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# A Guide to Green Choices:

Ideas & Practical Advice for Land Use Decisions  
in British Columbia Communities

Ministry of Community Development



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

The Best Place on Earth

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## INTRODUCTION

As British Columbians, we value a strong and growing economy together with our province's unique array of ecosystems, natural beauty, and livable and diverse communities. Each of our respective communities is working to apply these values in its own setting.

Our local governments have already made many positive choices in fostering green communities; and they want to do even more. As their partner in this goal, the Ministry of Community Development (MCD) has developed *A Guide to Green Choices* to provide practical advice and ideas for green communities in making land use decisions. The guide is meant to assist communities of all types: large, small, rural, resort-based, urban, and suburban. It is designed to help maximize both creativity and adaptability to varied scales, specific contexts, and changing on-the-ground conditions. This is particularly important when working with local communities, where each have their own settings, histories, needs, and values—and of course their own unique visions for the future. For this reason, *A Guide to Green Choices* is intended to be a living document. It will be revised over time to address ongoing changes in community needs, and to respond to suggestions from local government.

What will it look like when we arrive? This 'green' destination or vision will mean a healthier natural environment, healthier communities, and healthier citizens, and lead to:

- > Public spaces in all communities embraced by urban forests, and well-connected with safe cycling and walking access to all parts of the community;
- > Sustainable, compact rural and urban communities, with a range of options for different household types and sizes;
- > Affordable housing choices;
- > More opportunities for residents of all communities to comfortably age in place;
- > A fitter population;
- > A choice of transportation options serving all trips, needs and incomes;
- > Diverse and vibrant local economies;
- > Air quality improved by 50 percent over 2008 levels, and lowered rates of asthma in the population;
- > Lower greenhouse gas emissions;
- > Plenty of choices for residents to buy attractive and varied locally-produced foods; and
- > Reduced energy and water consumption.

## INTRODUCTION

The vision depends on many players, strong leadership, and a willingness to face challenges en route. It needs new approaches, forward thinking and long-term commitment. It will continue to rely on timely decision-making by all parties.

A key theme in *A Guide to Green Choices* is the notion of integration. It stems from a belief that the solid efforts already being made could be even stronger if they work together in the right direction — not at cross-purposes.

This document is expected to work in tandem with many other programs and projects already underway. These include initiatives such as Live Water Smart (see [www.livingwatersmart.ca](http://www.livingwatersmart.ca)) and the BC Climate Action Plan ([www.livesmartbc.ca/plan/index.html](http://www.livesmartbc.ca/plan/index.html)). Also, many of the ideas proposed in this guide are eligible for funding through various provincial government programs.

For example, Towns for Tomorrow allocates a total of \$21 million for capital investments in towns of 5,000 or less and in the Central Coast Regional District. Eligible projects are ones that enhance community infrastructure and create legacies for the future, including: water quality and energy improvements; enhanced protective and emergency infrastructure services; and the development of recreation, tourism or cultural amenities with long-term benefits for local citizens. (For more information, see web site: <http://www.townsfortomorrow.gov.bc.ca/>)

The LocalMotion program provides \$40 million in funding assistance for capital projects that make communities greener, healthier and more active and accessible places in which to live. This program provides extra resources for projects that encourage people to get out and be more active, support a reduction in car dependency and associated greenhouse gas emissions, and meet the mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

Projects funded through this program include capital projects that build bike paths, walkways and greenways, and build seniors-friendly and disability-friendly communities. LocalMotion funds are also available for projects that support community playgrounds and children's parks activities. (For more information, see web site: <http://www.localmotion.gov.bc.ca>)

The Green City Awards program profiles BC's leading-edge communities. It rewards municipalities based on population and includes two rewards for regional districts. In addition to these categories, a 2008 Green City Partnership Award will be given to both a local government and non-government partner whose collaboration has led to the creation of

## INTRODUCTION

a leading edge development, breaking new ground in the practice of innovation and urban sustainability. (For more information, see web site: <http://www.greencityawards.gov.bc.ca/>)

Through the Canada-BC-UBCM Agreement on the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenues (Gas Tax Fund) over \$1.635 billion in federal gas tax revenues will be available during a nine year period to BC for projects that foster environmental sustainability. This will be administered through three delivery mechanisms: a Community Works Fund; a Strategic Priorities Fund; and an Innovations Fund. (For more information and application forms, see web site: <http://www.civicnet.bc.ca/siteengine/ActivePage.asp?PageID=294&bhcp=1>)

In addition to funding programs, *A Guide to Green Choices* will be linked with the BC Climate Action Tool Kit accessible at [www.toolkit.bc.ca](http://www.toolkit.bc.ca). Eventually it will be joined by other new resources.

For example, monitoring and modelling will play a key role in fostering green choices, ensuring greater awareness of the true consequences of our actions today, and more effectively focusing efforts and resources on results. There is also a related need to reward risk-taking and decisions which further the vision. The government's commitment to ensuring fast-tracking for high performance green development is another example. Similarly, the Provincial Transit Plan is making transit investment contingent upon communities providing supportive zoning.

In concert, these pieces will help local governments with both new and ongoing initiatives. The basic premises of the Green Communities vision include: the wise use of our energy and water resources; the right development in the right place at the right time; economic vitality; brownfield redevelopment; food security; encouraging compact complete communities; social inclusion; and rewarding development that creates more affordable housing, new green spaces and more walkable, people-friendly neighbourhoods.

In working together, we will ensure that future generations—our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren—enjoy the same quality of life we do, or better.

*The Ministry of Community Development wishes to thank the group of planning staff from across the province who informally reviewed a preliminary version of this document and provided helpful comments.*

## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

*A Guide to Green Choices* is structured as follows:

First, it aims to help BC local governments face **seven major issues** in their work to advise green land use decisions. And it explains **why** each of the seven issues must be addressed

Second, **an objective** is proposed for communities to consider in addressing each of the seven issues.

More detailed suggestions to help fulfill the objective are in the section titled **Steps for Getting There**.

### ISSUE ONE A NEED FOR GREEN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Many BC communities have been growing rapidly, which can disrupt existing settlement patterns. Fostering green settlement areas can be a challenge when new low density developments are built at the edge of town, far from the complete range of needed jobs and services and extending the settlement's overall ecological footprint. These developments often respond to people's desire for space, tranquility and new housing. To stem climate change and enhance environmental sustainability, BC communities will need to consider creative ways of minimizing the spread of settled areas in order to avoid:

- > Consuming significant environmental resources including native species and ecosystems, trees and other plants which act as a carbon sink, waterways, and other sensitive features;
- > Removing forests that provide groundwater recharge and filtering, may harm water quality and quantity, and affect human and natural habitats;
- > Eroding or pressuring a community's productive farmland;
- > Lengthening commutes between homes, workplaces, shopping and recreation;
- > Reducing options for walking, cycling and transit which have impacts for both air quality and personal health;
- > Making it harder for seniors to cope if there are few options for living in compact settlements close to services; and
- > Paying the cost of extending roads, fire protection, sewer and water to areas with population densities that are too small to support these services; and
- > Increasing housing costs as well and residential and commercial tax rates arising from uneconomical servicing.

#### OBJECTIVE ONE

In their plans and through their development approvals, local governments seeking to fulfill the green communities vision are working to provide for the right development, in the right place, and at the right time.

1.1

### ISSUE ONE A NEED FOR GREEN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

#### STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

##### In general the right development will:

- > Contribute to the community's overall goals, and integrate with other initiatives;
- > Respect the history, and enhance the character and landscape, of the surrounding neighbourhood;
- > Respond appropriately to the physical constraints of its site (e.g. flood risks and steep slopes);
- > Maximize opportunities to preserve and augment mature vegetation on-site;
- > Maximize opportunities to preserve native species and the ecological character of local settings;
- > Maximize opportunities for energy-efficient building design;
- > Use developable land efficiently (including minimizing total surface area required for parking through shared parking facilities and reduced requirements where transit service is readily available);
- > Promote green development;
- > Be both durable and adaptable over the longer term (enabling building re-use);
- > Provide barrier-free access to people with disabilities;
- > Enhance the quality of the neighbourhood's pedestrian and cycling environment, through appropriate building massing, pedestrian-friendly design on-site, and by upgrading and linking with existing pedestrian and cycling connections nearby;
- > Generally add to, rather than detract from, the sense of community cohesion; and
- > Be cost-effective and amenable to private sector participation.



The right development.

*For residential projects in communities of all sizes, the right development will also enhance the range of dwelling types and tenure options available in a neighbourhood.*

*For single family homes, smaller lot sizes are encouraged and densification is promoted. Further guidance will be provided in a later guide to address the different needs which exist in different communities.*

*For retail and entertainment-oriented projects like restaurants and theatres, the right development is also designed to complement and strengthen the broader commercial area surrounding it.*

*For resorts, the right development will be at densities sufficient to support convenient transit and other services and infrastructure. It will also have a balance of land uses and patterns that support social cohesion.*

1.2

## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

Third, for each issue and related objective, additional resources, tools and examples are suggested to help communities fulfill the green vision. This section, called **Ideas**, recognizes that communities will make the choices that make the most sense locally. The ideas proposed are a small fraction of the many choices out there to help communities fulfill a particular objective.

ISSUE ONE | A NEED FOR GREEN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

**IDEAS**

**Efficient Use of Developable Land**

Cluster developments can help provide for compact, walkable communities while still preserving large tracts of green open space which can be used for both amenity purposes and for the preservation of sensitive ecosystems. In the diagram on the right, both layouts contain the same number of units and contain the same total number of acres. The example on the top is a conventional layout, while the example on the bottom provides for a more clustered development pattern, providing for more retention of green and natural areas. The type of pattern can be applied in a range of settings, and may be particularly appropriate for rural communities as they work towards more compact settlement patterns.

Several tools and approaches could help achieve this type of clustered development. One option would be to use comprehensive development zoning. This concept is explained and illustrated in a British Columbia context by the West Coast Environmental Law Association at the following web site: <http://www.wcel.org/issue/action/development%20mediawiki%20Zoning.htm>. Covenants and dedications can also be used, obtained through the rezoning process.

**Rural Duplexes**

This project is a good example of the right kind of development in several ways. First, it targets low income residents so its builders (the Community Housing Partners Corporation of Virginia) had to make it cost effective. Second, it used land efficiently through the duplex form which allowed higher densities. Third, construction involved many sustainable site planning practices, including a sediment control plan to retain topsoil, and a pervious paving system in almost 50 percent of the paved areas.

**Integrated Carbon-Neutral Building Design**

Bed Zed (Beddington Zero Energy Development) is an 85-unit, carbon-neutral mixed residential and office complex in London, England. The development is carbon neutral because it uses effective but relatively low-tech features, including combined heat and power generation, reduced embodied energy in materials, effective insulation, design to maximize solar gain, and a green transportation plan.

Finally, a section called **Putting it All Together** provides some practical advice for selected scenarios in ways that could help achieve the objective.

ISSUE ONE | A NEED FOR GREEN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**  
SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH PRACTICAL ADVICE

**Scenario One: Large Format Stores and Green Settlement Patterns**

A suburban municipality wants to add several new large format stores. How can this happen in ways that meet Objective One and its guidelines?

**Practical Advice**

Not all large format retail developments provide the right development, at the right place and the right time. But several BC communities now ask for specific designs (right development) that help fulfill part of Objective #1. There are also communities which have gone one better by ensuring the right places for such stores.

In Vancouver, a decision has been made that these stores do not belong in its Kinsilano neighbourhood, and so a size limit of 10,000 sqft has been placed on all stores which are not grocery stores or pharmacies. The limit does not prevent a traditionally large format retailer from building a boutique version of its store there, in ways that would respect the existing neighbourhood's pedestrian-friendly character. Vancouver has also approved several recent developments combining large format retail with residential, including the London Drugs at Broadway & Arbutus; a Future Shop on Broadway near Burrard; and a Canadian Tire Store combined with Best Buy Between 6th and 7th Avenues near Cambie Street with shared underground and rooftop parking.

The Home Depot Store on land owned by the Squamish First Nation in West Vancouver has been designed to fit into a pedestrian-friendly infill setting next to a 40 year old shopping mall. This has produced a green infill development which has thus reduced the need to build on bare land at the edge of town. The infill location of the mall also benefits from good transit access, giving plenty of sustainable travel choices. The latter are especially beneficial to store employees, but may also be feasible for some customers intending to buy smaller items. This achieves all aspects of the right development, right place and right time.



ISSUE ONE

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# A Need for Green Settlement Patterns



**WHY IT MATTERS**

Many BC communities have been growing rapidly, which can disrupt existing settlement patterns. Fostering green settlement areas can be a challenge when new low density developments are built at the edge of town, far from the complete range of needed jobs and services and extending the settlement's overall ecological footprint. These developments often respond to people's desire for space, tranquility and new housing. To stem climate change and enhance environmental sustainability, BC communities will need to consider creative ways of minimizing the spread of settled areas in order to avoid:

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## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

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**For retail and entertainment-oriented projects** like restaurants and theatres, the right development is also designed to complement and strengthen the broader commercial area surrounding it.

**For resorts**, the right development will be at densities sufficient to support convenient transit and other services and infrastructure. It will also have a balance of land uses and patterns that support social cohesion.

## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE



The right place.



The right time.

### In general the right development in the right place will:

- > Support a local government's objectives and policies for settlement containment, and reduce sprawl and single-occupant vehicle dependence;
- > Contribute positively towards greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set by the local government;
- > Optimize the use of previously developed land and vacant or under used buildings to the greatest extent possible;
- > Minimize new pressures on scarce and valued natural or heritage resources;
- > Be located near convenient transit (within direct, safe walking distance), with any large developments, including transit-friendly and walkable designs; and
- > Enhance neighbourhood vitality by expanding the range of uses within the immediately surrounding area, while minimizing overt land use conflicts.

### A development is occurring at the right time when:

- > Required expansion of hard infrastructure (roads, utilities, sewer and water) next to the proposed site has already occurred;
- > Appropriate community and retail services exist within convenient pedestrian and cycling access of the site exist, or will be provided in tandem with the proposed development; and
- > The strength and rationale for sustainable infrastructure choices exist.

**For new residential development,** the right place is also located close to:

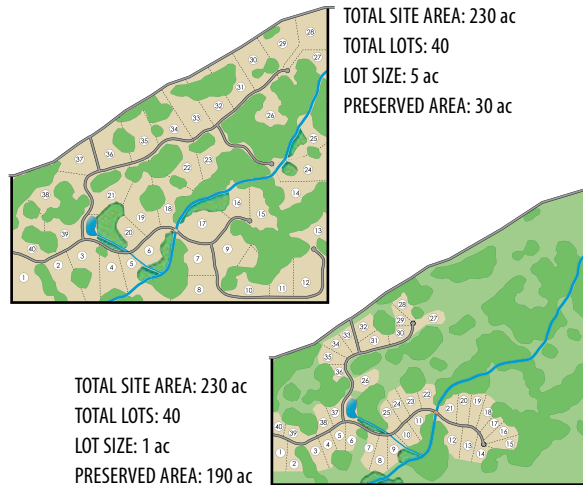
- > Park space or another publicly-accessible open space amenity;
- > Schools (except for purpose-built seniors' housing);
- > Convenience retail to support daily needs; and
- > Other community services such as recreation, places of worship, and health care facilities.

**For new retail and entertainment like restaurants and theatres,** the right place is often located in an established commercial precinct, particularly in cases where the specific proposal is likely to attract a large number of people. Proximity to existing or planned new residential areas is also desirable; but care must be taken to avoid potential incompatibilities.

**For new office-related and light industrial development,** further guidance on the right place will be provided in a separate set of guidelines for compact, complete communities, and will specifically address the importance of protecting industrial land.

**For resort development,** all season development is encouraged. Most residential units are located within a convenient walk of shopping, recreation, and other amenities. Lockoff units and workers housing are also encouraged.

## IDEAS



### Efficient Use of Developable Land

Cluster developments can help provide for compact, walkable communities while still preserving large tracts of green open space which can be used for both amenity purposes and for the preservation of sensitive ecosystems. In the diagram to the right, both layouts contain the same number of units and contain the same total number of acres. The example on the top is a conventional layout, while the example on the bottom provides for a more clustered development pattern, providing for more retention of green and natural areas. This type of pattern can be applied in a range of settings, and may be particularly appropriate for rural communities as they work towards more compact settlement patterns.

Several tools and approaches could help achieve this type of clustered development. One option would be to use comprehensive development zoning. This concept is explained and illustrated in a British Columbia context by the West Coast Environmental Law Association at the following web site: <http://www.wcel.org/issues/urban/sbg/part3/mixeduse/CD-Zoning.htm>. Covenants and dedications can also be used, obtained through the rezoning process.



### Rural Duplexes

This project is a good example of the right kind of development in several ways. First, it targets low income residents so its builders (the Community Housing Partners Corporation of Virginia) had to make it cost-effective. Second, it used land efficiently through the duplex form which allowed higher densities. Third, construction involved many sustainable site planning practices, including a sediment control plan to retain topsoil, and a pervious paving system in almost 50 percent of the paved areas.



### Integrated Carbon-Neutral Building Design

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## IDEAS



### Energy-Saving, Affordable, Rural Homes

*This rural subdivision combines land-conserving multiple dwellings with single family homes, all aimed at buyers and renters whose incomes are below 80 percent of area median income. In addition to being affordable, the development provides energy conserving solar panels as well as proper site orientation for passive solar gain.*

*For more information on this project, built by the Umpqua Community Development Corporation, go to [www.ruralhome.org/manager/uploads/GreenBuildingReport.pdf](http://www.ruralhome.org/manager/uploads/GreenBuildingReport.pdf)*

*For other examples of green buildings in rural areas, go to [www.dovetailinc.org/Dovetail-News040207.html](http://www.dovetailinc.org/Dovetail-News040207.html)*

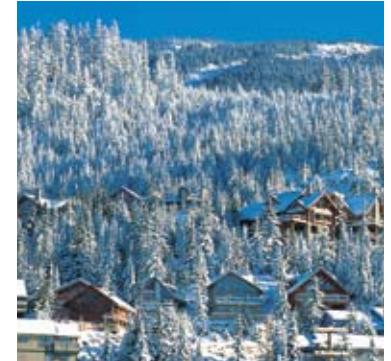


### Developments and Amenities that Respect Natural Features

*The City of Nanaimo has developed a detailed set of steep slope guidelines and steep slope zoning designations which encourage housing development on slopes to cluster in appropriate portions of the site. This can include provisions for reduced setbacks or zero lot line developments. It requires geotechnical and environmental assessments in conjunction with development approvals. While this approach was initially developed to reduce risk from potential slope instability, it also has significant potential for managing urban growth.*

*The guidelines can be found at: [http://www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/site\\_structure/development\\_services/planning\\_and\\_development/current\\_planning/steepslopedpguidelines.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/site_structure/development_services/planning_and_development/current_planning/steepslopedpguidelines.pdf)*

*Photo courtesy of the City of Nanaimo.*



*The Resort Municipality of Whistler has developed detailed policies and guidelines for respecting natural features in developing buildings as well as recreational trails. These guidelines are discussed in Chapters Five and Six of Whistler's overall Environmental Strategy. The full document can be accessed at: [www.Whistler.ca/images/stories/PDF/Admin/WES\\_Full\\_Document.pdf](http://www.Whistler.ca/images/stories/PDF/Admin/WES_Full_Document.pdf)*



## IDEAS



### Energy-Saving, Multi-Purpose Rural Community Facilities

*The Village of Pouce Coupe, BC, with a population of 785, recently completed a green multi-use building including community centre, school and library. This building makes use of solar power, and also provides for rainwater harvesting.*

*To learn more about planning for energy, check out the Community Energy Association. This agency, working in partnership with the Province of BC has resources to help local governments plan for maximum community energy efficiency. Visit their web site at: [www.community-energy.bc.ca/resources-introduction/heating-our-communities-renewable-energy-guide-for-local-governments-in-bc](http://www.community-energy.bc.ca/resources-introduction/heating-our-communities-renewable-energy-guide-for-local-governments-in-bc)*



### Buildings that Integrate with, and Support Their Contexts

*The Port of Nanaimo Convention Centre was designed to fit into an historic downtown streetscape, respecting its heritage (right development). The centre makes good use of land in an existing commercial node, while revitalizing it with a new economic activity (right place and time). Its design has also improved upon pedestrian linkages in the area, and benefits from access to transit reasonably close by, making it that much easier to get around without a car (right development, right place, right time)*

*Note the varied façade, rather than one long blank wall, for pedestrian visual interest, while also maintaining compatibility with facing buildings. Also note the wide sidewalks, attractive landscaping and benches to raise pedestrian comfort and reduce urban heat islands.*

*Photo courtesy of L. Tate.*



*The C2C Building on New Westminister's Columbia Street helped to provide new housing in a lagging downtown, close to existing rapid transit facilities, and re-using a 50 year old post office building that was no longer needed. This project was developed as part of a public-private partnership involving the City of New Westminister, and includes offices for the City's police force on the first two floors, with lofts above. Residential units went quickly at market prices.*

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**

SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE



*This store is designed to contribute to the pedestrian realm, including a coffee-shop at grade.*

*Photo courtesy of L. Tate.*



*A pleasant walk back to the car from the same store. Note the design of on-street parking which doesn't dominate the experience, and it's similarity to parking on a village's main street.*

*Photo courtesy of L. Tate.*

**Scenario One: Large Format Stores and Green Settlement Patterns**

A suburban municipality wants to add several new large format stores. How can this happen in ways that meet Objective One and its guidelines?

**Practical Advice**

Not all large format retail developments provide the right development, at the right place and the right time. But several BC communities now ask for specific designs (right development) that help fulfill part of Objective #1. There are also communities which have gone one better by ensuring the right places for such stores.

In Vancouver, a decision has been made that these stores do not belong in its Kitsilano neighbourhood, and so a size limit of 10,000 sq ft has been placed on all stores which are not grocery stores or pharmacies. The limit does not prevent a traditionally large format retailer from building a boutique version of its store there, in ways that would respect the existing neighbourhood's pedestrian-friendly character. Vancouver has also approved several recent developments combining large format retail with residential, including: the London Drugs at Broadway & Arbutus; a Future Shop on Broadway near Burrard; and a Canadian Tire Store combined with Best Buy Between 6th and 7th Avenues near Cambie Street with shared underground and rooftop parking.

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**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

In Burnaby, the Staples store on Kingsway has been designed in a two-storey format along a Main Street, with guidelines for a strong pedestrian orientation, provision of underground parking, and a location within walking distance of a rapid transit node (Metrotown Skytrain Station).

It can also be useful to truly consider the impact that a large format store may have on existing retail areas, and whether its arrival will create a major shift in the shopping patterns of a city. And, when moving to approve large format retail, such as a large format hardware, electronics, or household goods store, the local government could consider what will happen to the large format building in the event that the store shuts down or simply decides to move to a bigger location elsewhere. Departures of such stores can create big problems for retail areas. This is because it is often hard to find new store tenants for the empty structures; and when a large format store is left empty for months or years, it takes its toll on other shopping centre tenants and nearby stores. Guidelines and agreements put in place at the time of initial construction can prepare for this future re-use in ways that benefit the community. Examples of this can include:

- > Maximum size limits (to ensure that any potential future abandonment of a large format store creates a medium-sized, rather than a mega-sized problem);
- > Community impact studies prior to rezoning or issuing a development permit for a large format store, including plans for re-leasing, reusing or selling empty buildings; and
- > Reuse features in the design including additional entry points, more divided areas within buildings (New Rules Project Institute for Local Self-reliance, 2006). See: [www.newrules.org/retail/vacantbox.html](http://www.newrules.org/retail/vacantbox.html).

*To make things really “green”, the municipality in our scenario could consider encouraging a site design of the large format store which considers: opportunities for incorporation in a larger district heating and cooling system; reduced hard surfaces; cool roof technology (see [www.epa.gov/hiri/strategies/coolroofs.html](http://www.epa.gov/hiri/strategies/coolroofs.html)); and integrated rain water treatments; and rainwater reuse.*

*It could also secure additional transit facilities (e.g. shelters), and improved pedestrian and cycling connections between the site and other key destinations by taking advantage of recent amendments to the Local Government Act and the Community Charter which allow communities to take cash-in-lieu for required parking and to use those funds for new transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation.*



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario Two: Keeping Rural Settlements Compact**

A semi-rural community has several large parcels of land which were initially zoned 20 years ago for large lot single family residential development (e.g. 2 acre parcels). Unfortunately, these parcels are not close to the local community's existing commercial node, and while roads to the parcels do exist, they would need widening and upgrading. Now an out-of-town developer has bought many of these lots and wants to create a neighbourhood combining homes for young retirees and some of the higher paid workers employed in resource extraction activities nearby, as well as vacation properties for out-of-towners. How can the rural community respond to this proposal and still promote the right development, in the right place, at the right time?

**Practical Advice**

Greenfield developments which are outside a community's settlement nodes should generally be discouraged. That said, where zoned capacity to allow that development has existed for a long time, taking away development rights could be highly contentious. In some circumstances it may be warranted; in others, the costs may be too high. The community will need decide whether to rescind these rights, or maintain them. If the community chooses the latter course of action, the following suggestions may help.

The community could encourage the developer to build a mix of housing forms (single family, duplex and town housing), and to cluster these in a smaller portion of the proposed development site while protecting the remaining lands for a combination of recreational trails, parkland, community gardens, and preserved wildlife habitat. (See earlier cluster development diagram in **Ideas** section). To achieve this, the community may require the applicant to enter into covenants, and to rezone the property to a CD zone. As part of negotiations with the developer, the community might agree to provide higher densities.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

In exchange, it could require that the developer provide some commercial facilities, some community amenity space, and possibly a donated van or shuttle to the strata corporation or a car cooperative to enable residents to carpool for selected trips to the town's main commercial node.

In recognition of the likely increased greenhouse gas emissions created by a project like this, the rural community could also require that the development use a combination of technologies to ensure it will be carbon neutral—or at least closer to carbon neutral than a conventional development of similar scale would be.

The community could consider using a development permit area designation to provide for the development of green buildings; however, this designation is not designed to a site be applied after an application has already been made. Where communities are aware of greenfield sites outside main settlement nodes, with development capacity that they cannot easily down zone, they may wish to designate such sites as development permit areas to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Under this type of development permit area designation, development permits can be required for single family construction. To avoid making this process cumbersome, the community could also consider establishing streamlined processes for this type of development permit.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**

SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE



*This townhouse project in Surrey, Kew Gardens, includes 97 two-bedroom units. This affordably-priced complex includes community garden plots and a 10 minute walk from major shopping facilities.*

*Photo courtesy of L.Tate.*



*This new Fort Langley Development includes single family homes and duplexes blended on the same street. Garages are in back and accessed via a lane so that they don't dominate the street front. These attractive homes in a pedestrian-friendly setting are within an easy walk of the historic town centre and riverfront trails. Market interest in these units has been strong, with people lining up to purchase them before completion.*

*Photo courtesy of L. Tate.*

**Scenario Three: Building More On-the-Ground Support for Infill**

A region is experiencing growth pressures and wants to address these by encouraging infill to avoid sprawl. Unfortunately, the local development community seems reluctant to do infill housing, and is asking the region to open up new greenfield development sites that could create more reliance on long distance car trips in those areas. How can the local government keep development in the right place while responding to needs for new housing in the region?

**Practical Advice**

Infill development is an important strategy for keeping a community's settlement area compact. If a region is having difficulty promoting infill, one or more factors may be at play, and it will be important to do some research to find out which one it is.

Potential obstacles may include:

- > Community opposition, and fears about reduced property values;
- > Insufficient lands designated as eligible for infill;
- > Zoning for infill which is outdated or difficult to work with;
- > Onerous servicing and/or fee schedule requirements for relatively small projects where profit margins are low; and
- > Developer unfamiliarity with infill projects (in some instances some developers may lack the skills for complex land assemblies and rezoning approvals or the design concepts needed for successful infill that captures market interest).

So what might be done to address any of the above obstacles?

It is important to help the community understand and embrace the idea of infill. This helps to address zoning in a fairly straight-forward manner. The staff or a consultant can create appropriate zoning, or make revisions itself by referring

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

to any number of appropriate model bylaws that exist (These are eventually anticipated in the BC Climate Action Tool Kit. To access this web site go to [www.toolkit.bc.ca](http://www.toolkit.bc.ca)). Similarly, if servicing and fees are problematic, fees and requirements could be reviewed. While models and examples can be helpful, the community must still choose a solution that fits its own needs. There may also be concerns from a development community with little or no experience in addressing infill. This could be partly addressed through information sessions where developers with this experience are asked to speak. Another developer issue relating to fees and costs could be addressed by making use of new provisions in the *Local Government Act* which allow local governments to waive or reduce development cost charges for small lot developments and other developments designed to result in low greenhouse gas emissions.

Other issues in this scenario may need more than just technical solutions –they may need to be addressed with an appreciation of change management processes. For many communities, other steps may be needed for people to receive that change. Preparation work may focus around a major initiative, like the update of an existing Official Community Plan, or it can occur on an ad hoc basis with specific development applications. Behavioural psychology research suggests that people’s receptivity to change (including their willingness to hear new information about different housing forms and densities in their neighbourhood) will depend on whether they view a proposed change as an opportunity or a threat. Since people may be more inclined to perceive ad hoc applications as a threat, it is often helpful to begin conversations around infill with a more familiar planning exercise, like an Official Community Plan Review.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Ideas for Creating a Sense of Opportunity Around Infill Include:**

- > Linking potential infill developments to planned service upgrades, like new sidewalk and tree planting programs or park and trail development;
- > Helping people understand ways in which their lives and their own properties might improve in other ways as a result of infill e.g. opportunities for mortgage helpers like secondary suites or carriage houses on single family lots; better transit, etc.;
- > Requiring proponents of new developments to include drawings as part of their applications;
- > Considering community design charrettes to help people to become more comfortable with change. This is a technique used by the Smart Growth on the Ground Program—a partnership between the UBC Design Centre for Sustainability, the Real Estate Institute of BC, and Smart Growth BC. The program has done charrettes in Maple Ridge, Squamish, and Greater Oliver. For more information, visit the web site at: [www.sgog.bc.ca/content.asp?contentID=60#charette](http://www.sgog.bc.ca/content.asp?contentID=60#charette) .

Another popular tool many local governments have used to help with change management is the visual preferences survey, which can be done using both high tech and low tech methods. The tool provides participants with different examples of new housing forms, asking them to specify which one(s) they prefer, and to also indicate what they like and dislike about all of the examples.

Local governments can also create inventories of existing infill projects that have been successfully built and accepted by their own communities.

*Selected examples of communities using visual preference surveys include:*

- > *The City of New Westminster, which used this approach in developing its plan for the Queensborough neighbourhood (call the Planning Department at 604-527-4532 for more information);*
- > *Carroll County, Maryland, which used its survey results directly in the creation of a new zoning code (U.S. term for a zoning bylaw) ([www.carrollpathways.org/online/visual](http://www.carrollpathways.org/online/visual))*
- > *Halifax, Nova Scotia in planning for its Bedford Waterfront ([www.halifax.ca/visionHRM/BedfordWaterfront/VisualPreferenceSurvey.html](http://www.halifax.ca/visionHRM/BedfordWaterfront/VisualPreferenceSurvey.html))*
- > *Redmond, Washington in Phase Two planning work for its Overlake Neighbourhood, in anticipation of a new light rail transit connection between the neighbourhood, Redmond's downtown, and the adjacent city of Bellevue ([www.ci.redmond.wa.us/intheworks/Overlake/pdfs/cpappvisualpreference.pdf](http://www.ci.redmond.wa.us/intheworks/Overlake/pdfs/cpappvisualpreference.pdf))*
- > *Martha's Vineyard, survey for a comprehensive island plan ([www.mvcommission.org/doc.php/VPS%20-%20Report.pdf?id=565](http://www.mvcommission.org/doc.php/VPS%20-%20Report.pdf?id=565))*

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PRACTICAL ADVICE

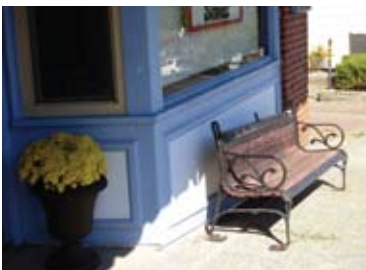
These can be used to encourage future developments which share their good qualities. Metro Vancouver has created one such inventory of ground-oriented, medium-density residential. For more information, contact Metro Vancouver's Policy and Planning Department at 604.432.6970. Related to this is a more recent, detailed study of opportunities for increasing densities in single family neighbourhoods in that region: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/housingdiversity/AffordableHousingWorkshopDocs/IncreasingHousingDensityinSingleDetachedNeig.pdf>

**Scenario Four: Compact Main Streets in Semi-Rural Communities**

A semi-rural community of 10,000 people is interested in promoting more compact development, and needs help knowing where to begin. It has a main street with City Hall, the police station, post office, and a medical clinic nearby. There are several vacant sites owned by different individuals which might be good places for new housing developments, but many were once used for local industry. Also, most of the shopping facilities are located in a mall at the edge of town. Finally, the community has many young seniors who, although healthy and active now, are wondering if they will need to move from their rural lots on the edge of town to a larger centre as their health declines.

**Practical Advice**

The main street will be a wonderful resource for the community in its efforts to promote the right development in the right place at the right time. Addressing the old industrial sites, or brownfields, will be an important step in working towards the compact development goal. Where there are multiple brownfields in a community, it is more cost-effective to develop solutions by looking at them all at the same time. This method also results in an approach and result that is consistent, hopefully meeting the needs of the community more fully.



Downtown Ladysmith, BC.  
Photos courtesy of L. Tate.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

At the same time, the synergies of dealing with multiple sites together can make difficult technical issues more manageable. Identifying the owners and use histories of these sites will help clarify areas of legal responsibility and the technical steps needed for clean up. The BC Brownfield Renewal Strategy is a comprehensive strategy with coordinated action across several ministries that will develop and implement new initiatives. For more information, refer to <http://www.brownfieldrenewal.gov.bc.ca>. Another useful resource which can help in the interim includes the following web site created by the Ontario government: <http://www.aboutremediation.com/Toolbox/default.asp>.

Whether on remediated brownfield sites, or other sites which have been assembled, opportunities also exist in this scenario for developing ground-oriented infill housing that may help retain an aging population close to at least some of the services that it needs. The rural duplex project shown earlier is one example of an appropriate development for this situation; another might be main street row housing or apartments.

If development interest in the Main Street has been slow in coming, the community might consider leading by example and entering into a partnership with one or more non-profit agencies and/or developers. In the District of Sechelt, a partnership with the Sunshine Coast Association for Community Living has resulted in a 24 unit assisted housing development for people with developmental disabilities, with the district's contribution comprising a \$10,000 grant and a \$34,500 discount on Development Cost Charges.

Once housing is built, it may be a while before new commercial services arrive to serve the neighbourhood. In the interim, there are techniques for enhancing access (See side panel). At the same time, efforts could be made to raise residential densities on and around the shopping mall site at the edge of town. The end result will be a community with two strong nodes, each with its own character and activities.

*Techniques for enhancing access and encouraging commercial services:*

- > Working with local farm groups to establish weekly farmers' markets in the downtown;
- > Holding a weekly flea market in downtown community space — perhaps opening City Hall for this purpose;
- > Partnering with the mall at the edge of town and/or local volunteer groups to provide scheduled shuttle bus service; and
- > Working with local retailers to provide cheap delivery and shopping services for seniors and others who might otherwise have difficulties accessing the mall.



Example of row housing that could fit in a main street setting.

Photo Courtesy of L. Tate.



ISSUE TWO

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# Valued Natural Features Need Protection



**WHY IT MATTERS**

BC regions and communities are home to many diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, forest range, lakes, rivers, inter-tidal zones, and grasslands. These ecosystems and the features they contain are valuable in their own right. They also provide important benefits. In addition to filtering pollutants, preventing erosion, and controlling crop pests and diseases, many natural areas provide habitat for diverse plant and animal species which have current value as well as future potential values which have yet to be discovered. Finally, they are important for species at risk.

Many of these ecosystems may come under pressure from human activities, including those related to land development for human settlement, but also from resource extraction and related activities. There are also many privately-owned parcels with development or resource extraction rights which are also home to threatened ecosystems like Coastal Douglas Fir and Interior Douglas Fir zones.

Protecting natural features and functions need not come at the expense of human activities, but does require special effort and attention. Some pressure on these resources will be reduced by promoting green settlement patterns. But additional measures which focus on specific natural features and functions are also needed.

**OBJECTIVE TWO**

Local governments furthering the green communities vision will work to protect valued natural resources of ecological and community significance.

## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

### Local governments are encouraged to:

- > Identify and provide mapped inventories of natural land and water resources;
- > Work in partnership with provincial and other agencies to find creative, collaborative strategies for preserving rare ecosystem species on private land;
- > Set priorities and develop corresponding strategies for protecting and enhancing those resources;
- > Enhance the quality of urban ecosystems by following best practices for managing urban forests, which will be developed shortly; and
- > Consider how climate adaptation might affect current environmental resources.



*Photos on this page courtesy of L. Tate.*

**IDEAS**

Up-to-date inventories and atlases are an important place to start in achieving this objective; and many BC communities have this step well in hand. Selected examples include:

Bella Vista  
 Central Okanagan  
 Central Okanagan south slopes  
 Coldstream-Vernon  
 Kelowna  
 Lake Country  
 Cowichan Valley Regional District  
 Sunshine Coast  
 Naramata  
 South Okanagan

Bowen Island and Gambier Island  
 Vernon  
 District of Saanich  
 Burnaby  
 Richmond  
 Coquitlam  
 Capital Regional District  
 City of Nanaimo  
 Nanaimo Regional District

Besides inventories and atlases, commonly used tools for protecting environmentally sensitive features include:

- > Prioritization strategies for acquiring and protecting highly valued natural sites;
- > Partnerships to acquire specific sites of value;
- > Development Permit Area designations for sites which will be developed, but where opportunities exist to maintain some key features; and
- > Groundwater protection, especially via integrated storm water management as well as through protective measures during resource extraction and farming activities (e.g. Objective Three).



*When natural areas are converted to human settlements, compatibility issues between humans and wildlife, especially bears, can increase. For more information on how to manage these conflicts, consult the following: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/bearsmart/bearsmintro.html>*

**IDEAS**

One particularly innovative inventory of fish-bearing habitat was completed for the Fraser River Estuary Management Program. It acknowledges that much of the Fraser River foreshore in Metro Vancouver is used for a range of activities, and classifies the foreshore according to features and functions: [http://www.bieapfrempp.org/frempp/managementplan/actionareas\\_intergration.html](http://www.bieapfrempp.org/frempp/managementplan/actionareas_intergration.html)

For more detail, see especially pp.30-40 of the following document:  
[http://www.bieapfrempp.org/frempp/pdf\\_files/Revised%20EMP%202003%20August%20.pdf](http://www.bieapfrempp.org/frempp/pdf_files/Revised%20EMP%202003%20August%20.pdf)

For more information on planning to protect environmentally sensitive lands, please consult the Ministry of the Environment publication series: *Develop With Care*, available for download at:  
[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop\\_with\\_care\\_intro](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop_with_care_intro).

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario One: Small Northern Community Wants to Maintain Green, Rural Character**

A small northern municipality has recently experienced some tourism development and is expecting more. The community wants to find ways of maintaining a green, rural character, which first attracted many of its residents and visitors to the area. This includes protecting some sensitive habitat lands.

**Practical Advice**

Protecting environmental resources helps to maintain them for their own sake, and can help enhance a community's appeal. Where a community is smaller and has fewer fiscal resources available for purchasing land, it will be particularly important to identify and set priorities. Developing a process for doing this can make an important difference. As a starting point, creating an inventory or atlas of environmentally sensitive areas is a crucial step. (You need to know what you have if you want to protect it.) But if the community is short on funds, often local colleges and universities have programs and students which can be made available to help the community in a cost-effective way.

Finally, communities should consult the resources listed in this Ministry of Environment publication: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/DWC%202006%20Sec%207%20App%20C%20Sources.pdf>

Another important way of stretching community resources for resource protection is in developing multi-purpose trails which can provide both a recreational amenity and habitat corridor links between larger, environmentally significant protected areas.

For communities experiencing recreational development pressures, particularly around lakeshores, development strategies tailored around the different needs,

*It is important to identify and work with partner organizations to help with acquisitions at an early stage in the process. The British Columbia Land Trust Alliance can help point you in the right direction: <http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/>*

*Good base information can also be found from the Ministry of the Environment's **BC Species & Ecosystems Explorer**, which helps users locate specific ecosystems of species within their communities. The web site for this resource is [www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/toolintro.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/toolintro.html). Mapping resources are also available. For more information, contact the BC Conservation Data Centre at 250.356.0928.*

*Trails are also often amenable to sponsorship and sweat-equity from various partnership organizations. For an example of this, visit the web site for Ucluelet's Wild Pacific trail at: <http://www.longbeachmaps.com/wildtrail.html>.*

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

uses and features of those lakes will be useful. One example includes the Thompson Nicola Regional District's *Lakeshore Development Guidelines* (for more information visit the TNRD web site at: <http://tnrd.fileprosite.com/contentengine/launch.asp?ID=96>). Another example is the Cariboo Regional District's *Shoreland Management Policy* at: <http://www.cariboord.bc.ca/Services/Planning/ShorelandManagement.aspx>

Where land acquisition is too costly to allow the purchase of all priority environmentally sensitive sites, resource constraints can be helped by integrating the preservation of natural resources with other needed community amenities, such as storm water management facilities. (See Ideas under Objective #3).

Finally, the community may also wish to consider looking at adapting its development review process to streamline how it uses information and stakeholder feedback on development permit applications involving environmentally sensitive areas, where zoning capacity already exists to build upon a given site. The faster and more efficient the process, the more amenable the developer is likely to be to making site planning adjustments that enhance the retention of key natural features on private property.

The Creston Valley Wildlife area in the Kootenays is an example of solid partnership efforts in preserving over 7,000 hectares of wetland habitat. This partnership has included Ducks Unlimited, BC Hydro, Terasen Gas, the federal and provincial governments, the Town of Creston, and a large group of volunteers.



Photo is of the wildlife interpretation centre, obtained from the wildlife area web site. For more information on this partnership, visit: <http://www.crestonwildlife.ca/index.cfm>

ISSUE THREE

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# Settlements Must Be Integrated with Nature



**WHY IT MATTERS**

Besides reducing the impact of new development on land and vegetation, BC communities must also become more integrated with the natural world. There are many benefits to doing this including reducing ecosystem stresses caused by intense resource usage. This involves re-engineering key services to make them more compatible with natural systems and processes. Where this is done in ways that maintain or enhance vegetation in an area, carbon sequestration benefits can also occur. Of critical interest are more integrated approaches to:

- > Watershed planning and rain water management;
- > Heating and cooling systems;
- > Sewage treatment and disposal; and
- > The construction of road and pathway networks.

Traditional infrastructure provision models often relied on paving and culverting, with significant disturbance to natural hydrological systems. Today there is some recognition that more integrative approaches to infrastructure provision bring environmental benefits, as well as other community benefits such as reduced flooding, and reduced infrastructure and maintenance costs over the longer term.

Better integration with nature also requires a synergistic approach to community, site and building design and retrofitting. This includes prudent resource use which appreciates the inherent resource and energy consumption embodied in new construction and green field development.

**OBJECTIVE THREE**

The green communities vision promotes the integration of human settlements with nature through more cohesive approaches to services for buildings, sites and communities.



## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

### Local governments are encouraged to:

- > Develop or refine policies as needed in subdivision bylaws and other key documents to encourage integrated infrastructure planning;
- > Develop watershed plans, and use these to guide future development patterns;
- > Identify specific opportunities for larger scale community retrofits which take an integrated approach, based on areas with significant redevelopment and infill potential;
- > Recognize the role of vegetation in achieving energy- and water-saving benefits, by maximizing opportunities for retaining mature vegetation and planting new trees as their communities change over time;
- > Reduce overall loads on water, waste and energy systems;
- > Promote opportunities for providing renewable alternative energy in new developments, and integrating these with district heating and cooling systems;
- > Address GHG emissions associated with infrastructure provision, by considering the embodied energy used to produce and transport materials used in road and drainage construction (e.g. asphalt, concrete, etc);
- > Consider ways of clearly linking integrated infrastructure approaches with annual budgets, five year plans, and other capital works programs; and
- > Prioritize the reuse and renewal of existing buildings over new construction to the extent feasible. This should include promoting good quality design in new construction, to facilitate future reuse.



*Green roof on single family garage in Victoria.*

*Photo courtesy of L. Tate.*

**IDEAS****Integrated Rain Water and Water Management:**

Integrated rain water management and watershed-based planning can be achieved by using valuable natural systems and processes for accommodating rain events and handling rain water runoff in ways that reduce pressure on (and the costs of) man-made systems like culverts and pipes. For example, natural drainage channels can, like trails, also provide wildlife corridors between those green spaces which a community has chosen to preserve and protect. The key is integration.

Selected examples include:

- > The District of Central Saanich, which is developing an Integrated Storm Water Management Plan for three important watersheds in its boundaries. For more information, go to: [http://www.centralsaanich.ca/hall/Departments/Engineering\\_\\_Public\\_Works/Integrated\\_Stormwater\\_Management\\_Plan\\_\\_ISMP\\_\\_Study.htm](http://www.centralsaanich.ca/hall/Departments/Engineering__Public_Works/Integrated_Stormwater_Management_Plan__ISMP__Study.htm)
- > The Brunette Basin Watershed Plan:  
See <http://www.waterbucket.ca/gi/sites/wbcgi/documents/media/149.pdf>
- > Coquitlam's Northeast Coquitlam Official Community Plan, which sets a framework for the development of several new neighbourhoods, each planned after completion of a watershed plan, including integrated storm water management. (see <http://www.coquitlam.ca> and search for the Northeast Coquitlam Area Plan Summary. For full copy of the plan document go to: <http://www.coquitlam.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1904C962-BED5-4318-8277-83176789D6C4/66990/CWOCPNortheastCoquitlamAreaPlan.pdf>)



*These homes in Northeast Coquitlam are on small lots, but framed by a natural backdrop because they were planned and built after a watershed plan, including streamside protection, was completed.*

*Photo courtesy of the City of Coquitlam.*

*Information on integrated storm water management planning is available from the Ministry of the Environment: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/stormwater/guidebook/pdfs/chapter9.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/stormwater/guidebook/pdfs/chapter9.pdf)*

**IDEAS**

**Integrated Infrastructure Planning and Building Design:**

The Oliva building in Delta’s Tsawwassen Town Centre is a LEED certified, 48-unit mixed use project nearing completion. Built on an existing shopping centre site, in an existing node, the complex provides for energy and water conservation, including solar-assisted hot water heating and rain catchment for landscape irrigation. It also includes reused building materials. Finally, it fosters sustainable transportation use, both through its mixed use and proximity to existing shopping and services, as well as its donation of a vehicle to the local branch of the Cooperative Auto Network, located on-site at Oliva.

Victoria’s Dockside Green is a brownfield redevelopment project currently in process. The project partners created design guidelines for the site that take into account a “triple-bottom-line” approach (environmental, economic and social) and include the delivery of public amenities such as affordable housing, public open space and a sustainability centre.



*The Oliva building in Delta’s Tsawwassen Town Centre. Note the panels on rooftop for solar-assisted hot water heating.*

*Images courtesy of Century Group.*



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**

SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE



*The Capers building, developed by Harold Kalke, in Vancouver's Kitsilano District.*

*Photo courtesy of Nadia Carvalho.*



*Koo's Corner in Vancouver's Strathcona neighborhood.*

**Scenario: Opportunities for Integrated, Green Infrastructure**

A medium-sized community is considering an application to convert a former small car dealership site into a four-storey apartment complex. The application would require both new zoning and a change to the neighbourhood plan, which supports multi-family residential, but initially designated the site for townhouse densities. What ideas might the local government consider in its development negotiations to provide for a new settlement integrated with nature?

**Practical Advice**

Major changes in land use, particularly when they occur in the early stages of neighbourhood transition, are important opportunities for setting the tone for the future. Where there is interest in developing a fairly large site, even in an established neighbourhood, opportunities exist to introduce several green infrastructure elements together, such as district heating and cooling systems or geothermal heating; greywater re-use systems;

The Capers Building in Vancouver's Kitsilano neighbourhood was an infill project and has won many awards for its sustainable design features. The Koo's corner project (also in Vancouver) involved brownfield remediation and the reuse of an existing building which has provided for many sustainable design features, including greywater heat recovery, extensive reuse of building materials (see <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/upload/Koo-s-Corner-Vancouver-B-C.pdf>). Even though the community in this scenario is smaller than Vancouver, and may not have the same resources at its disposal, consulting these examples gives a sense of what might be possible.

*Good examples can also be found in smaller communities. For example, Dawson Creek recently acquired an old Post Office building, which it is planning to convert to a community arts centre. Not only is this project re-using an existing building, it is also being heated through a district heating and cooling system, and will include a green roof.*

ISSUE FOUR

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# Vital Communities Need Vital Economies



**WHY IT MATTERS**

A vital economic base supports individual households and taxes for needed community services and activities. In a healthy local economy, residents can stay in a community and keep important social support networks intact. Through property taxes, they can also pay for environmentally beneficial items like green spaces for parks and ecological preservation. Conversely, communities in severe economic crisis often undergo large scale departures --with fewer resources to support those staying behind.

Vital and diverse economies maintain community health when individual sectors are in flux. Good land use planning can also help to guide the highest and best use of resources. While economic vitality is important, achieving it is increasingly complex. The BC economy has been changing rapidly, and some communities may have difficulties keeping up with these changes. Critical adjustments have included activity losses (e.g. Mountain Pine Beetle and loss of forestry jobs). At the same time, new opportunities and threats have arisen from changes to the fundamental structure of work processes. These include outsourcing and corporate restructuring enabled by technological change. Expectations for future economic development—including how we accommodate it through land use planning—must adjust.

The location of economic activities also affects a region's abilities to lower GHG emissions in several respects. First, some economic activities will have more of a direct impact than others in terms of production processes. Secondly, their locations in relation to existing settlements and transit have impacts on commuting patterns and single occupant vehicle use. Finally, their location can affect goods movement and related fuel consumption. Communities will need to consider these factors when planning for economic activities.

**OBJECTIVE FOUR**

In their plans and development approvals, local governments are encouraged to work towards adaptive, inviting, and environmentally-responsible ways of addressing economic needs.

## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

**Local governments are urged to be adaptive, and to foster economic resilience by recognizing that:**

- > The land use planning process is the main vehicle for integrating economic and environmental considerations in a given community; and
- > Changing resource conditions, technologies and modes of production bring new opportunities, constraints, and conditions for community economic bases.

When planning to accommodate business activities, local governments are encouraged to balance economic activities serving local needs and those forming part of an export base of goods and services sold to businesses and people outside the city or region.

**Local governments are encouraged to create business-friendly climates through:**

- > Transparent, consistent, and fair regulations and fee schedules;
- > Streamlined and effective development approval procedures to reduce potential cost uncertainties;
- > Land use plans that reflect realistic and relevant future development expectations, and which acknowledge business needs for choice, flexibility, and competition;
- > Land use plans which provide reasonable certainty on appropriate locations and amounts of industrial, commercial, and other employment-related land uses; and
- > Following best practices for anticipating employment-generating land uses and fostering quality employment;

## **STEPS FOR GETTING THERE**

**Finally, steps to ensure local economies actively foster sustainable environments could include:**

- > Configuring employment nodes to maximize opportunities for commuting by walking, cycling, transit, and other alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle;
- > Following best practices for protecting industrial lands;
- > Examining new ways to gain economic value from local agricultural activities;
- > Fostering high levels of coordination and collaboration between various departments and agencies, particularly between activities relating to land use planning and economic development; and
- > Working in partnership with other agencies to encourage the development of businesses that cater to the green economy.



## IDEAS

### Strategies for Becoming Adaptive and Inviting

An up-to-date economic development strategy which is integrated with the community's land use planning work will be a critical tool for local governments seeking to fulfill Objective Four. Examples of communities of varied sizes with economic development strategies adopted or revised over the last five years are described below:



*Burnaby had success in attracting activities with high quality jobs, including technology-based businesses.*

*Photo courtesy of L. Tate.*

#### City of Burnaby

One helpful feature in Burnaby's strategy for other communities (regardless of their size), is its commitment to securing an agreed focus for the strategy. Before work on the strategy was launched, stakeholders asked themselves what they hoped to achieve as the highest priority, in order to ensure all their efforts would move the city in this direction. These choices included:

- > Increasing total employment;
- > Increasing employment opportunities aimed at residents;
- > Increasing the quality of local employment (higher salaries, more career opportunities);
- > Maintaining or increasing employment diversity (entry level versus mid-career; blue collar versus white collar); or
- > Increasing the commercial and industrial property tax base.

#### City of Kimberley

Kimberley's tourism plan is a concise example of how a smaller community sets up a structure for marketing itself as an all-season resort community. The strategy also recognizes the value of partnerships in achieving Kimberley's goals. To see more, visit: <http://www.city.kimberley.bc.ca/files/%7B597C1FCF-8343-4653-B075-F9A57B401461%7DKimberley%20Tourism%20Plan.pdf>



*Kimberley's Bavarian heritage makes it home to the world's largest cuckoo clock.*

*Burnaby's strategy also involved effective collaboration and coordination between a range of internal and external stakeholders.*

*To see the end result, go to:  
[http://www.city.burnaby.bc.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/EDS\\_-\\_Burnaby\\_EDS\\_20203336.pdf](http://www.city.burnaby.bc.ca/__shared/assets/EDS_-_Burnaby_EDS_20203336.pdf).*

## IDEAS **Strategies for Becoming Adaptive and Inviting**

The Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP):

The tourism research innovation project provides a wealth of ideas for communities seeking to boost their tourism potential. The project is a partnership between Vancouver Island University, Thompson Rivers University, the College of the Rockies, the University of Northern BC, the College of New Caledonia, Tourism BC, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, the Ministry of Economic Development, and BC Parks. The project is aimed at providing workable expertise for communities, through a combination of dialogue with successful communities and entrepreneurs, documentation of success stories, and building a cluster of expertise in rural tourism development in British Columbia by linking academic and non-academic partners. For more information on the project, and to view the case studies, visit the web site at: <http://trip-project.ca/resources.php?page=cs>.

### **Adapting to Difficult Circumstances**

Quesnel Economic Development Corporation:

Quesnel is one of several resource-based communities impacted by the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, and has taken a leadership role in charting a way forward that will maintain and enhance community of life –and a solid economic base to pay for needed services. To see a copy of the strategy, visit:

<http://www.quesnelcorp.com/PDF/Quesnel%20Prosperity%20%20Sustainability%20Business%20Plan%20Final%20Jan%2030%2008%20web.pdf>

### **Environmentally-Responsible Economic Development**

Discouraging the spread of employment activities is an important way of ensuring that a community's settlement area remains compact. Many communities have adopted explicit policies to promote employment activities in specific nodes,



*The Silvagro partnership in Quesnel is growing replacement trees.*

*Photo courtesy of [www.canadianbusiness.com](http://www.canadianbusiness.com)*

**IDEAS**

which can be more readily accessed by transit. Implementing these policies can be a challenge, and new efforts and strategies will be needed to ensure success. For a thoughtful discussion of the extent to which jobs are located in increasingly diffuse patterns, visit <http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/glaeserjobsprawl.pdf>

**Green Business**

Green businesses use or produce biodegradable, recyclable, and reusable products and materials. Recycling companies, wet cleaners, alternative fuel automobile manufacturers and dealers, compost construction companies, and nurseries are some examples of green businesses. Agencies like the New York State Environmental Economic Assistance Unit have explicit programs for attracting these activities. For more information visit the web site at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/businesses/eedau.shtml>

Farming can also be a type of green business, to the extent that it enables communities to lower their carbon footprints, by growing more local food and reducing food transport costs. The business significance of farming is recognized in the Comox Valley, where the number of farms has grown in recent years, and is supported by the local economic development agency. For more information, consult the Comox Valley Economic Development Society web site: <http://www.investcomoxvalley.com/keySectors/agrifood.htm>

## **IDEAS**      **Tax Exemptions for Revitalization**

The Community Charter provides all local governments with the ability to offer revitalization tax exemptions. The Ministry of Community Development has published a primer document for local governments on the revitalization tax exemption tool.

This tax exemption tool can help encourage brownfield redevelopment by allowing local governments to offer tax exemptions for up to 10 years on properties meeting certain criteria. For more detail, consult *Revitalization Tax Exemptions: A Primer on the Provisions in the Community Charter*. To access this document, go to:  
[http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd\\_govstructure/library/community\\_charter\\_revital\\_tax\\_exemptions.pdf](http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd_govstructure/library/community_charter_revital_tax_exemptions.pdf)

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario One: Growing Green Businesses**

A community would like to grow its commercial tax base and develop a green business sector in its local economy. What actions might it consider in beginning this process?

**Practical Advice**

A good starting point for developing a healthy economy is to identify what the community has to offer, to better target efforts to attract green businesses. This might involve a SWOT analysis — a study of the community’s particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they might appear to the green business sector. The Quesnel and Burnaby examples cited earlier under the *Ideas* section provide particularly good illustrations of this.

The analysis might also help identify potential implementation partners. For example, the presence of a college, university or technical institute may be a key strength that could be leveraged in ways that could attract and assist green businesses. While this may not seem like typical land use planning, openness to some initial dialogue with institutional partners, as well as the community’s economic development specialists may ultimately help clarify future land use needs and opportunities for green businesses. Conversely, if a weakness is the lack of skills and training among the local workforce, this will flag a need to work with educational institutions to address the issue.

Another important step is for all relevant stakeholders — both internal and external to City Hall — to gain a better awareness of the green economy and its different sub-fields. This might involve a consultant study, and could also be undertaken collaboratively by more than one local government. Within City Hall, the study should not just involve economic development staff but land use planning staff as well. This is important because often zoning and other



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

land use regulations may need adjusting or updating in order to allow some types of green businesses to operate. By involving both economic development and planning expertise early on, site selection issues may be less of a problem in future.

Once the local government better understands the types of green business it wants to attract (and is likely to be a good fit), the local government may consider developing appropriate marketing materials that spell out the community's distinct advantage for targeted green business types. Finally, the local government could consider how to better support the employment areas which it hopes to populate with green business, by ensuring efficient transit and transportation links. New employers may be less amenable to setting up shop in areas with heavy traffic congestion and poor transit.

**Scenario Two: Drive-Through Proposal and Downtown Revitalization**

One year ago, a city of 70,000 people completed a downtown revitalization plan. A large mall sits at the edge of the downtown; and the plan calls for future apartments and townhouses on portions of the mall site, for more vibrancy and a larger downtown customer base. So far there is no market interest in residential development for the site. But recently the mall owners applied to rezone a portion of the site to build a new restaurant franchise, complete with a drive-through. Some people in the community worry that this does not fit the vision, while others are eager for new tax revenues to fund other downtown upgrades. What ideas might help the community resolve its dilemma?

**Practical Advice**

Few communities are in a position to turn away tax revenues by refusing the application under these particular circumstances –especially when linked to development in a part of town that needs revitalization. An alternative is

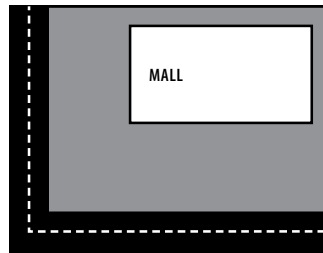


**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**  
SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

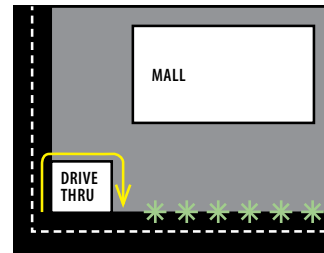
to take the long term view of the site, and work incrementally towards the vision. Design can help in this incremental process. The city could allow the drive-through at the downtown mall (rather than another location which might dilute the downtown’s drawing potential). And in doing so, it could ask that the restaurant be located on the corner of the site for a sense of street definition, which is more in keeping with its long-term downtown vision. (see graphic below). Buildings close to the street edge play an important role in giving pedestrians a more comfortable, less intimidating environment for travelling. Then as market interest picks up, residential units can be added gradually.

**Other ideas which could help the city achieve its downtown goals over the longer term include:**

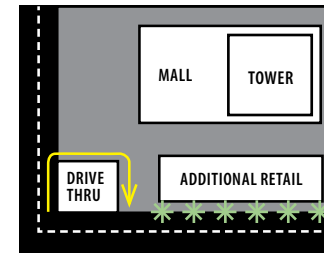
- > Encouraging downtown business associations to form and to come up with business-friendly approaches and suggestions for revitalization;
- > Examining whether current development fees, charges, and process requirements at City Hall are compatible with downtown goals (see also fast-tracking module); and
- > Conducting focus group sessions with the development community and other stakeholder groups to see what further actions could boost redevelopment interest in the downtown and help bring the plan to life.



Existing mall



New restaurant sited at corner can anchor street edge definition, which can fill in over time. The points where the drive-through lane crosses the sidewalk could be treated with pavers or other feature treatment as a visual cue for drivers and pedestrians to respect the crossing. And trees can be used to the east of the restaurant and drive through to create a temporary street edge.



With time, a tower could be added to the existing mall, and a new series of shops or townhouse units could be added to the right of the drive-through restaurant.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario Three: Community Vitality by Retaining Local Youth**

A rural community with about 5,000 residents, has many retirees but is afraid of losing its young people to larger towns outside of commuting distance. People initially came to the town for farming opportunities, but fewer young adults are interested in farming careers. What steps could the community take to remain healthy, and retain more of its younger population?

**Practical Advice**

Land use planning alone won't be enough to solve this problem. An integrated approach involving several perspectives, types of expertise, and resources will be critical. Because many young adults leave smaller towns in search of education and better work opportunities, one initiative that could help is to develop a strategy for providing those opportunities closer to home.

In Vauxhall, Alberta, a partnership between interested community stakeholders, the local high school, and Lethbridge Community College (from out of town) made it possible to deliver targeted training in carpentry skills, which would not have been possible otherwise in a town of 9,600 people.

On the land use side, the community could assess whether its existing housing stock is suited to meet the needs of its changing demographics and then respond with zoning changes if needed. For example, it may need to take steps to enable secondary suites and/or second dwelling units on individual parcels.

Other ideas which may help the community in our scenario relate to developing new industries, such as sustainable agriculture and small-scale food processing—one of the many steps that Quesnel is now taking (see link under preceding Ideas section).



Stewart, BC. Main street of the small town.

Photo downloaded from the Stewart-Hyder  
Chamber of Commerce web site:  
[www.stewart-hyder.com/](http://www.stewart-hyder.com/)



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario Four: Employment Patterns that Encourage Green Commutes**

A smaller city wants to ensure that its employment districts are concentrated in ways that help residents who wish to commute without a single occupant vehicle. The community already has a main street with some multifamily nearby and three other shopping centres surrounded by single family neighbourhoods. It also has an industrial area on the other side of the highway from single family neighbourhoods. How might the city work towards its goal over the longer term?

**Practical Advice**

These days, there are few cities that have a single employment node; and this creates significant challenges when there is a desire to provide efficient and economical transit service between the places where people work and where they live. There are several strategies which can help with this issue.

*The first idea* is to increase the opportunities for residential near existing places of work. For example, the shopping centres in the above scenario are workplaces for many of the town's residents; and by increasing permitted residential densities along arterials and other nearby streets near these centres, the community can enhance the likelihood (but not guarantee) that shopping centre workers may wish to move to homes nearby. At the same time, by adding people to these existing nodes, a larger market threshold is created for new businesses that might be interested in moving to the area. While larger than the city in this scenario, the City of Coquitlam has been taking this approach, adding much new residential capacity around its Coquitlam Centre Shopping Mall (see photo). As of 2005, Coquitlam's Town Centre area is home to 9,055 total jobs, and in 2001 it had nearly 9,000 residents.



Development in Coquitlam's City Centre.

Photo obtained from Metro Vancouver  
([www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org))

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

*The second idea* is to create incentives for jobs to locate in specific nodes. Doing this is more complex today. Fifty years ago, a typical workplace tended to be either a factory, a resource-extraction area out in the field, a retail shop, or a large office in a downtown. Today there is a wider array of types, including home-based businesses, telecommuting, small and medium-sized offices, call centres, smaller scale assembly plants, in addition to those more traditional types of workplaces. Recognizing the need for more diverse — and frequently smaller scale workplaces, communities are developing policies and incentives to encourage some of those spaces in specific, desired nodes. For example, both Coquitlam and Burnaby have policies to provide density bonussing for developments that provide office and other employment space within special areas in their major downtown nodes. In recognizing that small employment spaces are also valuable, this incentive-type of approach is more successful than waiting for a developer to propose a single large corporate office building. For more information, call the City of Coquitlam Planning Department at 604.927.3430 or the Burnaby Planning Department at 604.294.7400.

*A third idea* which might help the community is to focus on how to better connect existing workplaces with each other, as a means of eventually making transit service between them more efficient. For example, one node might be too small to serve via transit, but it may not be that far from another larger node. Future employment growth could be directed to a single corridor between the two nodes, making transit routing more feasible.

For all three of the above ideas to work, the community will need to ensure that there is extensive dialogue and collaboration between its economic development and planning related functions.



ISSUE FIVE

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# Transportation Links Could Do More for Communities

**WHY IT MATTERS**

Transportation networks provide the means for people to move within and between communities, carrying out daily living activities as well as less frequent special-purpose trips. A healthy transportation system ensures access for a variety of user groups and a range of trip destinations.

Transportation infrastructure also involves costly investments. To make the most of them, BC communities and agencies are encouraged to continue working to more effectively integrate transportation infrastructure in our communities, in ways which maximize sustainability and livability goals.

Finally, transportation infrastructure has a strong physical impact on the overall structure and fabric of a community. Care must be taken to ensure that transportation infrastructure—including roads, rail, rapid transit, and trails—enhance community structure and maintain the integrity of community fabric without isolating neighbourhoods from each other or irreparably harming quality of place.

**OBJECTIVE FIVE**

Local governments are encouraged to maximize the benefits of transportation improvements by communities and to communities through effective integration with local settlements.



## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

**Local governments may wish to improve the balance in the relationship between transportation and quality of place in their communities, by:**

- > Planning and modifying transportation networks that work with, and reinforce, the local settlement hierarchy. The term settlement hierarchy refers to the planned relationships between different nodes (e.g.: central business districts, town centres, neighbourhood shopping centres) and districts within a town or city;
- > Making best use of new transit investments by planning for strategic development and redevelopment around transit nodes following TOD Plus principles (additional resources on this topic are anticipated shortly);
- > Planning transportation networks that provide greater options for safe and convenient pedestrian, cyclist and transit mobility at all scales within the road hierarchy;
- > Including trail systems in these networks which are constructed outside, but in viewing range of, highly sensitive natural areas;
- > Investigating road design standards which better address the potential of streets to enhance community identity and aesthetics;
- > Improving linkages between previously fragmented parts of the community; and
- > Integrating economic and community goals through efficient and well-designed transportation corridors that move both goods and people.



## **STEPS FOR GETTING THERE**

### **Local governments could ensure effective inter-regional transportation connections:**

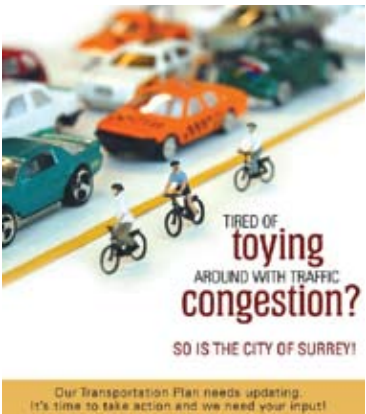
- through the designation, construction, and maintenance of effective routes; and
- by minimizing residential incompatibilities through appropriate design of, and noise-reducing standards for, any residential areas nearby.

Local governments, in collaboration with regional and provincial transit agencies, might also wish to examine opportunities for showcasing local agricultural products and information about local farming activity at major transit facilities (e.g. key rapid bus and LRT stations).

## IDEAS



Kelowna — Managing transportation demand



The City of Surrey is in the process of updating its transportation plan, and is making solid efforts to engage the public.

### Comprehensive Transportation Plans

Many communities have completed comprehensive transportation plans, both with a community wide focus as well as at sub-area levels. Often these are directly integrated with a community's OCP or distilled into OCP policies. Developing these plans provides a valuable opportunity for maximizing mobility throughout the community in ways that are appropriate for that community's settlement hierarchy and overall land use vision. They can also ensure that goods movement and inter-regional transportation needs are met.

The City of Kelowna has developed a plan focused on managing transportation demand, in partnership with the Central Okanagan Regional District and later joined by Westbank First Nations. Plan implementation in the form of rapid bus transit exchanges and pedestrian overpasses has also benefited from over \$5.6 million in funding through the gas tax fund created by the federal and provincial governments and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. For more information, go to: <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page377.aspx>.

### Transportation Improvements Through Development

Local governments seek to build in better mobility through their communities with each new development, often requesting pathways, bicycle routes and transit shelters. Selected examples of communities that are doing this include:

- > The City of Richmond (see especially its City Centre design guidelines, Sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.4 of the following document: [www.richmond.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/city\\_centre556.pdf](http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/city_centre556.pdf))
- > The District of Sechelt, where completion is nearing on a new development within the city's core which includes membership in, and facilities for a car-share cooperative

Resources to help with this can be found at: [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)

### Selected examples of other transportation plans recently completed or in process include:

- > The District of Summerland's Master Transportation Plan [http://www.summerland.ca/Local%20Projects/transportation\\_master\\_plan/transportationmasterplan.htm](http://www.summerland.ca/Local%20Projects/transportation_master_plan/transportationmasterplan.htm)
- > The Lake Cowichan Transportation Study, which received nearly \$14,000 in 2006 in funding through the gas tax fund.
- > The Capital Regional District's Travel Choices Implementation and Investment Plan [http://www.crd.bc.ca/regional\\_planning/transportation/documents/TIIPBrochureFINAL-ForWebsite.pdf](http://www.crd.bc.ca/regional_planning/transportation/documents/TIIPBrochureFINAL-ForWebsite.pdf). (See also discussion of regional transportation model at: [http://www.crd.bc.ca/regional\\_planning/transportation/documents/TransportationModelWebInfo.pdf](http://www.crd.bc.ca/regional_planning/transportation/documents/TransportationModelWebInfo.pdf))
- > The City of Vancouver's downtown transportation plan: <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/dtp/>
- > The City of Kamloops, including a transportation demand management plan and overall transportation plan: <http://www.city.kamloops.bc.ca/transportation/plans.shtml>

**IDEAS**

Comprehensive planning for street amenities is also helpful. The City of North Vancouver recognizes the greenspace potential of its streets, taking coordinated steps to ensure the health of its 5,400 inventoried street trees through its street tree master plan. The City also has a bicycle master plan, which ensures that 1.25 per cent of every capital project budget provides for quality streetscapes and/or public art.

**Other resources on TOD include:**

<http://www.transit-oriented-development.org/>

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

Transit oriented development seeks to foster dense, walkable communities built within a 10-minute walk radius around rapid transit nodes providing excellent transit access to a metropolitan area. Several BC communities have already begun to encourage TOD through policies, programs, and development approvals. Selected recent examples include:

- > Vancouver (eg: planning for rapid transit station at Oakridge: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/oakridge/pdf/mar05openhouse/transit.pdf>) and at Marpole: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/marpolegateway/public/08jun14%2B18/transit.pdf>)
- > Richmond (see most recent information on planning for the Canada Line at [http://www.richmond.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/No14735.pdf](http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/No14735.pdf))
- > Burnaby (eg: The Holdom Station Area Guide Plan at [http://www.burnaby.ca/cityhall/departments/departments\\_planning/plnng\\_plans/plnng\\_plans\\_hldmst.html](http://www.burnaby.ca/cityhall/departments/departments_planning/plnng_plans/plnng_plans_hldmst.html))
- > Coquitlam (see the latest City Centre Area Plan, built around TOD principles: [http://www.coquitlam.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1904C962-BED5-4318-8277-83176789D6C4/82010/PagesfromCCAP\\_AdoptedJul28\\_08\\_as\\_ScheduleA\\_to\\_Byla.pdf](http://www.coquitlam.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1904C962-BED5-4318-8277-83176789D6C4/82010/PagesfromCCAP_AdoptedJul28_08_as_ScheduleA_to_Byla.pdf))



**IDEAS**

- > Surrey: <http://www.surrey.ca/Doing+Business/Land+Development+and+Building/Plans+and+Policies/Plans+in+Progress/Surrey+Central+Transit+Village.htm>

**A Focus on Pedestrian and Cycling Needs**

- > The City of Vancouver completed a thorough study of pedestrian needs in 2002 based on actual pedestrian movements. For more information on the results and process, go to: <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/transport/pedstudy/pdf/2002PedReport.pdf>  
Vancouver's cycling plan can be viewed at: <http://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/1999plan.htm>
- > The City of Kamloops has created a pedestrian master plan which seeks to enhance pedestrian safety and focuses on pedestrian improvements within walking distance of specific destinations people will want to walk to. The plan also looked at opportunities to encourage walking where people are currently not travelling along particular routes because they are unsafe or unappealing (latent demand). To see a copy of the plan, go to: [http://www.city.kamloops.bc.ca/pdfs/plans/pedestrianplan/pp\\_approach.pdf](http://www.city.kamloops.bc.ca/pdfs/plans/pedestrianplan/pp_approach.pdf)
- > The Comox Valley Cycling Plan, involved different jurisdictions collaborating to meet regional needs: <http://www.city.courtenay.bc.ca/media/98402/final%20cycling%20plan%20dec%202007.pdf>
- > The District of Saanich has established bicycle parking guidelines to be used together with standards established in its zoning bylaw. To view these guidelines, visit: <http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/laps/dpguide/bikeparkguide.pdf>

***Bike BC**, a \$31 million program for cycling infrastructure was recently announced by the Premier and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. This program seeks to foster healthy transportation choices and reduction of individual carbon footprints. For more information, contact the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure at 250. 387. 7787*



## IDEAS

- > The City of Kelowna has recently adopted a sidewalk master plan, including a scheme for prioritizing sidewalk projects, to maximize residents' access to sidewalks, and to improve the quality and consistency of sidewalk facilities. (see <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page428.aspx> for summary).
- > The Town of Smithers is linking recreation with access by developing pathway systems such as waterfront and cross-country ski trails, and recreational greenways.
- > The Village of Alert Bay has also made efforts to provide attractive walkways along its scenic downtown waterfront. For more information, contact the Village Hall at 250 974-5213.

### Community Stewardship of Roads and Highways

While building the right kind of road and highway affects communities, maintenance is also important. Communities are encouraged to participate in the BC Adopt-a-Highway program, to ensure that these corridors are mowed, weeded, beautified, and free from litter. For more information, visit the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure web site at: [www.th.gov.bc.ca/adopt-a-hwy/adopt-a-hwy.htm](http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/adopt-a-hwy/adopt-a-hwy.htm)

### General resources for better, barrier-free pedestrian and cycling environments include:

- > [www.actnowbc.ca/EN/everyone/physical\\_activity](http://www.actnowbc.ca/EN/everyone/physical_activity)
- > [www.pps.org/info/streets\\_as\\_places](http://www.pps.org/info/streets_as_places)
- > [www.healthytransportation.net/view\\_resource.php?res\\_id=48&cat\\_type=improve](http://www.healthytransportation.net/view_resource.php?res_id=48&cat_type=improve)



Walkway along the Alert Bay waterfront.  
Photo courtesy of L. Tate.



## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

### Scenario One: New Opportunities for Rapid Bus and Transit-Oriented-Development

A suburban municipality is about to benefit from transit upgrades which provide for frequent rapid bus access through the community on to downtown employment and amenities. These upgrades will provide for improved resident mobility, and they present opportunities for density increases in key nodes. The community is generally familiar with the principles of transit-oriented development and interested in implementing them in this context. It wants to make the most of this opportunity, especially since it understands that rapid bus can, in selected instances, be a pre-cursor to the arrival of light rail over the longer term.

#### Practical Advice

When presented with this opportunity, it will be important for a local government to do its homework on several fronts. First, it will be helpful to have a good understanding of potential redevelopment opportunities that exist within 400 metres (a short walking distance) of planned or anticipated stops.

This involves compiling inventories of vacant and under-used parcels, as well as an analysis of ownership patterns. Secondly, if means permit, the local government could consider acquiring or collaborating with transit authorities to acquire strategic land parcels in these potential redevelopment areas. This approach was successfully taken by the City of Burnaby in planning for its Metrotown Skytrain Station back in the 1980s. Acquisitions can have several benefits for local governments under these circumstances:

- > Parcels can be used later for community parks, recreation facilities, and other amenities within easy access of major transit stations;
- > Parcels can be consolidated and sold to enable a redevelopment project that fulfills the local government's objectives for increased density developments using green building and infrastructure technologies; and

*General resources for better, barrier-free pedestrian and cycling environments include:*

- > [www.actnowbc.ca/EN/everyone/physical\\_activity](http://www.actnowbc.ca/EN/everyone/physical_activity)
- > [www.pps.org/info/streets\\_as\\_places](http://www.pps.org/info/streets_as_places)
- > [www.healthytransportation.net/view\\_resource.php?res\\_id=48&cat\\_type=improve](http://www.healthytransportation.net/view_resource.php?res_id=48&cat_type=improve)



Rapid bus service.



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**  
SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

- > Sale proceeds from sites with better transit access and higher permitted densities can represent a substantial return on a community's investment when timed appropriately, enhancing its fiscal health.

In connection with redevelopment, it will also be useful for local governments to work with area residents to identify opportunities for anticipated changes to benefit their neighbourhoods. For more ideas on how this can occur, refer to **Scenario Two** under **Objective One**.

Finally, the local government could consider the longer term potential to achieve other green features on sites around and near transit stops (see **Steps for Getting There** and **Ideas** under **Objective Three**).

**Scenario Two: Small Town Highway Upgrade Opportunities**

Highway upgrades are being proposed for a stretch of highway that travels right through a small town surrounded by rural areas. What can be done to ensure the improved highway benefits the community as a whole, while moving goods and people efficiently?

**Practical Advice**

Highway upgrades can create both benefits and challenges for smaller towns. On the benefits side, increased traffic through the town can mean more opportunities for local businesses to sell products and services to those traveling through. The upgrades themselves can also make the town more attractive to new businesses which don't necessarily serve tourists, but need rapid and convenient access to destinations beyond the region. They also help improve access for residents to desired destinations. Challenges created by highway upgrades also stem from the traffic increases, and from the impacts of road widening on adjacent buildings and neighbourhoods.

**Another idea for maximizing the benefit of the rapid bus investment** is to conduct a study of barriers and opportunities for residents who will walk or cycle to new transit nodes. Particularly in suburban areas with a cul-de-sac development pattern, direct access to transit nodes may be difficult and circuitous. (A distance of 400 metres as the crow flies may be over a one kilometre walk for a cul-de-sac resident). A study done in advance of route planning, followed by acquisitions and/or ROW designations or other agreements may help to boost access to future rapid bus stops.

**Communities could consider entering into an agreement with MOTI and MCD to enhance highway efficiency and access.** This type of agreement was made by the Regional District of Nanaimo. For more information, go to: <http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=481>



## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

### SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH PRACTICAL ADVICE



To maximize benefits, while addressing challenges, the local government could consider several approaches. First, it could work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to either re-route the upgraded highway from the town's main street or, if this isn't feasible, to ensure that the main street character is maintained and even enhanced with the expansion. There are many examples of highways which provide inviting sidewalks for shops and pedestrians. Under this type of scenario, it will be helpful for communities to collaborate in reducing left turn lanes and replacinf them with grass boulevards.

Second, it could work with MOTI to develop and fund a trail system next to the highway extending beyond the town or village core. An example of this can be found with the Island Highway, and the Parkway trail through Nanaimo. Campbell River has also been successful at coordinating trail and highway provision. This type of initiative is most beneficial when done on a regional basis, with the collaboration of several local governments. Third, the local government could work with the MOTI to coordinate traffic signals with other intersection, in the community, to avoid unnecessary delays from signalization problems on non-highway roads.

Finally, the local government could investigate new opportunities presented by highway upgrades for improved links via shuttle and van pool service to other communities within and outside their broader regions. This would also benefit from regional collaboration.

*Related to these design activities, the local government could consider directing its economic development officer, or hiring a consultant, to create a strategy for capitalizing on the business benefits from the highway upgrades. Regional collaboration could be particularly helpful, potentially formalized by a memorandum of understanding to pool resources on strategy development.*

Photos of 14th Street Streetscape Project.

Obtained from Alameda County Official Web site:  
<http://www.acgov.org/cda/redevelop/projects/e14street/index.htm>

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of a series of white shapes that transition from leaves at the top to hearts at the bottom. The shapes are arranged in a curved path from the top-left towards the bottom-right. The top part features several leaves of varying sizes and orientations, while the bottom part features hearts of varying sizes, with the largest heart at the bottom right.

ISSUE SIX

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# Social Aspects of Sustainability Need Attention

**WHY IT MATTERS**

People and their quality of life matter. To ensure social well-being, people need access to fundamental social supports, such as healthcare, education systems, safe environments, housing, and a helping hand if needed. Communities that are balanced are resilient to change. Because a healthy social infrastructure helps communities respond to pressures and conflicts that arise, a healthy social infrastructure is also a vital aspect of a green community.

Besides their intrinsic value, social systems generate and renew the processes which keep our communities running smoothly. They provide for rapid information sharing and for collaboration on important efforts to improve community resources. Social networks and supports are particularly important in fostering the behaviour changes that are needed for green communities.

Our social networks are in flux because they have undergone rapid change over the last several decades, such as greater individual mobility and movements between communities, an aging population, rising substance abuse problems, and growing income disparities as global economies continue to shift rapidly.

To promote social sustainability, communities would be well-served by promoting social interaction and creating conditions that enable a range of people to have a good quality of life. This doesn't mean that one agency provides all the services; rather, it speaks increasingly to the need for integrative partnerships.

**OBJECTIVE SIX**

Local governments could enhance social resilience through planning and program efforts which encourage and enhance the development of social networks and partnerships for delivery of key community social services.



## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

**Local governments may wish to foster community resilience and inclusivity by promoting opportunities for housing that meets a range of income, ability, and accessibility levels. Such efforts would ideally strive for inclusivity, accessibility, and equity, and could include:**

- > Land use designations and zoning that enable inclusive housing and a continuum of care;
- > Community-specific studies of barriers and opportunities for affordable housing;
- > Partnerships with non-profit agencies, senior levels of government, and/or private developers to create inclusive housing projects;
- > Development cost charge reductions or waivers for affordable or special needs housing projects;
- > Policies encouraging a designated proportion of new units in large housing projects to be affordable;
- > Using density bonussing as a tool for securing affordable housing; and
- > Policies promoting contributions to an affordable housing reserve fund for large housing projects.

**Local governments could foster a healthy climate for non-profit agencies and community groups to work together in addressing community-wide social issues. Such issues could include crime prevention, substance abuse, social isolation, the need for safe playgrounds and play spaces, service delivery to senior citizens, and multicultural services. Collaborative efforts might include:**

- > Establishing citizens' advisory committees to provide direction and advice to Councils on social issues; and
- > Partnering with other nearby local governments and/or non-profit agencies, possibly with the support of a regional level of government, to study barriers and opportunities associated with social issues, and working together to develop appropriate implementation strategies.



**IDEAS****Comprehensive Social Planning**

The City of Prince George has a comprehensive social plan, developed in partnership with the Community Planning Council of Prince George, a local nonprofit agency. Its goal is to help Prince George plan holistically to ensure appropriate social supports for good quality of life. To view the full strategy, visit: [http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/city\\_services/ocp/pgsocialplan/pgsocialplan.pdf](http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/city_services/ocp/pgsocialplan/pgsocialplan.pdf)

**Social Support Through Inclusive Housing**

As noted in Scenario Three of Objective One, the District of Sechelt has recently provided zoning to enable inclusive housing for people with developmental disabilities, while also contributing \$10,000 in cash and \$34,500 as a discount on development cost charges.

Over the last decade, the City of Kamloops has provided \$672,588 in grants to ten projects to offset development cost charges for social and special needs housing projects. Through its Affordable Housing reserve, Kamloops has also provided \$1.36 million worth of City-owned land to six social housing projects, plus a \$100,000 grant to a seventh project.

Several BC communities have completed affordable housing studies and/or strategies. Selected examples include:

- > Salmon Arm, whose economic development society hired two students to conduct an affordability study:  
[http://www.salmonarmedc.com/Affordable\\_Housing\\_Project\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.salmonarmedc.com/Affordable_Housing_Project_Final_Report.pdf)
- > The District of Sechelt, which adopted an affordable housing policy in 2008. For more information, contact the District, at (604)885-1986

*For more information and resources to help with social planning, visit the Social Planning and Research Council of BC web site at: <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/>. SPARC also includes a list of, and links to, other community social planning organizations at: <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/social-planning-links>*



## IDEAS Responding to Homelessness

At a regional level, several local governments have collaborated to address common social issues. For example, Metro Vancouver has a large collection of studies and resources relating to the issue of homelessness, available on its web site at: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/homelessness/Pages/Resources.aspx> or [http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/homelessness/Homlessness%20Docs/VisionStatement\\_homelessness\\_2007.pdf](http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/homelessness/Homlessness%20Docs/VisionStatement_homelessness_2007.pdf)

The City of Surrey and the Province have recently signed an agreement to work together to provide up to 172 new supportive housing units and 20 new sobering beds in Surrey. Other communities that are partnering with the Province on similar initiatives include: Vancouver, Victoria, and Kelowna. For more information, go to: [http://www.bchousing.org/news/news\\_releases/2008/04/14/3620\\_0804140958-246](http://www.bchousing.org/news/news_releases/2008/04/14/3620_0804140958-246)

### Special Efforts For Seniors

The Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan maintains a clearing house of information of programs and services for seniors in the region, as well as advocacy and educational initiatives aimed at improving seniors' quality of life. <http://www.socialplanning.ca/seniors/sirb/index.html>

Sometimes even little things can make a big difference. In the District of Taylor, the municipality provides fully subsidized brush and snow removal services for its elderly. For more information, contact the municipal hall at (250)789-3392. The Town of Smithers sponsors a free fall and winter Nordic walking program for citizens 55 and over, including free instruction and specialized walking poles. It also sponsors a door-to-door transportation service for seniors and the disabled in partnership with other surrounding communities. For more information, contact the Town of Smithers at (250) 847-1600.

**Another useful resource on addressing homelessness** includes the *Virtual Library on Homelessness issues*, created in partnership between the University of British Columbia, Human Resources Development Canada, and Shelter Net BC: [http://www.ihpr.ubc.ca/EN/jim\\_frankish/homelessness\\_virtual\\_library/](http://www.ihpr.ubc.ca/EN/jim_frankish/homelessness_virtual_library/)

See also the *Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy for resources and information*: [http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/home/index\\_e.asp](http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/home/index_e.asp)

The Ministry of Sport and Healthy Living has released a useful report on seniors, called *Seniors in BC: A Healthy Living Framework*. It includes a list of what makes a community age-friendly. [http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/seniors/PDFS/seniors\\_framework\\_web.pdf](http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/seniors/PDFS/seniors_framework_web.pdf)



The North Okanagan Social Planning Council building.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario One: Combatting Social Isolation for Seniors**

A semi-rural municipality has identified a problem with social isolation among its seniors, but lacks the staff and resources to address this issue alone.

**Practical Advice**

The local government could approach the regional district to see if there is anything that could be done collaboratively. Eventually, the regional district might choose to collaborate with all of its member local governments to develop a strategy to address the issue. As a pilot project in the strategy, they may choose to work with a local community college and a non-profit agency to establish internet terminals in accessible destinations throughout the regional district, and to hire college students to provide computer training to the seniors. The group might choose to develop a second pilot project involving seniors teaching gardening skills to pre-teen youth.

**Scenario Two: Housing Affordability**

A rapidly-growing resort community has been experiencing housing affordability issues which have exacerbated labour shortages in the area. What steps could the community take to address this issue?

**Practical Advice**

It will be important for the local government to begin with gaining a clear picture of the problem, including the extent of the gap between workers' incomes and market rates for housing rentals and mortgage payments. This will help both in confirming the extent of the problem and in making a case for local employers, resort-owners, and developers to collaborate in resolving the issue.

*For an example relating to Scenario One, refer to the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Department's Camp Garden Patch program, administered through its Oliver Woods Community Centre. For more information, contact the Nanaimo Parks Department at (250)756-5200.*



**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**

SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

With this knowledge, the community may decide its best course of action is to create an affordable housing reserve, and to consult with appropriate stakeholders both for contributions and to develop an appropriate formula for future contributions as well as broad guidelines for using the fund.

In using the reserve, the community may choose to make some of its own lands available on a leasehold basis for assisted / affordable housing projects. If the community does not have its own land agent, it could hire one on a consulting basis, or it could pool its resources with other nearby local governments wanting to make similar types of land transactions.



ISSUE SEVEN

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# We Need a Strong Local Food Supply

**WHY IT MATTERS**

Green communities need a strong local food supply for several reasons, not only does locally-grown food make a fresh and attractive contribution to the unique character of communities, it also has a significantly lower carbon footprint than items transported from thousands of miles away. Local food capacity is also important from a community resilience perspective. As climate change begins to manifest itself in different parts of the globe, having access to local food minimizes our dependence on sources outside the community, and it reduces our vulnerability to crisis in the event that supply is affected. Finally, agricultural land can play an important ecosystem role by providing habitat and wildlife corridors.

Yet regardless of the value of local food capacity—and the farming activities that furnish it, there are increasing threats to our agricultural resource base. These come most immediately from pressures to convert agricultural lands to other uses. These pressures are worrying since BC is home to eight percent of Canada's population, but contains only one percent of the country's potential agricultural land. But they also come from within the farm industry itself, particularly as a large cohort of farmers reaches retirement age. They can also occur from adjacent land uses creating conflicts with basic farm activities. Agricultural viability is thus an important consideration—and local governments have a role to play in this regard.

**OBJECTIVE SEVEN**

Local governments may wish to enhance local food supply capacities in local communities by ensuring a viable agricultural land base and removing obstacles to urban agriculture.



## STEPS FOR GETTING THERE

### Local governments are asked to consider the following in creating, updating, and reviewing their official community plans:

- > Preparing agricultural plans which address urban/agriculture edge issues, transportation, infrastructure and other key topics;
- > Developing new ways of making local farming opportunities more available and affordable than they are now;
- > Supporting enhanced income production activities on individual farms, provided that they enhance overall agricultural viability, even if they are non-farming.

Such activities might include:

- Farm supply sales, and providing B&B accommodations or farm vacation holidays;
- Investigating opportunities for agribusinesses in industrial areas; and
- In support of urban agriculture, examining opportunities for limited bee-keeping and hen-rearing activities.

### As a general practice, local governments are encouraged to:

- > Conduct detailed reviews of all bylaws, with input from the local farming community, to review and revise if needed any regulations that have the potential to harm farming activities, or could have potential to increase farming benefits if adapted;
- > Amend zoning bylaws to enable affordable, appropriate housing for permanent and seasonal agricultural employees;
- > Protect against land use conflicts that reduce farm viability; and
- > Pursue proactive partnership opportunities for promoting and marketing local agricultural products.



*Local governments are encouraged to consult the BC Agriculture Plan, found on the following web site: [http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/Agriculture\\_Plan/](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/Agriculture_Plan/)*

*Local governments may want to enhance their community's green spaces and increase awareness of the local food cycle by enabling the creation of Community Gardens. Community Gardens provide organized opportunities for citizens to grow nutritious and safe food; develop a neighbourhood social network; and re-connect to nature. The Ministry of Community Development is working with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities to produce a set of best practices which should be available by the end of 2008.*



## IDEAS

### Agricultural Zoning that Enhances Farm Viability

The City of Abbotsford has continuously updated its agricultural zoning regulations to ensure: compatibility with neighbouring residential uses; to enable accessory bed and breakfast uses; and to enable seasonal and permanent farm worker housing on agricultural properties. For more information, consult the regulations on the city's web site at: <http://www.abbotsford.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=957>.

*For advice on writing and revising farming bylaws, communities may also wish to consult the following:*  
<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800series/840000-1.pdf>



### Consolidating Agricultural Parcels

Some communities have policies of actively encouraging the consolidation of agricultural parcels to enhance the viability of farming. Pitt Meadows is one example of this—see OCP policies on web site at: [http://www.pittmeadows.bc.ca/EN/main/business/1156/1181/1269/1319.html?zoom\\_highlight=parcels](http://www.pittmeadows.bc.ca/EN/main/business/1156/1181/1269/1319.html?zoom_highlight=parcels)

The City of Burnaby actively secured farm consolidations as part of negotiations in the 1990s to develop a Burnaby Business Park in the Big Bend Area near its agricultural reserve lands. For more information, contact the Burnaby Planning Department at 604.294.7400

### Planning for Agricultural Areas

Several BC Communities have completed area plans to address land use issues in their agricultural districts, or have completed agricultural viability strategies, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. More recent examples done within the last five years include:

- > The Spallumcheen Agricultural Area Plan. To view the final report, visit: <http://www.spallumcheentwp.bc.ca/files/%7BE244CCF4-9825-4CF4-BAC1-21B3C0508C74%7DAgricultural%20Area%20Plan%20-%20Phase%203%20Report%20Final.pdf>





**IDEAS**

- > The Regional District of Central Okanagan Agricultural Plan:  
<http://www.regionaldistrict.com/docs/planning/agplan/final%20ag%20plan%20june%202005%20text.pdf>
- > City of Penticton Agriculture Plan, 2005
- > City of Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy, 2003

For a more complete listing, see the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands web site at:  
<http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/aap/strategies.htm>

For advice on creating these plans, see the BC Agricultural Land Commission's document *Planning for Agriculture*, available on the web:  
[http://www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning\\_for\\_Agriculture/index.htm](http://www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning_for_Agriculture/index.htm)

**Housing for Seasonal Workers**

The Abbotsford zoning mentioned beforehand includes provision for seasonal and permanent onsite housing for farm workers. Another example of recently adopted regulations for seasonal farmworker accommodation comes from the City of Richmond. Refer to Section 221.7 of Richmond's Agricultural zoning provisions at the following web site: [http://www.richmond.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/221583.pdf](http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/221583.pdf).

**Consulting with Farmers**

Many communities have established farm advisory committees to gain a clearer sense of farmers' needs. This step is highly recommended by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Communities may also wish to consult a brochure on this topic for helpful suggestions on how to form and work with these committees:  
[http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/Ag\\_Advise\\_Comm/Ag\\_Advisory\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/Ag_Advise_Comm/Ag_Advisory_Brochure.pdf)



## IDEAS

### Encouraging Farmers to Innovate

In the Bulkley Valley, local livestock farmers concerned about the reduction in local slaughtering capabilities formed a cooperative slaughter house as a nonprofit operation, with loan funding from the BC Northern Trust. This has helped both to improve local farmers' sales prospects, and to contribute to the ongoing viability of local agriculture in the region. For more information on this cooperative, see write-up in Northword Magazine, accessible at: <http://northword.ca/august-2008/open-for-business>



Concept sketch of Oliver Wine Village, downloaded from [www.oliverwinevillage.com](http://www.oliverwinevillage.com)

### Partnerships to Promote & Celebrate Local Agriculture as Part of Local Identity

Agricultural viability can get a boost when a town or region celebrates and markets its farming activities and products. The Town of Oliver, in partnership with Land and Water BC collaborated on a *Wine Village and Kettle Valley Railway Concept Plan* to capitalize on the town's emerging wine industry and to prevent urban sprawl through opportunities for multi-family development in a pedestrian friendly village core. This included coordinating appropriate road standards for the village core with the Ministry of Transportation. To view the detailed concept plan, visit the following web site: <http://www.winecapitalofcanada.com/pdf/KVR%20Concept%20Plan.pdf>.

To view an independent report on the project, visit <http://trip-project.ca/uploaded/case-studies/oliver.pdf>.



Tinhorn Winery Bed and Breakfast. Photo obtained from web site for Wines of Canada at: [http://www.winesofcanada.com/grandEstate\\_b.html](http://www.winesofcanada.com/grandEstate_b.html)

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE**Scenario One: Preserving Farmland and Farming Capabilities**

A local government with both rural and urban areas is concerned about a gradual loss of farmland that has occurred over the last decade. Council has asked staff to come up with a strategy for halting losses. What could be done to help preserve and enhance local farming capabilities?

**Practical Advice**

While the land base is a critical ingredient in agricultural viability, it is by no means the only one. Say, for example, that a community has a total of 500 hectares of agricultural lands, all designated as part of the BC Agricultural Land Reserve. Not all of this 500 hectares may be actively farmed. A first step would thus be to examine how much of the agricultural base is actively farmed and, where it is idle, what the reasons are for its lack of production. (Some of the agricultural plans mentioned earlier in the **Ideas** section have done this.) In some cases, land ownership in an area may be highly fragmented. As some conventional farming operations tend increasingly to need greater economies of scale, such fragmentation may discourage farming. Where this is the case, a local government may wish to develop a program to help with strategic land consolidations. This could occur through trades and/or sales of its own lands in other areas. It could also occur as part of negotiations for developments on sites nearby, as suggested earlier in the Burnaby example.

A second step would be to review the agricultural land base for any interface issues, to determine whether additional buffer zones may be needed, or whether plans should be made over the longer term to relocate incompatible uses next to active farms. The local government should also conduct extensive discussions with local farmers to learn more about obstacles to agricultural production. Third, the local government may wish to partner with other organizations, including non-profit

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

agencies and educational institutions to develop targeted training programs to encourage new farmers, or to familiarize new immigrant farmers who may need to supplement their experience from elsewhere with knowledge of local conditions and techniques.

Within the community's urban and suburban areas, the community may also wish to consider encouraging more intensive forms of farming. This could range from allowing hens in residential areas, to assisting non profit programs for permaculture. (Communities which currently allow urban hens on city lots, subject to conditions, include: Victoria, Esquimalt, and Oak Bay.) While this would not directly address the issue of farmland supply, it could provide the following benefits:

- > Increasing residents' capacity to eat more locally-grown food from a variety of sources;
- > Enhancing overall community resilience in the event of disruptions to more remote nodes in the food supply network; and
- > Creating a culture that values farming activities.

**Scenario Two: Small Lot Agriculture**

A local government is supportive of its agricultural sector, but faces a dilemma in that many of its farmers are on smaller sites of two, five, and ten acre sites. These farmers are struggling with financial viability. What could be done to assist these farmers, so that the lands can remain in agricultural production?

**Practical Advice**

While smaller parcels can pose more challenges for farmers, the case study of the Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee shows that many things can be done to

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:**SAMPLE SCENARIOS WITH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

help. In 2004 the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) began working with the District of Kent to assist the municipality in developing sustainable business clusters. As part of that work, the FBC did a needs survey of local farmers who were farming on small lots. The survey found that farmers would benefit from collaboration among themselves, so a support group was formed. This project also led to:

- > creation of a farm tour of the region for people to sample organic and local produce;
- > the creation of a business plan for the Agassiz Farmers Market (view the plan itself at <http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/publications/documents/2006-AgassizBizPlan.pdf>); and
- > An organized transportation initiative to enable smaller producers to collectively ship their products from the Fraser Valley to Vancouver restaurants.

For more information on this initiative, contact the Fraser Basin Council at 604-826-1661

## CONCLUSION

A Guide to Green Choices is a compendium of practical advice and ideas for green communities in making land use decisions. It has focused on assisting communities in facing seven major issues which impact their land use decisions in today's context of concerns about climate change, resource availability, and economic prosperity. These issues have included: green settlement patterns; the protection of natural features; integrating settlements with nature; vital economies; transportation links that do more for communities; social aspects of sustainability; and a strong local food supply.

Each community will be at a unique stage in addressing these issues. For some, many of the ideas presented in this book represent things the community has already spent time and energy working towards. For others, the ideas will be new, and may present a significant challenge to achieve in the short term. Because this publication is intended to be a living document, we welcome feedback which will help us better tailor it to your needs. A link for providing this feedback via e-mail will eventually be set up on the index page of the Ministry of Community Development web site.

By continuing to do the good work that they have been doing, and by using some of the ideas contained in this publication to go even further, local governments have a tremendous opportunity to implement a green vision of a healthier natural environment, healthier communities, and healthier citizens. This will ensure that British Columbia tomorrow will be even better than it is today.

If you are interested in an academic perspective on how to integrate individual planning programs and efforts into a wider sustainable planning framework, selected resources you may wish to consult include the following two documents, which have played an important role in shaping the philosophy of this document:

*Integral Urbanism*, by Nan Ellin

*Planning for Sustainability*, by Stephen Wheeler

**Also of interest are the following works:**

*The Sustainable Urban Development Reader*, by Stephen Wheeler and Timothy Beatley

*Plan Making for Sustainability: The New Zealand Experience*, by Neil Ericksen et al

*Urban Land Use Planning*, 5th Edition, by Philip Berke et al.