidence that the existing OCP is a relevant and accurate reflection of community values erodes.

An official community plan is described as a "living document" because it is open to amending and updating. Anyone may request, through an application process to the local government, that the OCP be amended. Often this is done to reassign a land use designation to a particular property so that it may be subdivided and developed accordingly: for example, a change from agricultural to light industrial to create an industrial park,

or from low-density residential to high-density residential to create multi-family dwellings. This amendment process follows much the same considerations as the OCP originally underwent in its creation but is limited to an examination of only those specified parcels. Similar questions will be asked, like how the proposal affects the existing infrastructure (Are the road standards suitable for this new and different traffic? Is there capacity in the sewer and water lines for the density?), whether the municipalities are affected, and how the local residents view the proposal. If there is suitable justification and a lack of objection, the OCP may be amended and a different land use introduced to a new area.

Outside of municipalities, it is the regional districts that provide this local government service of planning. Planners, sometimes with the assistance of outside consultants that specialize in development and public and governmental engagement, coordinate this process. It is a process that has many considerations and works more on a conceptual policy level but has real world implications directing where certain types of development land should locate. It is a collaborative effort among many players that strives to balance many interests to achieve liveable, sustainable communities that meet the aspirations of their residents.

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# Calendar of Events



JUNE 11, 2015

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members are welcome to join us at the Annual General Meeting. Voting privileges are for Professional members only.

**Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver, BC 5:00 pm**

JUNE 11, 2015

## RECOGNITION DINNER

Who will receive the 2015 Award of Excellence? Dinner, awards ceremony, and entertainment make this a great evening filled with fun and laughter. Sponsored by BCREA.

**Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver, BC 6:00 pm**



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JUNE 24, 2015

## 22nd ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

REIBC's annual tournament in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of British Columbia and Yukon.

**Northview Golf and Country Club, Surrey, BC 1:10 pm shotgun start**

AUGUST 26, 2015

## VANCOUVER CANADIANS EXTRAVAGANZA

Join us at the Nat for an evening of baseball fun while we launch a new advertising campaign on the big screen.

**Nat Bailey Stadium, Vancouver, BC**

DECEMBER 3, 2015

## PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON

Speaker to be announced.

**Location TBA**

QUESTIONS?

For more information visit [www.reibc.org](http://www.reibc.org)





# Our City Plan: Land Use Planning and Belonging in New Westminster

Do you know your neighbours? Do you love living in your neighbourhood? What would it take to increase your sense of belonging to your community? These are some of the questions that the City of New Westminster is trying to answer through the Our City Official Community Plan update process.

The City's current plan was largely drafted in 1998, a year in which Jean Chrétien was prime minister, *Titanic* won 11 Oscars, and Google was founded. The world has changed significantly since that time—locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It's time for an update that provides a vision for the New Westminster of today and of the future.

The updated Our City Plan will provide that vision as well as the regulatory framework to guide growth in that direction. Like most official community plans, Our City Plan will contain goals, policies, and a land use designation map that will determine the development and redevelopment of the city over the next 25 years. These will take shape through exploration and discussion with the community, Council, and other stakeholders. All combined, Our City Plan will provide direction guiding future



decision making so that step by step, decision by decision, New Westminster will transform into the city we envision.

## BELONGING

When planners think about what the future of a city looks like, we often focus on where people live and what type of housing they live in, where they work and play, and the different ways they move around. The Our City Official Community Plan process hopes to add a new theme into the mix: belonging. It does this by focusing on the purpose of a city as being a place that brings people together.

Changing how we approach the conversation means breaking away from the habit of focusing primarily on land use, buildings, and streets, instead thinking about the relationships between community members. Relationships and social connections can be a source of enjoyment, support, and happiness. They help people to feel that they have a part in a society where their needs are considered, and encourage consideration of the needs of others. They help to create a community where you are more likely to know your neighbours and fellow community members. Instead of your house being the place you call home, it's your entire neighbourhood. The local community parks and facilities are your yard and rec room, the owners and employees of the shops on your main street are next-door neighbours, and the local café is your kitchen and office. A sense of belonging can transform a city.

Focusing on creating belonging is important to the New Westminster community. A recent survey<sup>1</sup> indicated that over half of parents surveyed did not feel connected to their neighbours. Over half of the youth surveyed did not feel connected to other youth in their neighbourhood and did not feel involved in their city. Similarly, recent immigrants have reported having difficulty meeting people and making



friends, especially outside their own cultural or ethnic community.<sup>2</sup> A welcoming, inclusive, and socially connected community should make all community members feel that they belong. This includes the community members that call New Westminster home now and the ones that want to call New Westminster home in the future.

Focusing on creating belonging also means we plan for a city that is age, ability, and family friendly. An age-friendly community encourages active aging and inclusion by optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security to enhance quality of life. An ability-friendly community adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of people with varying needs and capacities. A family-friendly community ensures that these features are also suited to people with children of all ages. Of course, being age, ability, and family friendly also means thinking about the kinds of housing, services, and amenities everyone needs as they travel through the different times of life. These services and amenities include everything from daycare to medical offices, and from rec centres to libraries.

The challenge is how to get an official community plan, which is largely focused on land use and physical design,

<sup>1</sup> Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy Survey, *City of New Westminster*, May 2015.

<sup>2</sup> New Westminster Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Immigrant and Refugee Survey Report and Action Plan, *City of New Westminster*, January 13, 2014.



*Lynn Roxburgh, MCIP, RPP*  
Planner, City of New Westminster

Lynn Roxburgh started her career in New Westminster in 2006. Through the development of her career she has specialized in policy planning. She recently completed the review of the Queensborough Community Plan and is now the lead planner on the Official Community Plan review.

*Jackie Teed*  
Manager of Planning, City of New Westminster

Jackie Teed is Manager of Planning at the City of New Westminster. Jackie has over 15 years' professional experience in urban design and community planning. Jackie's background is in landscape architecture, and she has led numerous projects in Western Canada and China.





Participants of the visioning process had particularly identified the need to layer together different activities and public spaces to create more opportunities for running into neighbours and friends and meeting new ones. Being located on a greenway—such as a street with a large boulevard, bike route, and wider sidewalk—or on a street with transit was also seen as an asset.

to successfully create something as non-physical and elusive as social connection and a sense of belonging. In these, the early stages of Our City Plan, two “big ideas” for achieving this non-physical goal are being explored: community corners and great streets.

## COMMUNITY CORNERS

The City recently completed a Neighbourhood Visioning Process, a two-day community engagement event exploring how New Westminster can grow into the future, where the idea of “community corners” emerged. The visioning process asked: What do you love about your neighbourhood, where is its “heart,” and what’s missing from the heart? Many of the hearts identified were small retail spaces tucked into neighbourhoods of single-detached houses. They included the local butcher, a corner store, and, of course, the local café and microbrewery.

The discussions about these hearts, and the ways in which they could be strengthened, became the idea of community corners. Community corners are envisioned to include a small commercial unit (or two) with one floor of residential above. These corners should provide a place for community members to meet and could be located close to a parklet or other open space. Participants of the visioning process had particularly identified the need to layer together different activities and public spaces to create more opportunities for running into neighbours and friends and meeting new ones. Being located on a greenway—such as a street with a large boulevard, bike route, and wider sidewalk—or on a street with transit was also seen as an asset.

## GREAT STREETS

The concept of a “great street” is one of the strategies in the City of New Westminster’s recently adopted Master Transportation Plan. The plan identifies six great streets in New Westminster, each of which already acts as the “main street” for their neighbourhood and is served by transit, and most of which are the location of city amenities like parks and the library. The plan sees the role of these streets as going beyond supporting through traffic—they should be destinations themselves, places for people to spend time rather than move through.

The City’s Master Transportation Plan identifies ways in which the function of these streets can be strengthened by using urban design. This will include improving the physical comfort of using the street through different means such as widening sidewalks or adding boulevards that separate people from traffic. The Our City Plan process creates the opportunity to reinforce the role of these streets through land use and more urban design. Getting this right will mean these streets are “stickier”—where you can’t help but slow your pace to slowly wander, window shop, visit local stores, and enjoy lunch on a sidewalk patio. As they get stickier over time it will be more likely that these streets also become places where you bump into and say hello to your neighbours.

## CONVERSATION IS KEY

The trick will be to figure out what element must be included in these spaces to help community members feel comfortable crossing the threshold between simply nodding hello and





actually striking up a conversation, especially when English is not their first language or they are new to the country. It seems that many people find it less intimidating to start a conversation with someone walking a dog or strolling with their baby. Is it possible to achieve this same openness through design? Is it as simple as placing public benches in a circle so that people face each other when they use the benches? Or do people need to be united through a common activity, like a free Zumba class in the park?

As the Our City Plan update progresses, the City will continue to explore these ideas and others that can help increase a sense of belonging. It will build on existing successes, including New Westminster's charming neighbourhoods enriched by heritage assets and small town character, all within walking distance of transit, shops, and access to and views of the Fraser River.

The final Our City Plan will be a renewed vision that will provide direction for how the city grows and changes. Hopefully this growth happens in a way that ensures New Westminster is a place where community members know their neighbours and feel that they belong. This is especially important when you consider that the time horizon for Our City Plan is 2041. Over the next 26 years, 34,000 additional residents are expected to move to New Westminster, adding to the 70,000 already here. The lessons learned through this update process will help ensure that both new and current community members find connections and feel a part of their evolving neighbourhoods.



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# Planning to Save Paradise



From the sweeping views atop Gambier Island's Mount Artaban to the warm waters of Hornby Island's Tribune Bay and over to the sun-kissed slopes of Saturna Island's vineyards, life is good on the islands. Encompassing more than 460 small and large islands between Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, the Islands Trust Area is home to some of the richest biodiversity in BC. Sea lions and orcas can be seen from sandy beaches or steep coastal bluffs. Turkey vultures soar overhead while camas flowers bloom below in meadows of craggy Garry oak trees.

In recognition of the ecological value of this special place, subdivision of land within the Trust Area is carefully managed to limit the impact of development such as roads, building sites, and septic fields on the local environment.

## A MULTI-AGENCY PROCESS

As with other rural parts of the province, subdivision applications within the Trust Area are made to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. A provincial Approving Officer (AO) assesses the proposal against provincial standards for highway access, slope safety, and other concerns before approving the subdivision for registration with the Land Title Office.<sup>1</sup> However, prior to approving any subdivision in the Islands Trust Area, the AO refers the application to several agencies, including the Islands Trust, water service providers, regional districts, health authorities, and other service agencies. Within the Islands Trust, planning staff assess the application for consistency with the individual island's vision for development as expressed in its land use bylaw and official community plan (OCP).

<sup>1</sup> The exception to this is Bowen Island, which incorporated as a municipality in 1999.



Kristine Mayes

The Islands Trust is a unique federation of local governments created by the Province of BC in 1974 when it became apparent that the arrival of a small-lot recreational subdivision on North Pender Island foreshadowed a bleak future for the flora, fauna, character, and culture of the islands in the Trust Area if the pace and scale of residential development were not better managed. Under the *Islands Trust Act*, 12 local trust committees and one island municipality uphold the provincially mandated object of the Islands Trust: "To preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally . . ."

The Islands Trust's Policy Statement is the foundation document that guides each local trust area and the Bowen Island Municipality as they adopt policies and regulations to reflect the desires of their respective communities. Each local Trust Area (and Bowen Island) has its own unique land use bylaw and OCP with subdivision and servicing regulations, guidelines, and policies that reflect the Policy Statement.

*Jason Youmans, MAP*

Planner 1, Islands Trust Local Planning Services

Jason Youmans works as a land use planner for the Salt Spring Island office of the Islands Trust. He is proud to serve the Trust and help ensure that development in the Trust Area proceeds according to the vision of the people that live there and that the Islands' ecological values are protected. When not working on subdivision applications, Jason spends a lot of time exploring the woods on Salt Spring Island and enjoying the beaches with his partner and son.





Kristine Mayes

## FROM APPLICATION TO APPROVAL

All subdivision referrals from the Ministry are received by Islands Trust planning staff, who begin a review of the application to determine compliance with the individual island's subdivision regulations and any development permits that might be required.

The first consideration in reviewing a subdivision application (aside from whether the lot is subject to a no-subdivision covenant) is whether the lot is large enough to support subdivision. Each zone in the Trust Area contains either a minimum lot area, a minimum average lot area (the size of the parent parcel divided by the number of proposed lots must meet a certain threshold), or both. Permitted density will vary according to community goals like minimizing development in drinking watersheds and over sensitive groundwater aquifers to allow rainwater to recharge water supplies.

Typically, subdivision is an administrative process conducted by staff with decisions made by the provincial AO. However, certain subdivision applications may require decisions from local elected representatives if the applicant proposes a layout that does not comply with the regulations. In this case the local trust committee will need strong rationale for granting a variance, while still meeting the objectives of the OCP. For example,

the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee may grant a variance to subdivision regulations for a plan that achieves the OCP policy to: "Cluster new lots onto that part of their land that has the best capacity for residential development, and the least value for agriculture, forestry or environmental protection, or protection of archaeological sites or other First Nations cultural sites."

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The *Local Government Act* requires local governments in BC to protect property and public safety by regulating development "on land that is subject to hazardous conditions." Many parts of the Gulf Islands are included in what are known as development permit areas (DPAs) to protect development against hazardous conditions. Examples on Salt Spring Island include Development Permit Area 3, for the protection of the foreshore, and Development Permit Area 6, related to steep slopes and soil erosion hazards. Certain activities, such as tree removal and drainage alteration, can threaten the security and safety of buildings, roads, and utilities. Typically, activities within a DPA are allowed by permit when supported by advice from a qualified professional.



Sometimes, a proposed subdivision will result in the requirement that the applicant register covenants against the lots being created. A frequently used covenant on the islands warns prospective buyers that well water on the lot does not meet potable standards and commits the lot's owner to ongoing water treatment.

In an effort to curb rural sprawl, some islands have established density transfer provisions. Lots that could be subdivided under existing zoning, but are located in areas where subdivision is no longer desirable, can potentially shift that density to a lot located in an area where higher density development is encouraged and permitted by the OCP.

The islands of the Trust Area have been frequented by First Nations people for millennia. Therefore, low bank waterfront, creek beds, and other areas are often sites of archaeological significance. Subdivision applications in the Trust Area regularly require communication between applicants and the BC Archaeological Branch to ensure sites of cultural significance are appropriately treated. Similarly, subdivisions on agricultural land typically involve the provincial Agricultural Land Commission.

In an effort to curb rural sprawl, some islands have established density transfer provisions. Lots that could be subdivided under existing zoning, but are located in areas where subdivision is no longer desirable, can potentially shift that density to a lot located in an area where higher density development is encouraged and permitted by the OCP.

If you are thinking of making a subdivision application on an island within the Trust Area, call your local planner early in the process. The Islands Trust website also has information to help you make timely and informed decisions about your subdivision application at [www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/land-use-planning/application-guides-forms.aspx](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/land-use-planning/application-guides-forms.aspx)

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## LGMA: City Planning Matters

An understanding of municipal planning and its impact on property owners is a critical part of the real estate puzzle. Most property owners do not understand zoning and community plans, and real estate professionals can provide their clients with tremendous value when they are well informed about how the local government develops community and transportation plans, the requirements and impacts of zoning, and why these factors matter when it comes to buying, developing, or managing property. Establishing good contacts at a local government level is key to being aware of potential implications for various properties before the deal is signed.

Just as the local government in each community is a key resource, the LGMA (Local Government Management Association) is a trusted conduit, connecting close to a thousand municipal and regional district managers, administrators, clerks, treasurers, and other non-elected, senior government officials responsible for the daily operations of BC's communities.

"The local government is a one-stop shop where property owners and real estate professionals can get information on municipal planning, bylaw requirements, and other regulations, as well as day-to-day details on property-based services such as recycling, and property owner responsibilities such as permits," says Kelly Ridley, Acting President of the LGMA. "And at the LGMA, we support the dedicated professionals in local government as they serve their communities by providing them with opportunities for continued professional development and specialized training."

The LGMA is an independent, non-profit organization with about 850 members representing 190 local governments from across British Columbia. Founded in 1919, it is the longest established



local government organization in Canada. Its members are local government managers, such as administrators, clerks, city planners, and treasurers, as well as other local government officials. LGMA's policies and programs uphold best practices, professional standards, and a code of ethics to ensure that clients in even the smallest communities in British Columbia have access to the highest calibre of service.

The LGMA's programs improve employee engagement, retention, and satisfaction in local governments across the province, and ensure that British Columbia's communities, large and small, are equipped to face the future. Its programs include webinars, mentoring, career advancement services, networking events, and an annual conference that attracts prominent leaders as guest speakers. LGMA also publishes *Exchange*, a quarterly magazine featuring stories that reflect the shared experiences, challenges, and opportunities involving local governments across the province.

Not only does the LGMA support members through professional development, networking, and career advancement, it also hosts training programs in specialized areas like community planning through the Municipal Administration Training Institute (MATI).

"Our seven MATI programs are famous for being tailored exactly to local government managers' needs," says Ridley. "But some of our programs, like MATI Foundations, MATI Community Planning in Local Government Organizations, and the MATI School for Statutory Approving Officers, provide essential information that relates to how local government functions and what is involved in the community planning and development process."


The MATI Community Planning course focuses on key information for non-planning professionals, such as what planning involves, why it's necessary, and the legislation and regulations that affect the planning process. The course also highlights how to use the various regulatory tools such as zoning bylaws, official community plans (OCPs), development permits, and environmental planning and protection.

Local government managers stay informed about legislative and technical changes to planning and zoning by pursuing professional development, such as through programs and connections to colleagues at the LGMA. For almost a century, the LGMA has provided local government managers with the knowledge and tools they need to be happier and more successful in their jobs. LGMA is more than just a membership—it's a professional affiliation with a loyalty unmatched in the public sector. And that loyalty extends to partners and sponsors.

"Managers enrolled in LGMA programs learn alongside their counterparts from communities across the province, so they've got an instant group of peer advisors from that day forward," says Ridley. "Those collaborative relationships are further reinforced in LGMA's conferences and forums, national webinars, and other networking opportunities, and we welcome participation from our partners and sponsors, both to help them gain insights into the world of local government and to help them network with our members." Through this network and our strongly held standards for continuous improvement, the LGMA is living its mission to support excellence in local government.

For more information about the LGMA and its programs, services, and membership benefits, visit [lgma.ca](http://lgma.ca), and read about member experiences in the LGMA's quarterly magazine, *Exchange*, which is posted on our website under Resources and Publications.





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# Why Do We Have Truck Routes?

The trucking industry plays an important role in ensuring the livability and economic viability of today's society. Not only does the industry serve the needs of communities through the delivery of goods, freight, and services to both businesses and residents, but the efficient movement of goods is also vital to the economic development and growth of commerce within the Lower Mainland and the City of Coquitlam.

A “truck route” can be defined as the set or network of roads that a local government has formally designated for certain trucks to use when travelling through or within that jurisdiction. Truck route planning is used to define the street network that is safest for the movement of large vehicles, supports local and regional commerce, and provides the greatest reliability, capacity, and design features to accommodate the volume, size, and weight of the vehicles.

There are a number of approaches used by municipalities in developing truck routes, including:

- no truck routes (i.e., trucks are free to use any road within the municipality subject to individual restrictions such as time, size, or load limits, etc.)
- truck routes limited to all major arterial and/or collector roads (distributed)
- truck routes limited to specific arterial and collector road segments (concentrated)

There is no right or wrong approach—it is up to the individual municipality to determine which is most appropriate for its circumstances. The City of Coquitlam currently uses a combination of the approaches listed above: no truck routes are used in designated industrial areas, and concentrated routes limited to specific road segments are used in residential and commercial areas.

## **BENEFITS OF TRUCK ROUTES**

Many jurisdictions have placed restrictions on commercial truck travel to manage the life expectancy of roads and bridges, improve traffic operations, and address public concerns about noise and safety. In fact, there are many benefits to designating truck routes.

Designated truck routes can be built to handle the increased weight loads and the higher braking and accelerating forces on the pavement. This results in longer life expectancy and reduces the operating, repair, and maintenance costs for roads. Routes can be designed to accommodate wider and longer vehicles to reduce the risk of a truck intruding into an adjacent lane or riding up on a curb as it goes around a corner.

Along truck routes, a higher level of access control can be easier to justify in order to reduce conflict points, which will, in turn, reduce the collision risks and improve road capacity. The number of intersections can be limited, which reduces

the number of conflict points and reduces the corridor travel time. With a designated truck route residents and businesses know where to expect higher truck volumes and noise, and can manage expectations accordingly.

While all roads will carry some trucks, the higher geometric, structural, and access management controls on designated truck routes provide improved safety, reliability, and efficiency for goods movement. Establishing designated truck routes also minimizes the impacts upon residential areas by limiting the truck travel off of the designated truck routes to local deliveries only, and it provides some wayfinding assistance for truckers who may not be familiar with an area.

Designated truck routes are generally a benefit for trucks passing through the community by reducing total route costs (distance and time). However, there may not be a benefit for short haul trucks making deliveries in a community. For local deliveries, restricting trucks to a truck route may increase the total route costs by increasing the total distance travelled (fuel costs, vehicle wear and tear, driver costs, and greenhouse emissions). It may also increase the collision risk by increasing the total travel distance since this increases the number of conflict points the truck is exposed to. As well, a truck route may result in trucks passing by schools or through residential communities that they may not have otherwise passed if they did not have to follow the truck route.

## **PLANNING AND DESIGNING A TRUCK ROUTE**

There are a number of key planning considerations for truck routes:

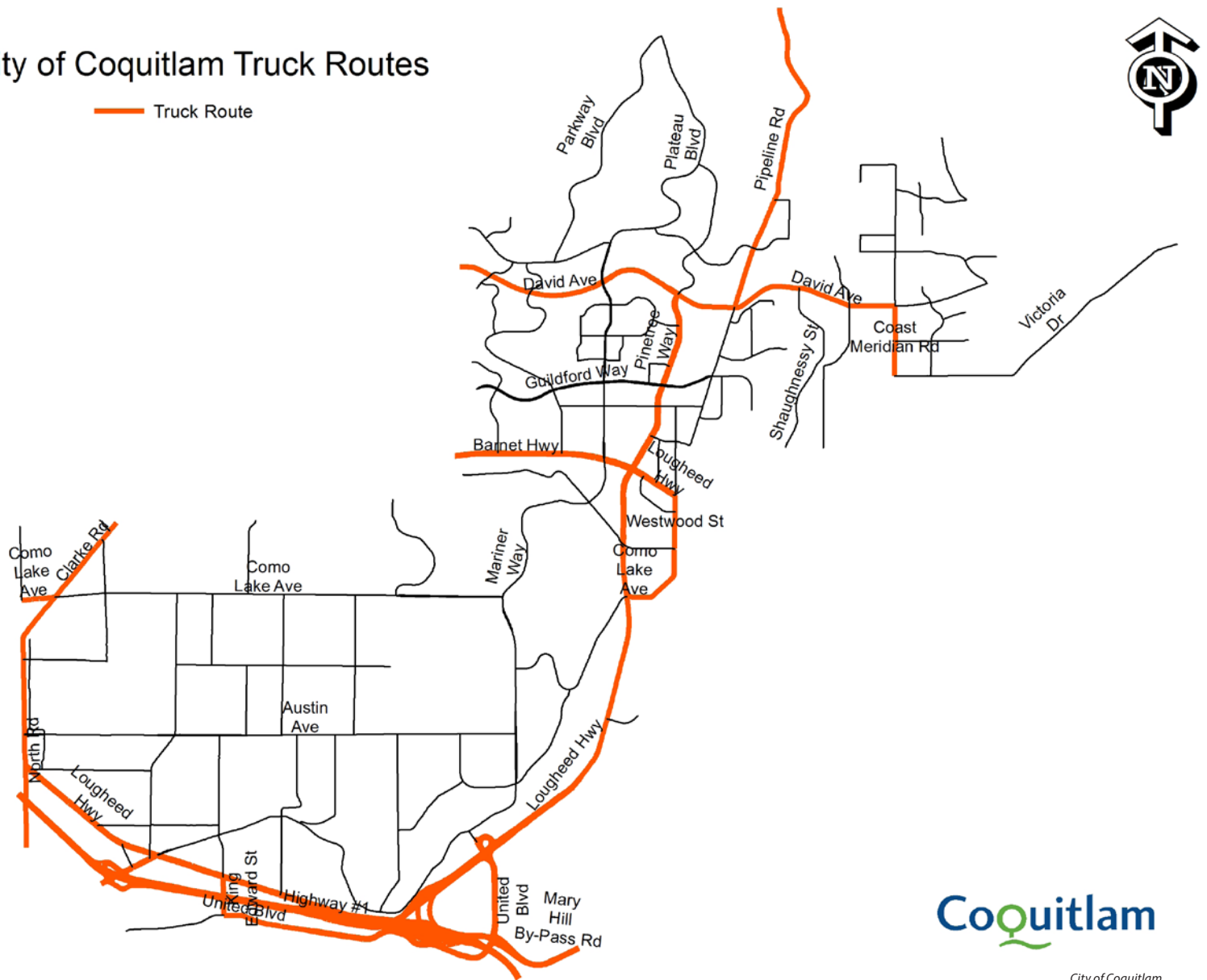
1. Land use: truck routes should avoid residential areas and schools; they are better suited in commercial and industrial areas.
2. Pedestrians and cyclists: trucks can co-exist with pedestrians and cyclists but the need for separated facilities increases.

Jamie Umpleby is a Professional Engineer and is Director of Public Works with the City of Coquitlam. He has over 30 years' experience in Municipal Engineering in both the private and public sectors. His current responsibilities include the operation and maintenance of the City's infrastructure systems. Jamie serves on the Master Municipal Construction Documents Committee and is a past Director of the BC Public Works Association.

*Jamie Umpleby, P.Eng*  
Director of Public Works, City of Coquitlam



# City of Coquitlam Truck Routes



**Coquitlam**

City of Coquitlam

Current City of Coquitlam truck route system.

3. Noise: trucks are noisy and this is one of the reasons truck routes are limited to certain hours of the day. In residential areas they may also have special road surface treatments ("quiet pavement"), special building treatments (fewer or double/triple glazed windows), or, in some cases, sound-attenuation fences.
4. Safety: trucks have greater stopping distances requiring special design considerations, particularly on hills. The most dramatic truck crashes are those that involve runaway trucks at or near the bottom of a long, steep downhill. It is in everyone's interest that safety be paramount.

In order to design a truck route, a number of physical attributes of the road are examined to ensure they can accommodate the movement, operation, and safety of trucks:

- geometry of corners
- crossings and structures

- lane width
- vertical and lateral clearances
- sign placement
- weight limits
- intersections and interchanges

## COQUITLAM TRUCK ROUTES

The City of Coquitlam has taken the principles identified above into consideration to develop its truck routes. The City's truck route system was designed to avoid steep grades, residential areas, and schools. The roads selected for truck routes are major roads designed for the additional loads and forces placed on them as a result of concentrating the truck traffic in these locations.



## IDENTIFYING ROADWAY SEGMENTS

Many elements are considered in order to select the specific segments of road that will make up a designated truck route:

- location of other truck routes
- adjacent land uses
- location of major structures such as bridges, overpasses, retaining walls
- roadway classification or type (e.g., arterial, collector, or local/residential)
- number of lanes
- constrained road status
- traffic analysis
- roadway grades

The City uses a variety of tools and technologies to facilitate the movement of not only trucks but also general purpose vehicles in the community. The City's state-of-the-art traffic control system features pan-tilt-zoom cameras to observe traffic conditions, battery back-up to power traffic lights during a power outage, and large internally illuminated street name signs for wayfinding.

## TRUCK ROUTES IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

There are 21 municipalities within Metro Vancouver and each one is responsible for developing its own truck routes to meet the needs of its community. One of the challenges is to ensure continuity of the road network from municipality to municipality. Each municipality should consult with its neighbouring municipality as part of the planning process to ensure continuity. In addition, in order to ensure regional coordination of truck routes, any new routes or changes to existing truck routes within a municipality require approval from TransLink.

Every municipality should have readily available maps and bylaws related to both existing and potential future truck routes. Prospective business and home buyers are encouraged to check with their local municipality to determine where truck routes exist or are planned, and what potential impacts or opportunities are associated with their location.

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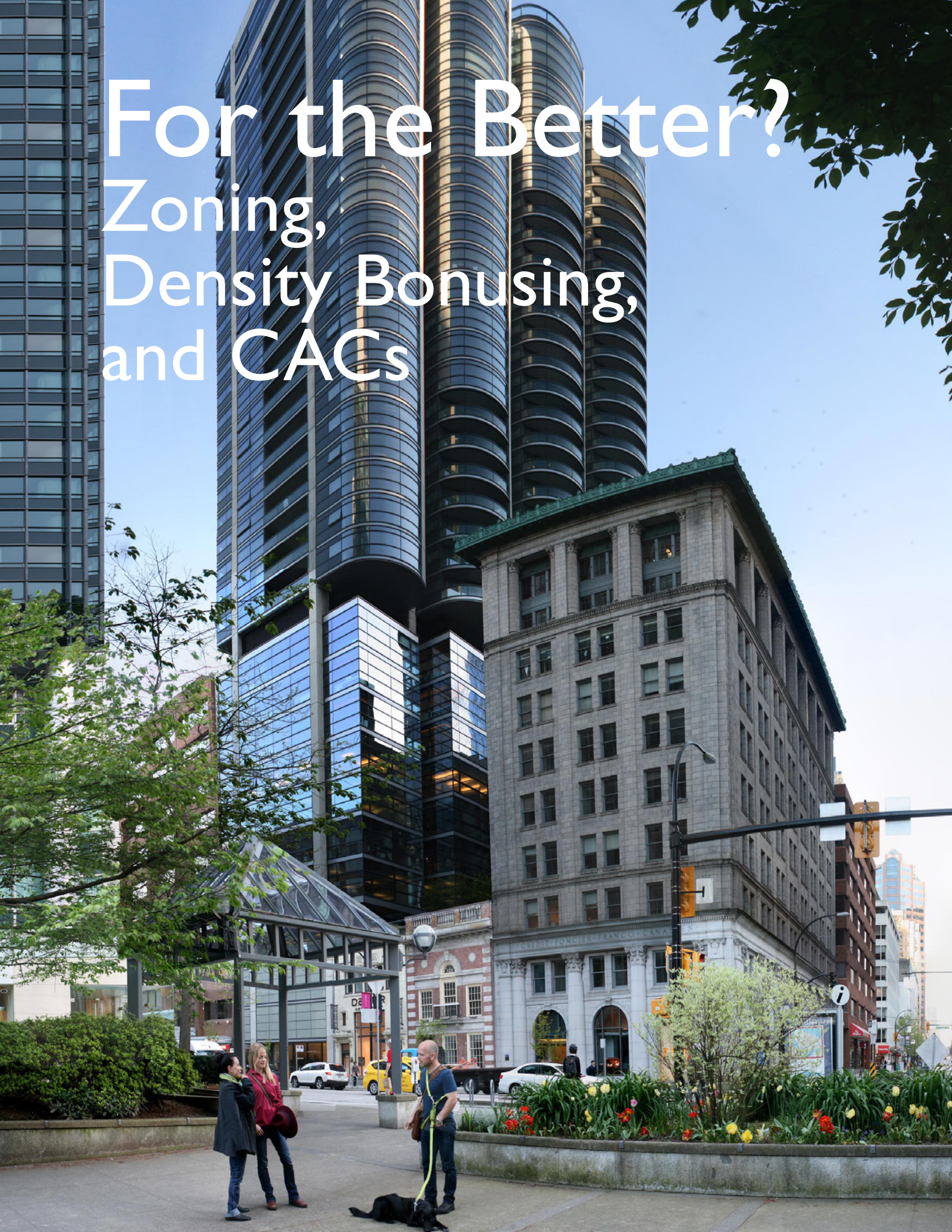
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# For the Better?

## Zoning, Density Bonusing, and CACs





The livability of a city is the product of a number of factors. One influence is the effectiveness of land use regulation to coordinate growth and services towards a defined vision. The range of both essential and preferred infrastructure has expanded in recent decades, but the legislated abilities of BC municipalities to levy costs are relatively unchanged.

In response, local governments often capture a portion of the *betterment*—the change of building or land value resulting from government action such as zoning—for public purposes. While there are many examples of projects that successfully meet owner, municipal, and public expectations, this practice attracts criticism due to the perception that amenity contributions are a new and excessive burden on development.

The primary instrument that regulates the legally entitled use, density, siting, and other characteristics of land and buildings is the zoning bylaw. A local government's council exercises discretion in the approval of bylaw amendments, and is influenced by both localized and community-wide impacts of a proposal. Voluntary contributions to improve the community highlight the benefit of a development to both council and the public. Nearly all Metro Vancouver local governments report engagement in some form of betterment recapture. Commonly used mechanisms include:

- bonusing, transferring, or excluding floor area if certain conditions are met under existing zoning
- amending the zoning in association with an amenity contribution

It is the local government's vision statement or official community plan (OCP) that provides guidance in the

The binding of development potential to the achievement of goals and principles represented a shift in planning regulation and amenity production. Betterment was increasingly understood as rightfully belonging to the community.

consideration of rezoning proposals. The OCP does not confer rights to owners, but constrains council resolutions to align with the adopted plan.

## ZONING REGULATION

Land use controls and betterment have evolved as paired constructs. The nineteenth-century introduction of zoning in Europe challenged the concept that development rights originated from the land similar to minerals or crops. Urbanization, the changing means of production, and shifts in governance supported the establishment of overall densities and their apportionment unevenly across the community. In turn, the increased property value of development lands was understood to justly bear the civic costs required for infrastructure improvement. Furthermore, this value was not limited to the reward of production, but included value attributable to community growth at large. Early Canadian town planning acts referenced recapturing betterment, although implementation mechanisms did not follow until later.

Initial zoning bylaws addressed public safety concerns by separating noxious uses and limiting heights to diminish fire risk. The City of New York's 1916 comprehensive zoning ordinance went further. It shaped the physical form of the

*Courtney Miller, MASA, BArch*  
Planner, City of North Vancouver

Courtney Miller has held positions with Metro Vancouver municipalities since 2009. He is currently part of a team implementing land use changes from the City of North Vancouver's recently adopted official community plan. His responsibilities include policy development, project management, and development review. He has also worked as a community energy manager and led research and consultation for a planning department. Courtney previously worked for the UBC Design Centre for Sustainability on neighbourhood plans in BC and Alberta.





city by defining a building envelope that stepped back as it rose, preserving access to light and air on the street below. This effort was understood to serve the mutual benefit of the City and developers by reducing the uncertainty of new development, maximizing land values, and increasing tax revenue. In BC, the municipal council of Point Grey adopted Canada's first zoning bylaw in 1922, seven years prior to its amalgamation into the contemporary City of Vancouver. Court rulings on legal challenges supported zoning regulations in both the United States and Canada, although with distinct legislative and judicial limits.

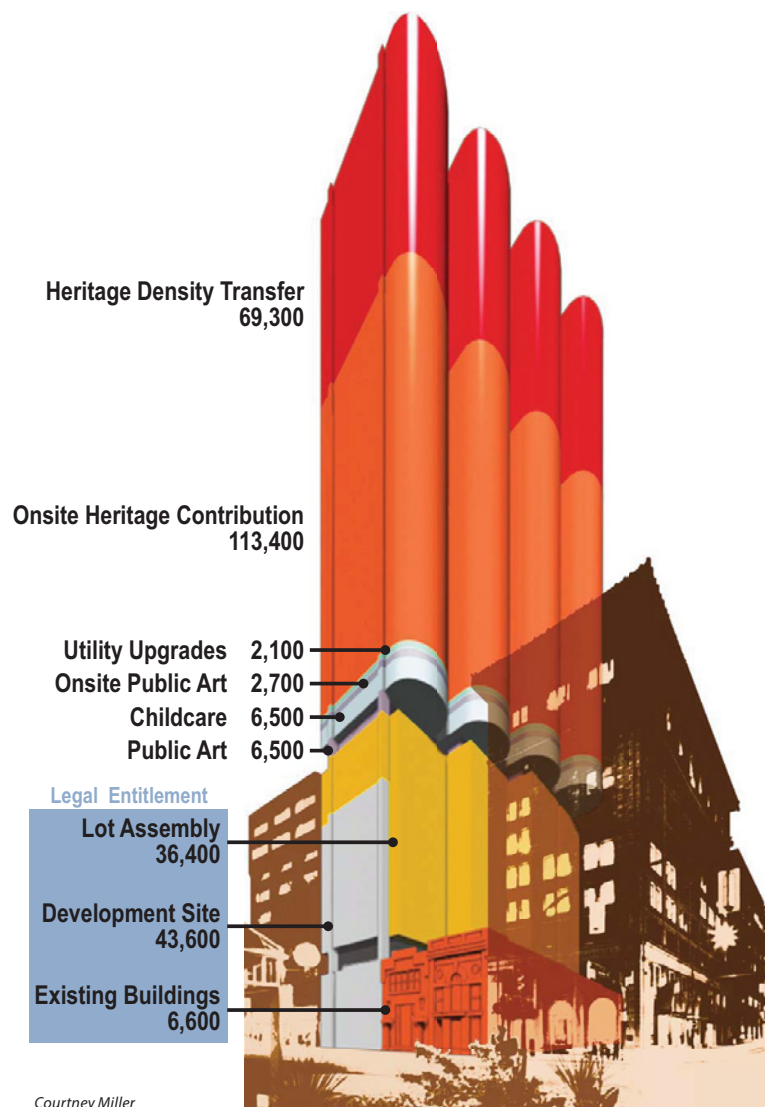
## DENSITY BONUSING

The 1960s brought new forms of development control. The City of New York introduced floor area ratios along with density bonusing to incentivize the provision of street-level public space. The approval process varied based on the proposed bonus, with the most significant amenity spaces—and therefore densest developments—considered truly discretionary and requiring approval by a public body following an open hearing. Although this departed from the traditional assumption that land development was regulated by ordinance, large numbers of zoning variances were already being considered and approved in North American municipalities. Canadian examples followed, including the City of North Vancouver's 1967 zoning bylaw that structured bonusing provisions related to building form, such as increased building height and parking allocation. Extending further, the City of Vancouver adopted discretionary controls in the 1970s that lowered the legally entitled development rights while introducing greater development potential on a discretionary basis.

The binding of development potential to the achievement of goals and principles represented a shift in planning regulation and amenity production. Betterment was increasingly understood as rightfully belonging to the community, impelling a City of Vancouver council discussion on levying an added value tax on rezonings in 1973. During subsequent decades, community plans with rezoning procedures and bylaws scheduling individual sites for comprehensive development became increasingly commonplace, supplanting area zoning in urbanized centres. This approach both facilitated form and character control and structured the recapture of betterment.

## CAPTURING VALUE

Narrowly construed, betterment is the increase in value of neighbouring property resulting from adjacent improvement. In the 1940s, British Royal Commissions popularized a more



The floor area (in square feet) of 838 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, rezoned to three times the permitted density, is supported through density bonus, transfer, and CACs.

encompassing definition, finding that the planning model of the day's failure to capture betterment was a major impediment to city building. They determined that since a municipality limits land supply through planning policy, granting permission for more intensive development or more profitable use amounts to a shift in value.

The residential densification of downtown Vancouver beginning in the 1980s necessitated the delivery of new community facilities through a number of separate developments. In 1989, the City of Vancouver introduced community amenity contributions (CACs) that, unlike structured levies based on the legal intent to pay for growth costs, are not specifically tied to new growth or a schedule of eligible amenities. This has allowed contributions to fund community centres, libraries, childcare, and cultural and public safety facilities, as well as park, public realm, and infrastructure improvements, affordable housing, and heritage conservation. Over the past 25 years,



Recent provincial guidance reaffirms that contributions proportional to and related to development impact meet the intent of the *Local Government Act* and that amenity conditions may be established that permit higher density than is otherwise allowed. As a result, there is renewed interest in scheduling bonuses in the zoning bylaw, particularly in support of corridor and neighbourhood plans.

objectives and significant public amenities. NVSD retains 159,400 square feet of transferable floor area from the rezoning in order to support future projects in the community.

### IMPROVING CERTAINTY

While comprehensive development continues to be formative, there are increasing demands to improve certainty and transparency. Recent provincial guidance reaffirms that contributions proportional to and related to development impact meet the intent of the *Local Government Act* and that amenity conditions may be established that permit higher density than is otherwise allowed. As a result, there is renewed interest in scheduling bonuses in the zoning bylaw, particularly in support of corridor and neighbourhood plans. The challenge of a more formulaic approach will be maintaining the flexibility needed to capitalize on site-specific opportunities.

Regulation of building form and the amenities delivered through development reflect public values and priorities. In turn, these investments support livability and contribute to land values in the city. Density bonusing and community amenity contributions remain important mechanisms to optimize the public benefit of development within the limits of sound urban design and adopted policy.



## Introducing the **RESERVE FUND PLANNING PROGRAM (RFPP)**

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*Ramin Seifi, P. Eng, MCIP, RPP, RI*

General Manager, Engineering and Community Development  
Township of Langley

## **WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL POSITION?**

I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Engineering and Community Development divisions in the Township of Langley, which has experienced one of the fastest rates of growth within the region over the past several decades—a pattern that is expected to continue. In my current role I am responsible for the operations of 10 distinct but interconnected departments (five each in Engineering and Community Development) with over 300 staff and an annual operating and capital budget of close to \$300 million.

## **HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAY?**

I spend a lot of my time in meetings providing overall guidance and direction to staff based on the strategic vision, guidance, and direction of the municipal council, and meeting with the public, stakeholders, and residents to address concerns that arise with respect to public impact from the engineering capital and planning and development projects.

## **WHAT PREPARED YOU FOR THIS ROLE?**

I have a degree in Civil Engineering and have been able to take several courses to obtain planning certificates. I am a member of the Association of Professional Engineers as well as the Planning Institute of BC and have over 25 years of experience in managing engineering and planning-related projects and initiatives in both the private and public sectors. I believe the experience in the private sector greatly assisted in my understanding and appreciation of market and economic pressures facing the industry.

## **WHAT DO YOU FIND CHALLENGING ABOUT YOUR WORK?**

One of the most challenging aspects of my work, from a technical perspective, is reconciling different—and often conflicting—viewpoints as they relate to growth and development. Ensuring the public is not only fully engaged but also seen and felt to be fully engaged, all stakeholders are adequately consulted

with, and issues and implications of decisions fully analyzed, conveyed, and understood is a key challenge, particularly considering the advent of social media and public expectation with respect to responsiveness. Other challenges relate to the increased level of responsibility essentially downloaded from senior levels of government without the necessary financial resources, such as housing and environmental stewardship. Finally, in the area of human resources, it is increasingly challenging, particularly in the public sector, to attract, recruit, and retain a well-qualified and young labour force.

## **IS THE WORK YOU DO TYPICAL FOR YOUR TYPE OF POSITION?**

Being responsible for both Engineering and Community Development (Planning) divisions is not typical in local government, but it has provided me with a significant opportunity in being able to bring professional planners and engineers closer together in planning new development areas and ensuring all issues from land use to servicing are adequately considered in an integrated manner.

## **WHAT TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS EMPLOY YOUR POSITION?**

Government and non-government organizations; public, private, and educational institutions. In the private sector, the employer would typically be a developer, a consulting firm, or a contractor.

## **WHAT GOALS ARE YOU WORKING TOWARD?**

Continuous improvements and efficiencies in delivering public service, and developing sustainable communities and neighbourhoods.

## **WHAT CHARACTERISTIC OR PERSONALITY TRAIT WOULD BE BEST FOR THIS TYPE OF CAREER?**

Having excellent social and interpersonal skills and an analytical mind are two key characteristics.



Ting Pan

# Advancing the Sustainability Agenda in Regional Planning

Regional planning and sustainability are inevitably intertwined but each has its own distinct focus and boundary. The broad goal of regional planning is to create a sustainable region by defining a vision and creating the overall policy framework. The Energy and Sustainability Division's function, in the context of regional planning in the Regional District of Nanaimo, zeros in on developing tools and mechanisms to enable energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and improve regional resiliency.

Several sustainability initiative examples, described below, are used to illustrate how the Energy and Sustainability Division supports three specific relevant regional planning goals in the Regional District of Nanaimo's Regional Growth Strategy:

1. Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption
2. Enhance Economic Resiliency
3. Enhance Cooperation Among Jurisdictions

PHOTO, ABOVE: The owners of a 19.5 kW rooftop photovoltaic system (the largest residential solar power system in the region) on a rural property hosting an open house during the annual Green Building Series.



## INITIATIVE #1: GREEN BUILDING INCENTIVE AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

### What is it?

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) started its green building outreach activities and incentive program in 2010 and 2011, respectively. The two components in many ways work hand in hand to raise awareness, build local capacity, and create incentives in order to drive actions on the ground. The main activity related to the outreach effort is the annual Green Building Series hosted in partnership with member municipalities. Events in the series include presentations, workshops, and open house tours covering the entire region. A major barrier to building “green” in the region, identified by many residents, is the extensive and time-consuming process required to search for locally available expertise and resources. The series aims to help overcome this barrier by focusing on connecting local professionals with residents and showcasing exemplary projects in the region.

The incentive program was created with the rural residential context in mind, where many residents live and work on large wooded lots with wells and septic systems. The suite of incentives rewards a wide range of actions including home energy assessments, installation of residential electric-vehicle charging stations, and high-performance new constructions. It also includes regionally tailored rebates to encourage woodstove exchanges, use of site-cut timber for building structures, wind power and other renewable energy generation, and large-capacity (over 1,000 imperial gallons) rainwater harvesting systems.

### How does it support regional planning goals?

In 2010, buildings accounted for 24% of the GHG emissions in the Nanaimo region. There are tremendous opportunities in this sector to realize significant energy and emissions reductions relatively quickly when compared to the longer-term process of creating more compact and complete communities.

Through the outreach activities, we are able to demonstrate to residents that it is entirely possible to create net-zero homes and improve existing homes to a high efficiency standard with current technologies and local expertise. The Green Building Series has inspired many locals to take actions, document their experiences, and pass on the knowledge to other interested residents. Through collaboration with experts in different fields, the Green Building Series touches on many aspects of climate preparedness that resonate with residents who live in mid-Vancouver Island, such as reliability of power supply, drinking water availability, flooding, food security, and fire hazards. It empowers residents to make changes to respond to those concerns at a site level.

The incentive program targets actions on the ground. For instance, wood burning is a popular heating choice in the rural area and contributes 16% of residential GHG emissions in the region. Between 2011 and 2014, the incentive program saw 392 old woodstoves changed out for high-efficiency heating appliances, reducing firewood consumption and improving air quality. Heating oil is another prevalent heating source and contributes 45% of residential GHG emissions—the largest source of residential energy emissions in the region. In 2015, the RDN will promote an incentive to convert oil furnaces to electric heat pumps as part of the program. If successful, the conversions will drive the biggest reduction in residential GHG emissions.

The incentive program also has a very direct economic benefit for businesses and tradespeople in the region. Each incentive the RDN provides reflects a larger (often much larger) investment made by the recipient. Woodstove exchange rebates, on average, translate to an investment 10 times the rebate amount. The ratio is much higher for home energy assessment and renewable energy rebates. Since most of the home energy improvement services and products are purchased locally, the incentive program is helping to support the local economy.

*Ting Pan, LEED AP BD+C*  
Sustainability Coordinator, Regional District of Nanaimo

Ting Pan is a sustainability specialist with over 10 years' experience in the green building and sustainable community planning field in Canada and China. Her background in private sector consulting, public policy development, and non-profit initiatives complements her technical expertise with LEED project management, integrated design facilitation, energy management, and community-based social marketing. In her current role with the Regional District of Nanaimo she develops and manages the green building program, facilitates corporate energy initiatives, guides policy development, and undertakes projects in partnerships with government agencies and community organizations. She holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in resource management and environmental studies.







Cindy and Bill McCaugherty

A house made with earthen materials and local labour on Gabriola Island showcased in the annual Green Building Series. The owners rely heavily on solar energy for hot water, a 2.5 kW photovoltaic system for power generation, and a 3,500-gallon rainwater system for on-site water use.

## INITIATIVE #2: REAL ESTATE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT

### What is it?

The Real Estate Energy Efficiency Project (REEP) is a joint initiative among the RDN, the City of Nanaimo, and the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, funded by BC Hydro Power Smart and the Real Estate Foundation of BC. The project provides a customized energy efficiency resource package and training to licensed realtors. Since realtors are in a unique position to help raise awareness about home energy efficiency to buyers and sellers of existing homes, the project helps them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to explain the benefits of an energy assessment, identify energy efficiency features of a home, demonstrate financial and health benefits of recommended upgrades, and provide relevant information and tools to their clients.

The project targets the early adopters in the realtor community in the Nanaimo region and aims to train 20% of active realtors in the region—approximately 60 realtors. Since the project launch in May 2014, 42 realtors from various real estate companies were trained and became the pioneering force to bring energy efficiency dialogue to their everyday business. Collectively they made 56 home energy assessment referrals within six months of the training. An additional 20 realtors will participate in the project in the spring of 2015.

### How does it support regional planning goals?

Aging building stock is one area that holds great potential for energy and GHG emissions reduction but proves to be challenging for local governments to influence. Unlike new

buildings, which require building permits from local authorities (thereby providing opportunities for policy interventions), the majority of existing buildings do not interface with local governments unless major changes to them are proposed.

The thinking behind engaging real estate professionals starts with the recognition that they play a unique and critical role in assessing properties and influencing buyers' and sellers' decisions, and the fact that collectively they are involved with a large quantity of existing buildings over time. Having them equipped with the knowledge in energy efficiency could potentially help a home's energy features gain value in the real estate market. It could also encourage efficiency upgrades, either in readying a house for a speedier sale or realizing long-term savings and comfort after their clients make a purchase. In using this knowledge to gain a competitive edge, realtors have the ability to transform the real estate market into one where energy efficiency is valued, driving improvements in order to capture that value and generating significant energy savings and economic benefits in the region.

An important aspect of this initiative is to make it driven by the real estate community's needs while being supported by a team of local governments, as opposed to the other way around. Similar attempts to engage real estate professionals in other communities have previously met with resistance because such attempts are seen to be obstructive to realtors' everyday business activities. The project team learned from those experiences that the only effective way to engage realtors in the energy conversation is to demonstrate the benefits to their businesses. We are making this possible through extensive consultation with partners and leaders in the local real estate





A group of realtors learning about the blower door test and basement insulation during an energy efficiency training session held in a real home.

community and close collaboration between the RDN and the City of Nanaimo.

### INITIATIVE #3: GREEN BYLAW AMENDMENTS

#### What is it?

In 2014, RDN staff reviewed the land use bylaws and regulations to identify potential barriers to green building features, systems, and technologies, and subsequently proposed changes to two sets of zoning bylaws that apply to the RDN's electoral areas. The RDN Board adopted the amendments in February 2015.

The changes focus on removing potential barriers to passive design strategies, onsite renewable energy production and rainwater harvesting system installations. More specifically, the definition was revised to exclude wall thickness and overhangs. This change will allow greater levels of insulation and large overhangs to provide solar shading without restricting livable floor area. Rooftop solar energy systems are now permitted to exceed maximum height, which could have been a limiting factor to retrofitting an existing building with such systems. Wind turbines are clearly defined and given specific height and setback allowance. In addition, the RDN Board policy that guides decisions on development variance permits has been updated to include considerations in support of green building systems.

#### How does it support regional planning goals?

The amendments support the use of passive design strategies, which are often the most effective way to reduce building energy demand. The low energy demand of a building will help to achieve net-zero consumption with smaller (and therefore more affordable) renewable energy systems. Having buildings that require less resources to operate and generate renewable energy onsite is a great strategy to build resilience against disruptive weather events and the rise of energy costs for local residents.

It comes as no surprise that there was a general lack of clarity on how green building features and systems should be treated in previous land use regulations since they were created before energy and climate change entered public discussions. For example, mechanical devices “necessary for the operation of a building” technically can be excluded from height restrictions. But does a rooftop solar system or micro wind turbine retrofitted to an existing building fit in this definition and therefore is allowed to exceed the height limit? Different readers may have different interpretations. The lack of clarity and specificity could create confusion and prolong the approval process. Practitioners and homeowners interviewed cite the difficulty and time it takes to get official approvals as major discouraging factors.

By addressing the lack of clarity in land use regulations, installers and homeowners gain certainty and confidence in moving forward with incorporating green building features and technologies. Creating a regulatory environment that is consistent with regional priorities is also an important way to attract “green” businesses that will provide services and establish themselves in the region.

Since many local governments have or are in the process of considering similar changes, the amendments marked an important step towards a “new normal” and set an example for adjacent jurisdictions.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

The examples represent the Energy and Sustainability Division's policy, program, and project developments that aim to catalyze changes on the ground. While regional planning is largely focused on setting policy frameworks, these initiatives are meant to turn policies to tangible and practical actions. In the process of carrying out these initiatives, the organization has also increased its staff capacity and strengthened its relationships with key stakeholders in the community in achieving regional sustainability goals.



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**Theodore Chuang**  
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## *Wayne Braid, RI*

**Chief Executive Officer, The Society of Notaries Public of BC, and Executive Officer, The Notary Foundation of BC**

Born in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and raised in Kitimat, BC, Wayne worked early in his career for a group that owned insurance and real estate offices, travel agencies, movie theatres, and golf courses in and around Terrace, BC. His first job, however, was working in a grocery store where he did everything from stocking shelves to running the checkout register. Wayne reveals that “it was a great job where you were quickly taught that to survive you needed to have a strong work ethic, and that the public was sometimes quite demanding but you needed to get the job done!”

Fast forward to January 1, 2001, when Wayne was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of The Society of Notaries Public of BC. He is only the sixth individual to hold that position in the society’s long history. It is Wayne’s responsibility to see that the membership of The Society complies with its stringent Rules and Code of Ethics. He also directs the BC Notaries’ Errors and Omissions insurance program and oversees the in-house legal counsel and the retention and management of the outside legal counsel. Wayne finds his work “indepth, demanding, and very rewarding.”

Pictured with daughter Ambur (top right), a professional opera singer, Wayne suspects that a love for music runs in families, though he admits that his trumpet prowess hardly compares to his daughter’s talent. Parenting six terrific kids together with wife Laurie Salvador (right) and being a grandfather to 11 grandkids is Wayne’s most-prized personal achievement. “I believe the best thing we can leave behind is kids who are productive contributors to our communities,” he says.

Wayne’s desire to be involved in the community and to make a difference in the lives of others has led him to volunteer. During his time as an elected School Trustee he was able to interact with other parents, with students of all ages,



and with all levels of government to support education in the community. He plans to do more. “When I leave this profession,” Wayne reveals, “I hope to contribute my skills and time to a local community-help program of some kind.” At home in Sidney by the Sea, Wayne imagines the perfect day off as a day travelling in Italy with Laurie, or (as a distant second choice) a day on the golf course with friends. “I am very fortunate to have a loving and supportive wife who encourages my professional life and my personal life,” says Wayne. “Maturing and growing together is an awesome adventure.”



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*Input* is published three times a year by the Real Estate Institute of BC, a non-profit association. The Institute's members, officers, and staff do not accept responsibility for the statements or opinions expressed in *Input* and publication does not necessarily constitute endorsement.



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Editing and design:  
Uncover Editorial + Design

Printing: Initial Print & Copy Center

Editorial + Design  
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