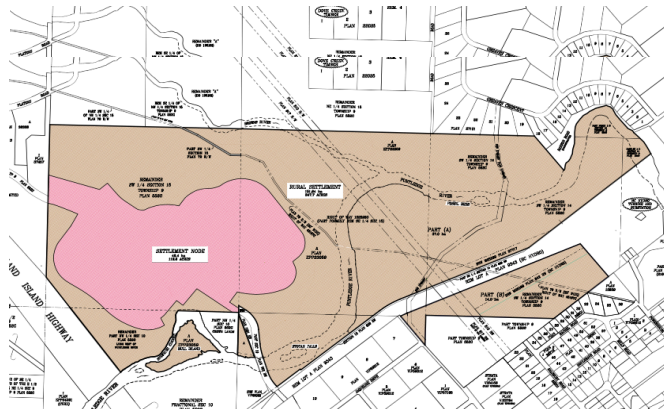


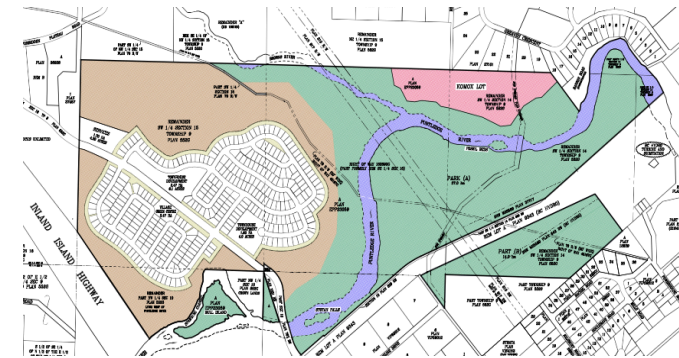


Request for Regional Growth Strategy Amendment



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Application for Official Community Plan and Rezoning Amendments



A Starting Point for Discussion



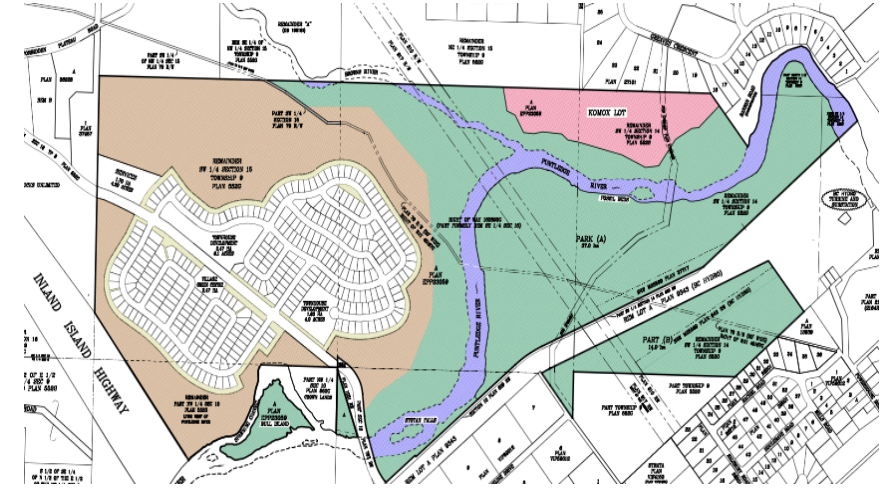
## Introduction:

Riverwood is an approximately **201 hectare (500 acres)** master planned community in the Comox Valley.

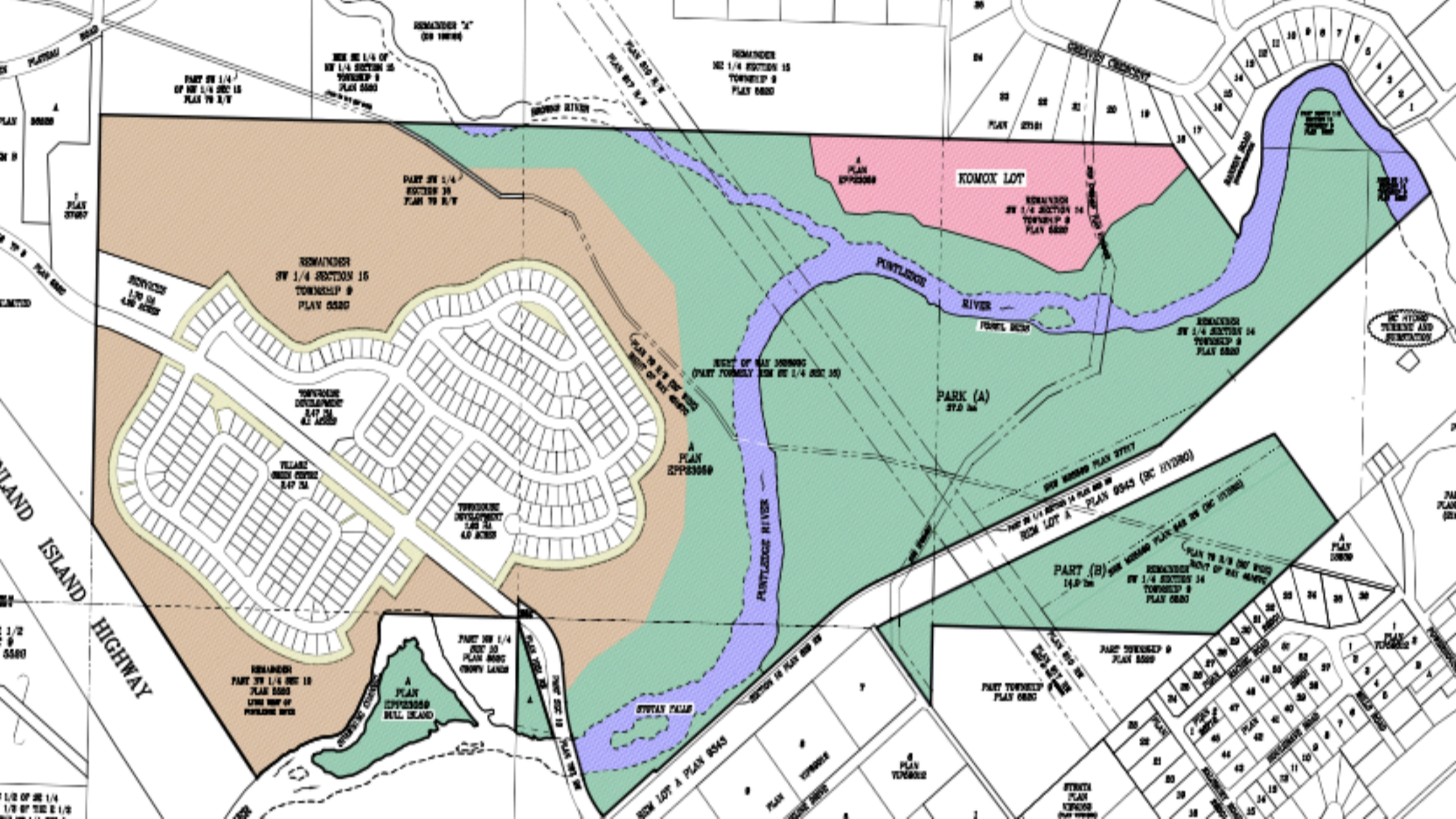
At build out, Riverwood will consist of 335 single family homes with secondary suites, a mix of low (54 units) and medium density (56 units) multifamily housing (with provisions for assisted living and special needs units) and 1,400 square metres (15,000 square feet) of neighbourhood commercial space in a central village green.

The density is approximately 17 residential units per hectare.

# Development Overview



- Reduced development footprint (25% of the site)
- 49% is proposed as park land
- 21% is proposed as rural settlement land for agriculture
- 5% (10 hectare parcel) is proposed for the K'omox First Nation.
- We are open to constructive dialogue and amending the development approach.



PART SW 1/4 OF NE 1/4 SEC 15 PLAN TO 2/3

REMAINDER SW 1/4 SECTION 15 TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

REMAINDER NE 1/4 SECTION 15 TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

PART SW 1/4 SECTION 16 PLAN TO 2/3

REMAINDER SW 1/4 SECTION 16 TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

KOMOX LOT

REMAINDER SW 1/4 SECTION 14 TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

REMAINDER SW 1/4 SECTION 14 TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

WEST OF RAY BRIDGE (PART FORMERLY SW 1/4 SEC 16)

PARK (A) 37.0 ha

TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT 247.21 ACRES

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT 247.21 ACRES

TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT 140.21 ACRES

A PLAN EPP23550

PART SW 1/4 SECTION 14 PLAN SW 1/4 FROM LOT A PLAN 0545 (SC HYDRO)

PART (B) SW 1/4 SECTION 14 TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

14.0 ha

REMAINDER PART SW 1/4 SEC 15 PLAN 0520 (1/2 SW 1/4 OF PUNTLOOSE RIVER)

A PLAN EPP23550 BULL BEARD

PART SW 1/4 SEC 20 PLAN 0520 OBONY LANDS

NEW LOT A PLAN 0545

PART TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

PART TOWNSHIP 9 PLAN 0520

STEVAN FIELDS

1/2 OF SW 1/4 1/2 OF SE 1/4



# The Public Interest

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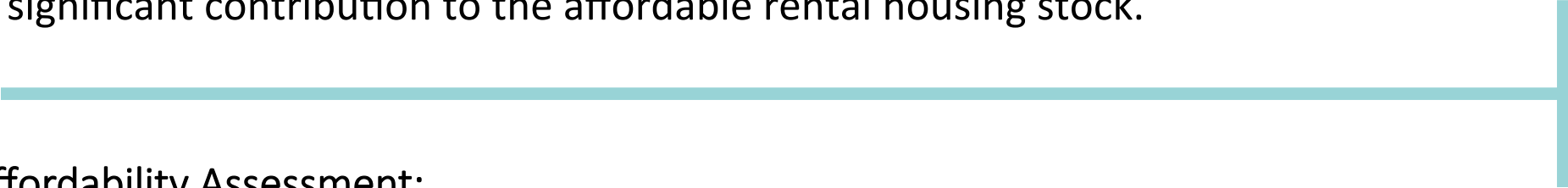
- Riverwood is committed to dedicating approximately half of the total site area which will place about 97 hectares into public ownership and create a network of public trails. This significant park and trail dedication will include the Puntledge and Brown's Riverbeds and adjacent green belts.
- Acquisition of these lands are a priority objective in the Comox Valley Regional District's Parks and Greenway Strategy which calls for the acquisition of the Puntledge triangle trail system and Stotan Falls. These dedications would place these important lands with ecological and recreational values into the control and stewardship of the Comox Valley Regional District and enable achieving a number of regional policy goals.
- In addition, affordable housing, transportation, and climate change goals are addressed.

# Further work and assessments

The following efforts will be undertaken as the application and development proceeds:

- 1) An archaeological review where the development footprint includes areas of moderate to high archaeological potential.
- 2) Additional environmental assessments.
- 3) Work with CVRD staff to detail zoning regulations, prepare a local area plan, and create development agreements to secure commitments.
- 4) Connection to the greenways located to the north and south.
- 5) Sight line improvements (vegetation removal) and pavement marking improvements in accordance with the Traffic Assessment.
- 6) Incorporation of traffic sustainability measures including walking, cycling, car pooling, and car sharing per the Bunt Traffic Assessment.
- 7) Compliance with the flood plain set back and flood construction levels recommended in the McElhanney Flood Plain Analysis.

# Inclusionary, Affordable and Sustainable Housing

- The proposed 335 single family dwellings with suites, 110 low and medium density housing units will make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing in the Comox Valley.
  - Riverwood proposes to have secondary suites included in the zoning bylaw which will enable a significant contribution to the affordable rental housing stock.
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## Affordability Assessment:

- Average 2015 economic household income was \$89,004.
- Average 2015 lone parent household income was \$48,837.
- CMHC definition of housing affordability = 30% of gross income
- Incomes equate to \$2,225 per month for the average household and \$1,220. per month for the average lone parent household.
- Local rental rates for apartments and suites in the range of \$900 to \$1,400 per month.
- Secondary Suites (58% of total housing units) will be affordable units for the average household as well as for most, in not all, of the lone parent households.

# Housing Affordability Continued

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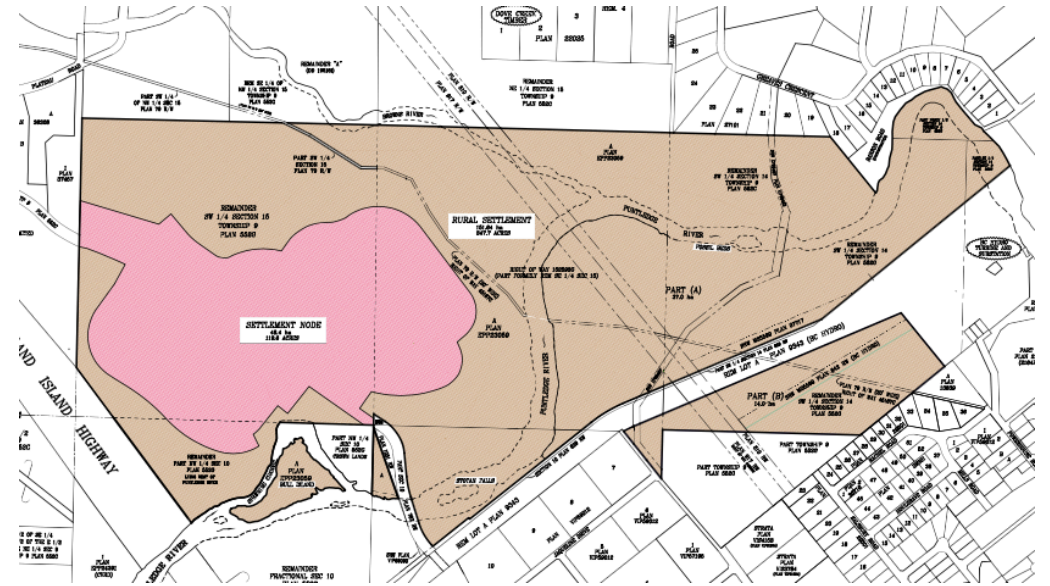
- Current real estate listings show a range of prices for town houses and apartments from \$225,000 to \$474,000 (excluding the luxury market) with a cluster around \$400,000.
- At a 3 percent interest rate, it would cost about \$2,218 a month to service a \$400,000 mortgage. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that all of the apartment and town house units will add to the stock of affordable housing.
- With the assistance of suite rental revenue (estimated at \$1,200), this approach may make the single family dwellings much more affordable to the home purchasers.
- \$1,200 suite rental services a \$250,000 of mortgage.
- For a \$750,000 home, the remaining \$500,000 of cost would be serviced by payment of \$2,366 per month at 3% interest. In 2015, 30% of the average household income was \$2,225.
- After a 10% down payment, these numbers indicate that even the single family dwellings could be affordable for the average household income.
- Mortgage of \$675,000 at 3% = \$3,195
- Suite income of \$1,200 plus \$2,366 (30% of income) = \$3,566
- Riverwood would be a model affordable housing development.



# The Proposed RGS Amendment

It is proposed to remove the Settlement Expansion area in the south east area of the site and replace that designation with Rural Settlement. It is also proposed to remove an area of Rural Settlement in the north west part of the plan and replace it with Settlement Node.

These changes relocate planned settlement lands. They do not add settlement lands.



# Suitability of Lands for Development

The suitability of the lands currently designated for urban expansion south east portion of the site is questionable.

- 1) Designated urban expansion lands (UEL) currently hosts areas of significant mature forest and forest ecosystems. This would be impacted with development (this is in conflict with RGS Objective 2-A).
- 2) Access to UEL would be impractical with the Penstock dissecting the land.
- 3) There is a major hydroelectric transmission line dissecting the property . Residential use under or near these lines should be avoided because of electromagnetic radiation concerns.

The relocation of the planned development does not increase development in the Comox Valley. It relocates it across the Puntledge River onto a more suitable site that protects ecological values and realizes recreational values. This node would be separated from the adjacent urban and suburban development by a large park and green belt that is called for generally by the RGS and the Parks and Greenway strategy.



# Proposal's Rationale and Policy Alignment

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The RGS cites a number of trends that help shape the RGS goals and policies. Several of these trends support the new Settlement Node we propose for the Riverwood Lands.

## **RGS Affordable Housing goals**

The third trend (RGS Page 9) notes the increasing trend towards unaffordable housing. (see VIREB and CVRD references). Riverwood responds to this robustly.

## **RGS Transportation goals**

The proposed Riverwood settlement node will open up a closed logging road for public access. Development of these lands will improve the Regional Transportation network by offering more direct routes for some traffic. (Trend 6, p 10). The Region's transportation plan identifies a north south road through Riverwood and a bicycle lane through the land. Development of Riverwood would facilitate these plan goals.

## **RGS Parks and Greenways**

This node will allow the CVRD to realize one of its important parks and greenway strategy goals which is to have a greenway and trail system through the property (Trend 4, p 9)

## **RGS Low Impact Development Goals**

The Riverwood Settlement node offers an opportunity for a low impact development being very level and with an existing impacted ecosystem due to recent logging. (RGS Trend 4, p 9)

## RGS Food Production Goals

The Riverwood Settlement node offers the opportunity for food production within three minute walk on surrounding rural resource land (RGS Trend 8, p 10)

The RGS sets policies regarding farming and food production as follows:

Objective 6-A: Protect land for existing and future agriculture and associated activities and allow for the growth and expansion of such activities.

- Rural Areas: Additional farming occurs in non-ALR rural areas. There is the potential for innovative agricultural enterprises and location of agricultural- supported activities in these areas, such as food processing plants, storage and distribution centres (e.g., farmers markets).

The Riverwood plan proposes:

- 1) The development will add to the supply of agricultural land in the area surrounding the development.
- 2) The agricultural land will be improved and made ready for agriculture.
- 3) The development would include allotment gardens adjacent to the perimeter trail.
- 4) The allotment gardens will be provided with water service. These gardens would act as a food productive buffer to the adjacent proposed farm land.
- 5) The zoning is proposed to include the sale of produce and other agricultural products.
- 6) The central commercial area will be designed to include a local farmer market area for local production to be sold and exchanged.

## **RGS Public Health Goals**

- Access to on site and regional trail system and allotment gardens works towards the public health goals in the RGS. (RGS Goal 10, p 11)

## **RGS First Nations Economic Development**

- The site offers an opportunity to support the RGS's goal of supporting First Nations economic development opportunities through a gift of land and opportunity for employment opportunities (RGS Goal 11, p 11)

## **RGS Parks and Greenway Goals**

- Realization of the CVRD's parks and Greenway strategy goals for the trail network through the property and RGS Objective 2-D (Ensure access to parks, recreation areas) would be realized with the development of the property as a settlement node.
- Without that rezoning, this goal may not be achieved.

## **RGS Electric Vehicle Goals**

The RGS encourages the use of electric vehicles as follows:

- 8B-7 In order to promote the use of electric vehicles, local governments should develop incentives and infrastructure for low-emissions vehicles such as recharging infrastructure and priority parking.
- The Riverwood Settlement node will include public EV charging stations.

## **RGS Climate Change and GHG Emissions:**

- The staff report identifies the policy goals addressing climate change and GHG emission reduction. To reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions the development will include a neighbourhood shopping complex. Further measures to address GHG emissions and climate change include: building solar ready homes, providing transit facilities, bicycle facilities and electric car charging stations in the commercial centre. We would be open to exploring other ideas to address this goal further.

## **Protect Key Natural and Ecological Features**

- The RGS's first Growth Management Policy is to "Protect key natural and ecological features throughout the Comox Valley". Riverwood provides a unique opportunity to protect key green ecological corridors.

# RGS Interface Fire Hazard Protection Goals

The RGS calls for attention to interface fire hazard protection as follows:

- 8F-7 Address fire protection needs for developments in the interface areas where there is a high risk of forest fires.

The location of Riverwood provides a number of advantages for interface fire hazard protection.

- 1) The Inland Island Highway provides a significant fire break
- 2) The Browns and Puntledge Rivers provide significant fire breaks.
- 3) A perimeter trail around the node will provide an additional fire-break and ability for firefighters to defend structures from interface fire.
- 4) Low combustibile roofing and other Firesmart construction measures will be used.
- 5) The area around the development will be prepared for agriculture and on-site vegetation from clearing will be used as soil amendments to improve that soil when practical.



# Other CVRD Policies

## CVOCP Transportation Plan Objectives:

- The CVOCP calls to “increase opportunities for rural residents to walk, bicycle and use public transit”. The trails within Riverwood and along the Puntledge and Browns Rivers will increase walking opportunities. Improvement and access to the Comox Main will secure a portion of the planned bicycle route through the property. Public transit facilities will be provided within Riverwood.

## Transportation Road Network Plan:

- The Regional District’s Transportation Road Network Plan shows the Duncan Bay main as an existing part of the road network and bicycle network. Development of this settlement node will facilitate securing and improving these transportation elements thus improving the connectivity of the regional system and enable shorter trips/fewer GHG emissions.

Map 1 Excerpt Road Network Plan



Map 2 Excerpt of Active Transportation Plan



# CVOCP Policy

The Comox Valley Official Community Plan contains a number of policies that the Riverwood Settlement node would assist in achieving.

CVOCP Natural environment – objectives:

- 1) To identify and protect unique natural features and characteristics of the Comox Valley.
- 2) To protect, restore and enhance coastal shorelines, streams, wetlands and the marine environment.

Riverwood would protect and preserve a critical segment of the Valley's green corridor and trail system along with the Puntledge and Browns river ecosystems.



## 6 - Puntledge Triangle (includes Browns River and Stotan Falls)



## CVOCP Parks and Greenway Plan Objectives:

The CVOCP has specific park and greenway policies that Riverwood would assist in achieving. The Riverwood Settlement node will provide access to the Puntledge River and Stotan falls.

# CVOCP Growth Management Goals

Development of Riverwood would help achieve the CVOCP policy regarding growth. It sets the following settlement node objectives:

Settlement Nodes – objectives:

1. To implement the CVRD regional growth strategy by directing most growth in the electoral areas of the CVRD to the settlement nodes.
2. To encourage residential intensification as a means of increasing the amount of available housing including rooming, boarding and lodging houses, accessory dwelling units, infill, re-development and conversions within existing neighbourhoods, provided the additional housing is compatible with the scale, design context and community features of the neighbourhood.
3. To ensure that the design of the built environment strengthens and enhances the character of existing distinctive locations and neighbourhoods, and that proposals for intensification and infill within existing neighbourhoods are designed to be compatible with the existing neighbourhood character.
4. To integrate assisted and special needs housing in the settlement nodes and provide for a supply of assisted and special needs housing.
5. To promote complete communities and neighbourhoods within the settlement nodes where people can live, work, play and shop.

In response to these objectives, Riverwood would help keep development in a settlement node, allow the integration of assisted and special needs housing in the settlement, and provide a complete neighbourhood by providing homes, recreation, shopping, working and food production land uses.

# Conclusion



The Riverwood Settlement node is key to the ability of the Comox Valley Regional District to achieve several of its important regional growth management, parks and greenway, and transportation goals.

The plan is consistent with many of the CVRD's growth management policies.

It would be an important measure to start addressing the housing affordability crisis that has developed in the Comox Valley.

It does not create additional planned settlement areas; rather, it simply shifts planned growth from one part of the property to another part.

Finally, with the Riverwood Settlement node, a very important and cherished part of the Comox Valley will be protected from potential resource extraction activities and be accessible to public use and enjoyment.

The options:

1. Non-approval does not mean protection of the environment, provision of park land and green ways, river access, bikeway or transportation links. It achieves the opposite and may make these policy goals unachievable.
2. Approval of the proposal achieves the above policy goals.
3. Public purchase would also achieve the above policy goals and would be welcomed.