



## SOOKE TOWN CENTRE PLAN

PREPARED FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOOKE  
Council Adoption June 9, 2009



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



### PRIMARY GOALS

To establish a Sooke Town Centre that will;

1. Be a well defined, compact, mixed-use 'village core'
2. Provide a strong "heart" for the community
3. Reflect Sookes' distinct cultural heritage
4. Reinforce its unique geographic location and spectacular natural setting.

### LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The fundamental guiding recommendation of this Town Centre Plan is to transform the area South of Sooke Road and develop around a new 'main street' (Waterview Street) that will visually and physically link Sooke Road to the waterfront. Development along Waterview Street should be mainly four storeys, with commercial spaces below residential floors. Adjacent lands would best be developed with a mix of housing types but primarily for three storey townhouses. Appropriate sites for new buildings along the waterfront are limited. New development should provide, whenever possible, public access at the foot of Waterview Street and from the extension of Church Road to the waterfront.

Development along Sooke Road should be primarily a mix of two storey commercial and service buildings with parking between and behind. Major improvements to the appearance and performance of pedestrian amenities within the public rights-of-way are to be a priority for all redevelopments of adjacent lands.

Development north of Sooke Road will focus on key sites including the potential reuse of Sooke Elementary School for community services and development of a business precinct on the vacant land at Gatewood Road.

### STREETS

Sooke Road will serve as a major route for through traffic, while a system of wide sidewalks, landscaped boulevards, medians and a number of traffic-calming strategies, will provide a safer, quieter and a visually improved highway. The proposed Grant Road extension will route traffic generated north of Sooke Road, around the Town Centre without requiring access to Sooke Road from within the Town Centre.

South of Sooke Road, Lincroft Road, Goodmere Road and Horne Road would be extended as a collector road system that will link Murray Road to the proposed Church Road extension and Charters Road. A key component of the street system will be a network of lanes that will provide services and access to properties without interrupting the street frontages with too many driveways.

## URBAN DESIGN

The Design Guidelines adopted by the District of Sooke in 2006 laid out the basic streetscape design for Sooke Road, new streets and the waterfront as well as providing principles for future development.

The Town Centre plan builds on this by providing a more detailed description of a new main street with a wide park-promenade, primarily four storey commercial residential development, public uses such as arts and cultural facilities, a public plaza, relocated library, and a farmers market.

Provisionally named Waterview Street, this shop-lined 'high street' connects to the waterfront. Here, marine-commercial uses and a public pier complete this new 'spine' for the Town Centre.

Lower density development on the streets that cross Waterview Street will be primarily townhouses with vehicle access from lanes at the rear of the lots.

## HEIGHT AND DENSITY

This plan recommends maximum building heights based on public feedback, street proportions and shadowing studies. The building massing also reflects the density limits recommended in the plan.

This plan recommends a built form based on public feedback, expected viable growth capacity for the area and the rate of development that will result in the comprehensive development of a new town centre.

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Downtown Design Guidelines provide the context for the development of sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and other key elements that define the appearance of the streets.

The current Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw will be amended in reference to stormwater management, street classification, paving surfaces and street furnishings.

Sustainable practices to be implemented will include rain gardens and bioswales as alternatives to conventional drainage systems. The plan will also encourage alternative strategies for all parking lots,

# VISION

## What is it going to look like?

At the entrance to the Town Centre next to Sooke Road is a gateway representing the Sooke theme of "Where the Rainforest Meets the Sea"

The Sooke Elementary School has been converted to a community facility with a wellness centre including a medical clinic and meeting rooms. The gym has been converted into a movie theatre that is run by the community and employs local teens. The play field has been changed into a community garden and next to it are family oriented townhouses.

Sooke Road is busy but the completion of the Grant Road extension has helped. There are traffic circles to remind drivers to go slow through the centre of town. There is a bus exchange in front of the Evergreen Mall and Village Market. People are getting off the buses and picking up a few groceries before they head home.

There are service businesses fronting Sooke Road that serve people travelling through town. These properties look much better than they used to now that the town has built sidewalks together with street furniture, lighting and landscaping. With a bit of prompting the property owners along Sooke Road have now started to upgrade the appearance of their buildings.

Where there used to be only empty parking spaces there is a new garden centre at the Evergreen Mall. The place is very busy now that people are growing more of their own vegetables.

The redevelopment of the Evergreen Mall has prompted development of the adjacent large vacant site for a mix of townhouses, apartments, and open space. The inclusion of affordable housing has helped ensure a mix of income levels and age groups living in the town centre.

Next to the Village market is the new Waterview Street that extends right down to the waterfront. They are getting ready to close off the street in preparation for the very popular street market. There are people sitting at outside tables enjoying a coffee or meeting friends for lunch. Above the stores are three floors of residential.

People love being by the water. They can enjoy going for a walk on the boardwalk at the end of Murray Road. At the waterfront at the end of the Waterview Street is a popular marine pub with a small hotel. The pier has a ferry dock that provides a great alternative for people travelling from East Sooke. Further along is a pier and marina that was built as part of the development of the Quimper Motel.

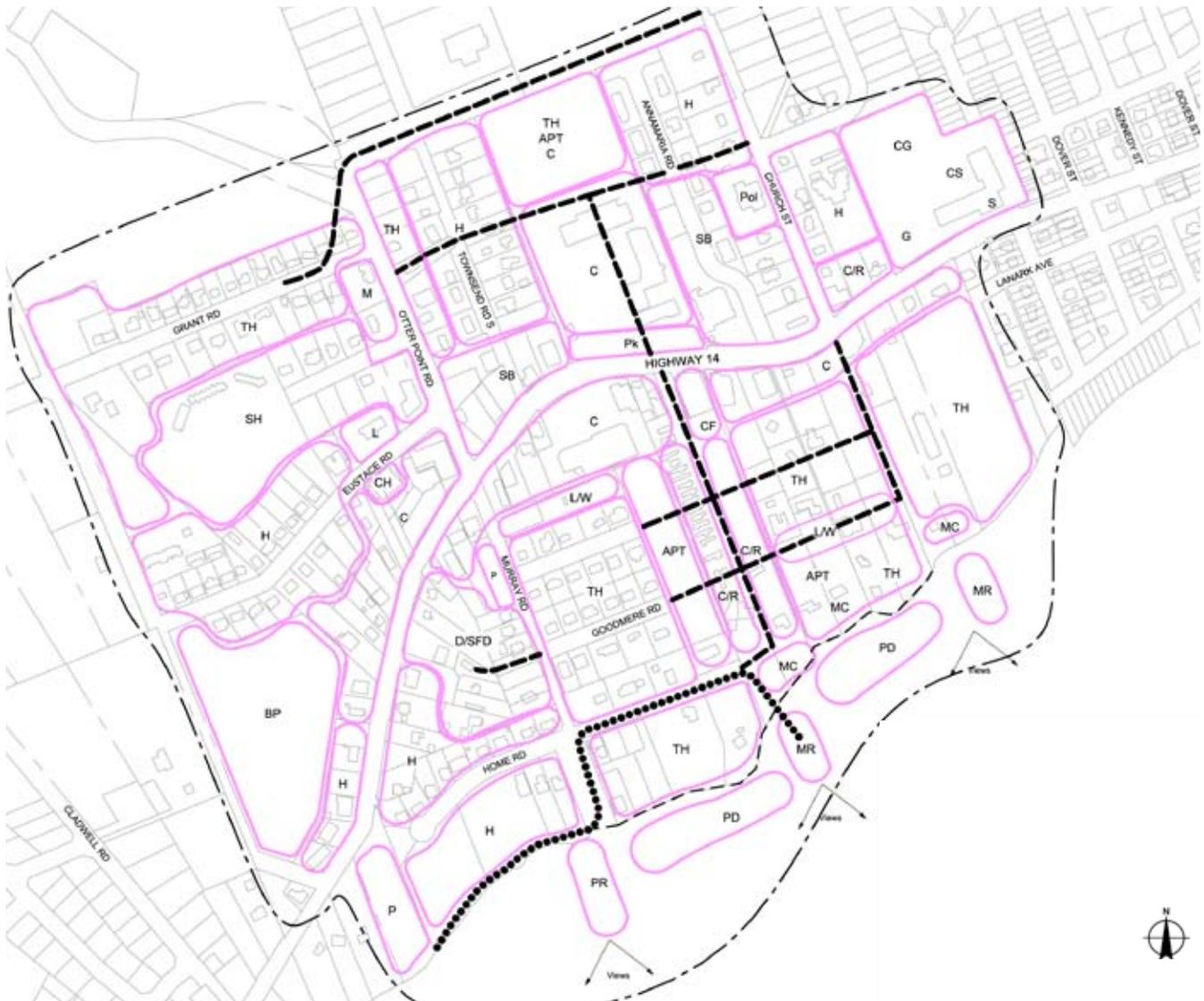
Development was slow at first but as the town centre became a hot spot for arts and culture more seniors moved in. As the town grew as a service centre more jobs were available and young adults followed which added new vitality.

Adjacent to Waterview Street is an interesting mix of condominiums, townhouses, duplexes and single family dwellings. The Sooke staff and council made sure that new development fit in well with the existing housing.

Ayre Road has become a favourite location for seniors to live because of the development of garden apartments, together with the creation of a wellness garden and medical centre. Otter Point Road now has sidewalks so it is much safer and convenient for people to walk to the new seniors centre or head into town to meet a friend for coffee.

As Sooke has evolved into a service centre for the area there have been opportunities to develop new industrial space such as the recently completed 3.5 hectare (8.5 acre) Gatewood Business Park. This has brought new jobs and diversified the tax base.

SUMMARY MAP



Summary Map

Residential

- C/R Commercial/Residential
- APT Apartment
- TH Townhouse
- SH Seniors Housing
- D/SFD Duplex/Single Family Dwelling
- H Existing Housing

Proposed

- Proposed Streets
- Pathway
- Future Waterfront Pathway

Commercial

- C Retail/Commercial
- M Medical
- SB Service
- BP Business Park
- LW Live/Work
- M/C Marine Commercial
- M Marine
- PD Private Docks
- PR Pier

Waterfront

Community

- CS Community Service
- CG Community Garden
- CF Civic Facilities
- CH Community Hall
- S School
- G Gateway
- P Park
- L Legion
- Pol Police

Study Area

- Study Boundary

## BACKGROUND



## PLAN PROCESS

### WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

We recognize that there has been much work done already. The updating of the Official Community Plan will reflect the current vision of the community, and that will position Sooke to respond to future opportunities and challenges.

The Design Guidelines prepared in 2006 laid out basic design guidelines for the waterfront, Sooke Road, new streets and provided principles for future development.

The Economic Development Commission survey in 2007 identified the town centre as the highest priority and highlighted the desire for a broader range of services to be available there.

### TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENT

The success of the Sooke Downtown Plan is dependent of understanding the strengths but also recognizing the potential barriers to a vibrant downtown. Through interviews and research we compiled appropriate information to determine the following:

- Current economic status of Downtown Sooke
- Potential for development in residential areas adjacent to downtown
- Infrastructure constraints
- Potential links to new developments
- Opportunities and barriers to developing waterfront access

### CHARRETTE

In April 2008 property owners and representatives from various community organizations were invited to attend an all day “brainstorming” session. The objective of the charrette was to generate interest in, ideas for and support within the community, for positive change and the creation of a vital Sooke town centre.

This charrette is one of a number of techniques being used by the Planning Team to create a basis for their work toward the plan for the town centre. It was not intended to be the only source for ideas, simply one of the tools used in planning and urban design.

The results of the charrette incorporated and built on the Downtown Design Guidelines and inform the future design of the following key areas:

- Public access to and the town centre's identity with the waterfront
- Development of the 'South slopes'
- Development on the north side of Sooke Road

## PROCESS

### OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

In May 2008 we met with the Official Community Plan steering committee to review the major objectives of the town centre plan and ensure there was coordination with the OCP review.

### COUNCIL MEETING

In June 2008 we presented the Town Centre Assessment and the charrette results to Sooke Council.

### OPEN HOUSE

In October 2008 the public was invited to look at the broad concept and provide feedback

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Regarding the Town Centre, there are a number of questions that remain to be addressed:

1. What is the role and function of the town centre?
2. What types of land uses are appropriate and where should they be located?
3. Where is the preferred location for developing both the physical and the symbolic heart of Sooke?
4. How do you make sure that future development fits with and contributes to the community vision?
5. What is the best layout for a street system?
6. What are the priorities and strategy for public investment?
7. How do you make it happen?

## LAND USE - HOUSING



### CONTEXT

Historically new construction in Sooke has been approximately 100 units per year. This has been a minor percentage of the regional construction which has been focused primarily in Victoria and Langford. As these communities have built out, there has been increased activity in Sooke. CMHC statistics indicate 111 housing starts for January- August 2008. This is an increase of 26 % from the same period in 2007. Most of this construction has been single family dwellings in major development projects outside the town centre.

The Town Centre Assessment undertaken prior to the development of the plan indicated a perceived lack of confidence in the ability of the community to clearly identify a strategic direction for the town centre and the lack of follow through on initiatives that have already been identified. This uncertainty has hampered both public and private investment in the village centre. Fractured ownership and narrow lot configuration particularly south of Sooke Road was also identified as an impediment to development.

### POPULATION ESTIMATE

Based on the development potential as shown on the Summary Map, there is a capacity in the town centre for approximately 900 dwelling units consisting of an estimated 350 condominiums units and 530 townhouses. Applying a factor of 1.8 persons per dwelling for condominiums and 1.2 persons per dwelling for townhouses this would result in a total population in the town centre of approximately 1400 people. It is estimated that build out would occur over a period of 35-40 years.

The goals and objectives contained in this section of the plan are based on the goals included in the Downtown Design Guidelines 2006 and the outcome of the town centre design charrette.

### WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE - GOALS

1. Create a population base that supports a range of businesses and cultural activities in the town-centre.
2. Ensure that residential development reflects the small town character of Sooke.
3. Encourage a diverse population and a range of housing types and tenure.
4. Develop housing that minimizes the impact on the environment

## HOW WILL WE GET THERE – OBJECTIVES

1. Accommodate a net growth of 1400 people in the town centre by 2050.
2. Focus apartment and townhouse development in the town centre.
3. Concentrate apartment development adjacent to the proposed Waterview Street. Particular attention should be made to ensure that individual projects do not capture an inordinate amount of the growth projected for the town centre.
4. Retain areas of established housing on Church Road, Anna Maria Road, Townsend Road, Eustace Road and Horne Road.
5. Development should be in accordance with the updated Official Community Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines 2006.
6. Variances should be supported where it can be demonstrated that it is appropriate given the context and is consistent with the Official Community Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines 2006.
7. Development should be in accordance with the revised Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw
8. Review the Sooke Affordable Housing & Social Housing Policy 2007 and develop an action plan.
9. Maintain the commitment as a signatory to the British Columbia Climate Change Action Charter to develop policies and process to encourage green developments.
10. Support the recommendations of the Sustainable Development Strategy 2008 to create policies that ensure innovations in green buildings, increase the viability for developers to adopt green building practices and educate the public and those involved in the building sector about green opportunities in Sooke.
11. Develop a bonus density policy that clearly defines the method for determining the value of additional density and limits the additional density attributed to affordable housing and the list of amenities.  
Amenities that could be considered within the town centre include:
  - Affordable housing
  - Underground parking
  - Parking facilities
  - Public open space including town square, public pier, park
  - Public art
  - LEED Building

## REZONING POTENTIAL

### COMMERCIAL / RESIDENTIAL

1. Commercial-residential development will be considered for sites fronting the proposed Waterview Street as shown on the Summary Plan and the site at the north east corner of Sooke Road and Church Road.
2. Height should be primarily four storeys. Additional height up to or beyond 6 storeys may be appropriate for signature buildings that are stepped or tiered to respond to steep topography and incorporate design features such as green roofs and renewable materials to minimize their site and environmental impact.
3. Development density will be determined in accordance with the Bonus Density Policy.

## APARTMENT

1. Apartment development will be considered for specific sites adjacent to the commercial-residential use as illustrated on the Summary Concept Plan.
2. Height should be primarily four storeys. Additional height up to or beyond 6 storeys may be appropriate for signature buildings that are stepped or tiered to respond to steep topography and incorporate design features such as green roofs and renewable materials to minimize their site and environmental impact.
3. Development density will be determined in accordance with the Bonus Density Policy

## TOWNHOUSES

1. Support townhouses with a maximum height of three storeys.
2. Stacked townhouses/rowhouses with a height of four storeys may be considered appropriate for sites fronting on major streets such as Goodmere, Lincroft, Otter Point and Church Road.
3. Support residential redevelopment along the waterfront between Murray and Church Road provided a waterfront pathway secured.
4. Townhouse development should respect the residential character of the housing east of Slemco Road.
5. Consider redevelopment of sites fronting Otter Point Road to townhouses. This is appropriate based on adjacent single family dwellings and the location at the entrance to the town centre.
6. Consider redevelopment of single family dwellings to townhouses on Grant Road frontage if development as a collector proceeds.
7. Consider development of seniors housing on remaining properties fronting Ayers Road.
8. Duplex and single family dwellings are an appropriate mix with townhouses.
9. If Sooke Elementary is closed family oriented townhouses would be considered as an appropriate residential use. Support the development of family oriented townhouses on the school site in addition to community uses. Maximum height of three storeys.
10. Density will be determined in accordance with the Bonus Density Policy

## SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING / DUPLEX

1. Retain single family west of Murray Road as shown on the Land Use Summary Map.
2. Support family oriented housing including duplex and single family dwelling with suites.

## LIVE / WORK

1. Consider including live-work fronting proposed Artisans Alley as shown on the Summary Plan.
2. Live/work on Goodmere frontage linking Waterview Street to potential commercial development at the foot of the Church Road extension.





**CONTEXT**

The Transportation Master Plan undertaken by the District of Sooke will identify a recommended design and cross section for Sooke Road. The Youth Survey undertaken as part of the OCP update identified the top five responses as movie theatre; build a mall, establish a youth centre, have more things to do and create more parks. The survey undertaken by the Economic Development Commission identified support for a broader range of local stores, services, and entertainment.

**WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE – GOALS**

1. Concentrate retail uses, personal services and entertainment within the town centre.
2. Develop a strong service centre that serves Sooke and the surrounding area.
3. Develop marine commercial uses that attract tourists and locals.

**HOW WILL WE GET THERE – OBJECTIVES**

1. Create new Waterview Street south of Sooke Road that extends to the waterfront.
2. Create active storefronts that limit non-retail uses on the ground floor.
3. Limit further rezoning for commercial use of properties outside the established commercial core.
4. Encourage redevelopment of the Evergreen Mall in a manner that discourages vehicle dependent businesses such as automotive services and drive thru's. Parking between the building and Sooke Road should be limited.
5. Support medical services in the town centre and particularly in close proximity to the seniors housing on Ayre Road.

**RETAIL**

1. Create new Waterview Street south of Sooke Road that extends to the waterfront.
2. Create active storefronts that limit non-retail office uses on the ground floor.
3. Limit further rezoning for commercial use of properties adjacent to the established commercial core.
4. Encourage redevelopment of the Evergreen Mall in a manner that limits parking between the building and Sooke Road.
5. Consider development of the vacant site adjacent to Evergreen Mall for townhouses, apartments or large commercial uses that require significant floor space. Such commercial uses should not compete with the smaller scale commercial and retail focus along Waterview Street.

6. Support medical services in the town centre and particularly in close proximity to the seniors housing on Ayre Road.

## SERVICE

1. Focus service businesses such as gas stations, hardware stores and fast food restaurants on the north side of Sooke Road.
2. Development of service businesses on the proposed Grant Road extension is not supported.
3. Create a business park on the large vacant site on Gatewood Road.
4. Support the eventual relocation of automotive/light industrial business on Otter Point Road.

## MARINE COMMERCIAL

1. Support marine related retail including marine pub and hotel on identified waterfront sites. Consider limited parking requirements.
2. Investigate potential demand for increased moorage space.
3. Investigate potential of a small passenger ferry link to East Sooke.



## CONTEXT

The Official Community Plan 2002 recommends the development of a civic centre as a focal point for community services, healthcare, recreational, educational and cultural programs. The OCP also encourages the development of senior oriented facilities adjacent to the Town Centre.

## ARTS

The Official Community Plan 2002 recommends development of a public art program that would support local artists and public spaces. Public art is encouraged as component of development projects. The Sustainable Development Strategy 2008 also recommends arts, culture and entertainment uses be encouraged in the Town Centre.

## HERITAGE

The Official Community Plan 2002 recognizes the historic importance of Sooke and the need to identify buildings and sites that have heritage value and character. The Sustainable Development Strategy 2008 also recommends that new development complement the existing heritage and character of Sooke.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Official Community Plan 2002 and the Downtown Design Guidelines 2006 recommends the creation of a town square as a gathering place for civic and cultural events. The Parks and Trails Master Plan currently being developed identified the limited amount of parks and open space in the Town Centre.

## SCHOOLS

The Official Community Plan 2002 recommends that school sites be identified where it would be appropriate to develop multipurpose facilities for different community user groups. Downtown Design Guidelines recommends that if Sooke elementary was closed in the future, it would

provide the opportunity for development of an outdoor civic space.

The community survey undertaken in 2007 by the Economic Development Commission identified support for the establishment of a post secondary institution either as a satellite campus, trades training or research facilities.

## WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE - **GOALS**

1. Concentrate community services and facilities in the Town Centre.
2. Create space for artists and art.
3. Include public art as a component of major development projects in the Town Centre.
4. Ensure that significant heritage buildings in the Town Centre are protected and that new development is complementary.
5. Preserve open space along the waterfront and increase the amount of open space within the Town Centre.
6. Retain Sooke Elementary site as an important community facility.
7. Create a learning campus within the Town Centre.

## HOW WILL WE GET THERE - **OBJECTIVES**

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. Meet with Vancouver Island Regional Library Board regarding potential relocation of the library as part of the development of a multi-purpose civic centre on the proposed Waterview Street.
2. As part of the Five Year Capital Plan for Sooke, investigate other public facilities that would be appropriate for a multi-purpose civic centre located on proposed Waterview Street.
3. Establish a program to create a street market on the proposed Waterview Street.
4. Consider appropriate sites for location of a youth centre.
5. If Sooke Elementary closes, consider retrofitting the gym as a local movie theatre as part of the reuse for community facilities.

### ARTS

1. Provide incentives for public art as part of new developments.
2. Support the development of galleries, live-work, and exhibit space in the proposed Artisan Alley.
3. Support art studios as home occupations.

### HERITAGE

1. Develop inventory of significant heritage sites and buildings within the Town Centre.

### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

1. Identify an appropriate site for a community garden.
2. Create a civic square as a key component of the proposed Waterview Street development concept.
3. Confirm Sooke Lions Park on Murray Road as a key park for the neighbourhood.

## SCHOOLS

1. Consider development of a college or arts school on the vacant site adjacent to Evergreen Mall.
2. If closed, consider the re-use of Sooke Elementary School for community space and investigate converting gym to movie theatre.



## LAND USE - WATERFRONT



### CONTEXT

Public views of the waterfront from Sooke Road are limited because there are no streets that provide view corridors. Public access to the waterfront is limited to the Rotary Pier which extends between MacGregor Park and the foot of Murray Road. There are private homes and docks along the remainder of the waterfront that restrict public access. The Parks and Trails Master Plan currently being developed suggests the creation of a waterfront trail extending from Whiffin Spit to Sooke River.

### WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE - GOALS

1. Improve public views of waterfront from Sooke Road.
2. Improve public access to the waterfront of Sooke Harbour.
3. Introduce uses at strategic locations that add to the vitality of the waterfront.

### HOW WILL WE GET THERE – OBJECTIVES

#### VIEWS

1. Create streets that extend from Sooke Road to the waterfront and create public views of the waterfront.
2. Limit the location and height of development adjacent to the waterfront in order to maintain public views.

#### PUBLIC ACCESS

1. Improve the waterfront access from Murray Road in accordance with the Downtown Design Guidelines 2006.
2. Provide viewing locations of the harbor as part of the marine commercial development at the foot of the proposed Waterview Street and at the proposed extension of Church Road.

## WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

1. Consider rezoning the waterfront at the foot of proposed Waterview Street for a mix of marine commercial uses including a hotel and marine pub with a preferred height of four storeys. Additional height up to or beyond 6 storeys may be appropriate when buildings are stepped or tiered to respond to steep topography and incorporate design features such as green roofs and renewable materials to minimize their site and environmental impact.
2. Develop a public pier with marine related retail and ferry service to East Sooke.
3. Consider rezoning for the waterfront at the foot of the proposed Church Road extension that includes marine retail and a marina with a preferred height of four storeys. Additional height up to or beyond 6 storeys may be appropriate when buildings are stepped or tiered to respond to steep topography and incorporate design features such as green roofs and renewable materials to minimize their site and environmental impact.
4. For lands between the proposed new Waterview Street and the proposed extension of Church Road, development proposals will be considered based on a comprehensive mixed-use plan which should complement and not draw away from the proposed new Waterview Street.
5. In the long term, a waterfront pathway will be secured between Murray Road and Water Street as single family properties are redeveloped.
6. Retain natural areas as shown on the Summary Map

## WHAT WE NEED TO DO – ACTIONS

1. Include a waterfront pathway in the Parks and Trails Master Plan and the Transportation Master Plan as a long term objective.
2. Include upgrades to Murray Road access and parking in the Five Year Capital Works program.
3. Develop Horne Road in a manner that provides pedestrian connections between Murray Road, the proposed public access at the foot of Waterview Street and the extension of Church Road.
4. Ensure that the Development Permit guidelines in the OCP include a provision for retention of trees along the waterfront.

## URBAN DESIGN



It is important to remember that urban design is the result of multiple decisions made regarding both public and private properties that make up a town. In the case of the Sooke Town Centre the urban design begins with an existing street layout and existing property boundaries. The plan is based on turning these into an expanded and complete network of streets and open spaces that are intended to foster a fully functioning town centre in a new geographic location.

The elements of a successful town centre are governed by zoning bylaws and other regulatory mechanisms that are based on the overall intentions of Sooke as articulated in the OCP (Official Community Plan). The success of the Town Centre will depend upon the uses located there, the access and circulation in and around the centre and a physical form that is conducive to social interaction, commercial activity and general convenience. A town centre can become the heart of a community as it becomes a desirable place to shop, to congregate, to meet people and be the focus of activity for residents and visitors alike. From the activity of a vibrant town centre can emerge the cultural expression and ultimately a strong part of the identity of Sooke as a distinctive town.

The urban design proposed outlines the problems, sets design goals, acknowledges and accepts “Smart Growth” principles and proposes a guiding plan for incremental development of the area identified as the new Sooke Town Centre. The guiding principles outlined here are those of Smart Growth BC and can be considered as the shared aspirations of communities throughout the province. We have adopted these principles in recognition of the desire of the District of Sooke to become a vibrant and viable independent town.

### **SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES ADOPTED FOR SOOKE TOWN CENTRE**

1. Each community is complete
2. Options to the car are emphasized
3. Work in harmony with natural systems
4. Buildings and Infrastructure are greener, smarter and cheaper
5. Housing meets the needs of the whole community
6. Good jobs are close to home
7. The spirit of the community is honoured
8. Everyone has a voice



## DESIGN GOALS

The following priorities for the Town Centre reflect both the Smart Growth principles as well as the goals contained in the official community plan. These five goals represent the necessary elements of a successful town centre.

- A strong central focus and a series of nodes within and adjacent to the town centre
- A strong civic presence and a high level of public amenity
- An interconnected network of small scale, mixed-purpose, or shared streets
- A mix of uses including medium density residential
- Plan, design and build according to Smart Growth principles and environmental sustainability



## EXISTING PROBLEMS, CONDITIONS + ISSUES

The scope of this Town Centre plan included the study and analysis of the existing physical conditions throughout the central area of Sooke, from the waterfront to Grant Road and from Gatewood Road to Slemko Road. The area within these approximate boundaries was observed and photographed over a period of six months. While there are numerous attractive features and pleasant surroundings in Sooke, the purpose of this analysis was to identify the issues and causes of what most would agree are less than ideal conditions. The problems identified were in several categories including operational and functional aspects, pedestrian and driver safety, convenience, orientation and the aesthetic beauty of the streets, public spaces, and buildings.

It is recognized that many of the negative conditions are not the result of anyone's conscious intentions. Instead, numerous private initiatives and reactive piecemeal planning have compounded the effect of the lack of a shared long-term vision for the town that coordinates and satisfies both public and private interests. By identifying these apparent problems and proposing remedial strategies, the urban design plan for the Sooke Town Centre along with the zoning and development bylaws that will emerge from this plan, may be able to correct and improve these negative conditions and ultimately produce a more ideal and successful town centre.



- Lack of direction for the future growth and stabilization of Sooke due to private development pressures in and around the town.
- A disfunctional West Coast Road – The District of Sooke lies along this route which poorly and inadequately serves its' pragmatic purpose of transportation, fueling, parking and commerce. The uses have developed a haphazard and unbalanced physical relationship that is inefficient, unsafe and unsightly
- Makeshift, unsafe and unfriendly pedestrian environment
- Limited public awareness of and poor access to the waterfront
- Lack of a developed and connected street system is an obstacle to town development
- Major public facilities are located outside of the potential town centre area
- Too little retail, office and residential space near any single potential town centre site to have the necessary number of uses and a sustaining population



## TRANSFORMATIONS - WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

The principles and goals used to generate the Town Centre Plan will be instrumental in achieving a number of important transformations. These transformations are ultimately physical and functional in terms of how the urban structure will perform. However, they can only be achieved by a renewal of mechanisms of governance and a commitment from the community and its' leadership. Through a concerted effort and long-term commitment to achieving transformations such as those described here, a successful town centre can be developed.

**1. Heal the Highway** – Integrate and calm the West Coast Road  
 This is the main route from the most populated and urbanized part of Southern Vancouver Island to one of it's wildest ocean coastlines and the southern West Coast Trailhead. The unsatisfactory condition must be redressed through a combination of zoning changes, roadway network modifications and urban design to reclaim the spaces between and adjacent to the existing highway commercial.

EXAMPLES OF TRANSFORMATIONS:



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**2. Re-establish the Centre** – Make Sooke a "Town Centre" for the District.  
 Over the last 20 years or more, a mixed shopping area has emerged from what began as highway commercial. The "town centre" will have a network of streets, public rights of way and public open spaces that allow existing buildings to orient to them and new development to define and reinforce them at the human scale (2 to 3 stories and eventually, perhaps 4 storeys above ground- floor commercial space).



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**3. Concentrate development** - Prevent unbridled and hap-hazard growth by avoiding the development of open sites (green fields) which bring the problems and expenses known as urban and suburban sprawl.



EXISTING



PROPOSED

4. **Shape the Streets** – The street is a traditional public space that serves residents as a safe place to drive, walk, shop, sit and meet people. Streets should properly manage the needs of both vehicles and pedestrians through the use of boulevards, street trees, sidewalks, crosswalks, vegetation and signage.

5. **Arts and culture** should continue to be encouraged, concentrated and supported in the Town Centre.

6. **Provide parking** in appropriate amounts of to meet the needs of residents and visitors in an attractive, discrete and user-friendly way without creating large expansive parking lots (ie. street and inner block parking lots).

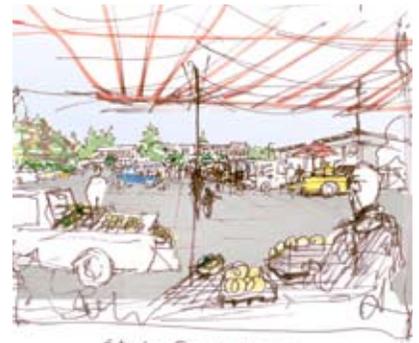
7. **Provide additional public access to the waterfront**

8. **A new coordinated promotion** of the community to its' residents to foster community pride, investment and commitment.

EXAMPLES OF TRANSFORMATIONS:



EXISTING



PROPOSED



EXISTING



PROPOSED



EXISTING



PROPOSED

## THE YEAR 2020 PLAN

Town planning initiatives such as this Sooke Town Centre Plan are often difficult to understand due to their extensive scope, their projection into an unknown future and the changing context and circumstances that will bring.

To focus on more achievable 'phases', the plan on the next page illustrates a possible scenario for the key area that has been determined to be appropriate for the establishment of a town centre. The drawing is of an urban design plan that can be considered the important seminal increment after about 20 years in the long-term development of the Town Centre. While acknowledging existing rights-of-way and some principle private property boundaries, the plan does anticipate the careful and equitable reconfiguration of some property boundaries.

It is clear that to accommodate the form of development required to achieve all of the desirable qualities of a viable town centre, a certain amount of cooperation and coordination will have to occur among private landowners as well as with public governing bodies. The key components of this 2020 plan could be achieved in fewer years but this will be contingent on the commitment, co-operation and ultimately the investment of the community.



**LEGEND**

- 1. CIVIC/PUBLIC SPACE (TOWN HALL/LIBRARY ETC.)
- 2. TOWN SQUARE
- 3. SOOKE MARKET PLACE
- 4. LANDSCAPED PROMENADE
- 5. COMMERCIAL / RETAIL

- 6. COMM. / RES. ABOVE
- 7. MARINE COMMERCIAL
- 8. WATER STREET PIER
- 9. TOWNHOUSES
- 10. MULTI-STOREY RES.
- 11. EXISTING COMMERCIAL

- 12. EXISTING RESIDENTIAL
- 13. PRIVATE DOCKS
- 14. ROTARY PIER
- 15. GALLERIES + LIVE/WORK UNITS
- 16. EXISTING CHURCH
- 17. PARK

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architecture + urbanism

## THE YEAR 2050 PLAN

The following illustrative plan envisions a fully developed Sooke Town Centre of the future. While only one possible scenario, the date of 2050 acknowledges the fact that the capacity of the town centre neighbourhood is extensive. This Town Centre plan acknowledges the intention of Sooke to become a viable, distinct and complete community.



**LEGEND**

- |   |                                      |                          |                                 |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. CIVIC/PUBLIC SPACE<br>(TOWN HALL/<br>LIBRARY ETC.) | 5. COMMERCIAL / RETAIL               | 10. MULTI-STOREY RES.    | 15. GALLERIES + LIVE/WORK UNITS |
| 2. TOWN SQUARE  | 6. COMMERCIAL /<br>RESIDENTIAL ABOVE | 11. EXISTING COMMERCIAL  | 16. SINGLE FAMILY + SUITES      |
| 3. PARK   | 7. MARINE COMMERCIAL                 | 12. EXISTING RESIDENTIAL | 17. EXISTING CHURCH             |
| 4. LANDSCAPED PROMENADE                               | 8. WATER STREET PIER                 | 13. PRIVATE DOCKS        | 18. SOOKE MARKET PLACE          |
|   | 9. TOWNHOUSES                        |                          |                                 |

**D'AMBROSIO**  
architecture + urbanism

## ON THE WATERFRONT: A new location for the Sooke Town Centre

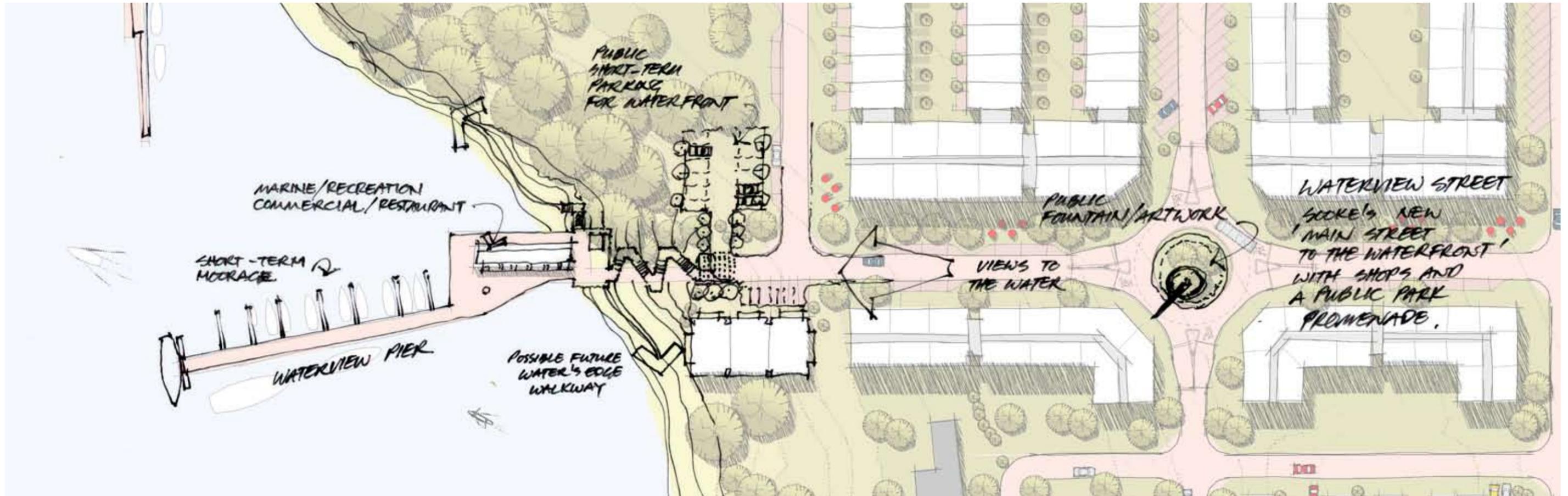
One of the great strengths of Sooke as a town is its setting. Early in the process of developing concepts for this Town Centre Plan, it was determined that there exists a strong desire to establish a Town Centre that acknowledges and takes advantage of Sooke's proximity to the water's edge and that remedies the disruptive aspects of the WestCoast Road/ Highway.

While a significant part of the District lies adjacent to the water and there are some spectacular views to it, there is only limited public access to the waterfront. Orienting the Town Centre towards the water and away from the highway makes the most of this beautiful and valuable setting. More residents of Sooke will be able to live, work and play in an environment that takes advantage of the natural beauty. This re-orientation and improved proximity to the water will also be a significant attraction for tourism and investment.

This section of the Town Centre Plan acknowledges the fact that a significant portion of the District of Sooke lies adjacent to the waterfront. However the physical reality is that the commercial and cultural foci of the town are dispersed and have not evolved along the water's edge. This Town Centre plan is based on the expressed desire for the Town Centre to be associated with, and as much as possible connected to the Sooke waterfront. The plan attempts to address the significant change in elevation between the water's edge and the upland area of the proposed Town Centre. It proposes view corridors, enhanced accesses, strong physical connections and street-scape devices such as water features, to more closely associate the Sooke community and its new Town Centre, with its water's edge location. The following detailed plan illustrates how the proposed Town Centre with its strong focus on the new Waterview Street, will direct and facilitate access to a future public pier, which will ultimately form part of a continuous walkway along the waterfront.



WATERVIEW STREET TO THE WATERFRONT



DETAIL PLAN



SECTION

## BUILT FORM

The following are guidelines to assist designers of future buildings within the Town Centre in making buildings of an appropriate scale and massing. The size and appearance of future development should reflect the aspirations of the community as a moderate-scale town that achieves appropriately high densities without the use of high-rise buildings. The massing studies on the following pages use schematic block models to illustrate the general height and footprint (massing) recommended for buildings in the Town Centre. The street sections and detailed plans are the principle guides to achieve the scale and physical setting of the Town Centre neighborhood. Peoples' activities, both commercial and cultural, that will occur within the buildings and the spaces of the Town Centre, will ultimately express the character of the community.

- The mixed-use buildings along Waterview Street should be primarily 4 storeys in height. Other residential development will take the form of 3-4 storey townhouses or apartments as well as detached homes with the potential for secondary suites.
- A consistent line of building fronts which clearly defines the space of the street is desired. Building facades will provide definition and enclosure of outdoor spaces, as well as control access and views to and from those spaces. They should reflect the activity which goes on within and express the structure and materiality of the building.
- Larger and longer buildings should be visually broken into “human scaled” proportions, especially along streetfronts.
- Massing should be devised to minimize shadowing effects on surrounding buildings or open spaces. Proportional relationships between street width and buildings must also be considered. On sloping sites, stepped or tiered buildings may be appropriate and preferable as they reflect the nature of the topography.
- Windows should be placed to allow overlook of streets, lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian passages, children’s play areas, parking areas, public open spaces and the water’s edge to increase neighbourhood security.
- Overhangs and canopies are encouraged, especially on commercial buildings. They should provide shelter from rain and sun as well as usable outdoor area for shops and restaurants. All canopies and awnings should be designed to integrate with the architecture of the building.



## FORM AND CHARACTER

These images are examples of the the kind of architecture and landscape that could evolve in the Sooke Town Centre.

The buildings and streets shown are appropriately scaled, allowing and encouraging various forms of interaction, activities and events to take place around them.

Street trees, special street furniture, textured paving and landscaping contribute immensely to the pedestrian experience.



WATERVIEW STREET



LIVELY STREETS



RAIN GARDEN



GREEN BOULEVARDS



RESIDENTIAL OVER COMMERCIAL



VILLAGE GREEN



TRAFFIC CALMING ROUNDABOUTS



GREEN PARKING LOTS

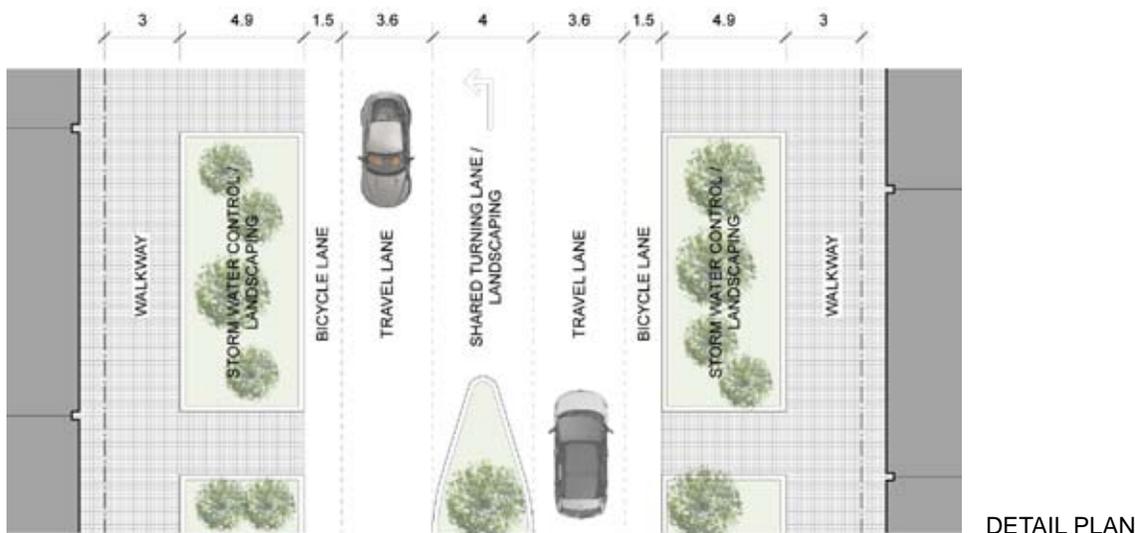
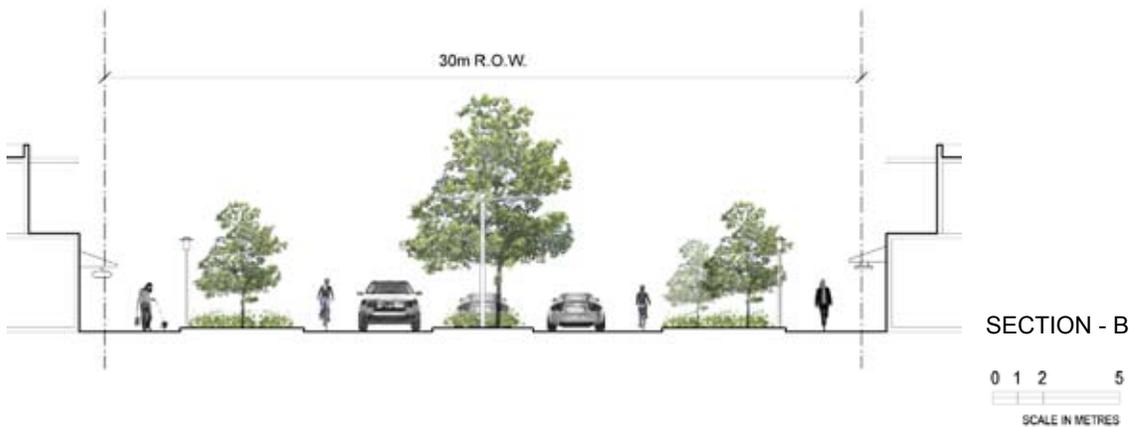


MIXED-USE / LIVE/WORK

## STREET SECTIONS

### SOOKE ROAD

The traffic along Sooke Road/Westcoast Road will be calmed by the addition of roundabout intersections at Waterview Street and the proposed extension of Goodmere Road west of Murray Road. A landscaped boulevard will separate the traffic on either side and allow for a shared turning lane. The roadway itself will be narrowed to allow for storm-water control and landscaping features on either side of the drive lanes. Landscaping will provide a buffer between sidewalks and the traffic and will visually constrict the street to discourage speeding. The pedestrian environment will be further improved by the addition of street trees and proper low-scale, shielded street lighting. These techniques have been proven to reduce driving speed and encourage driver behaviour that is more appropriate for mixed-use town centres.



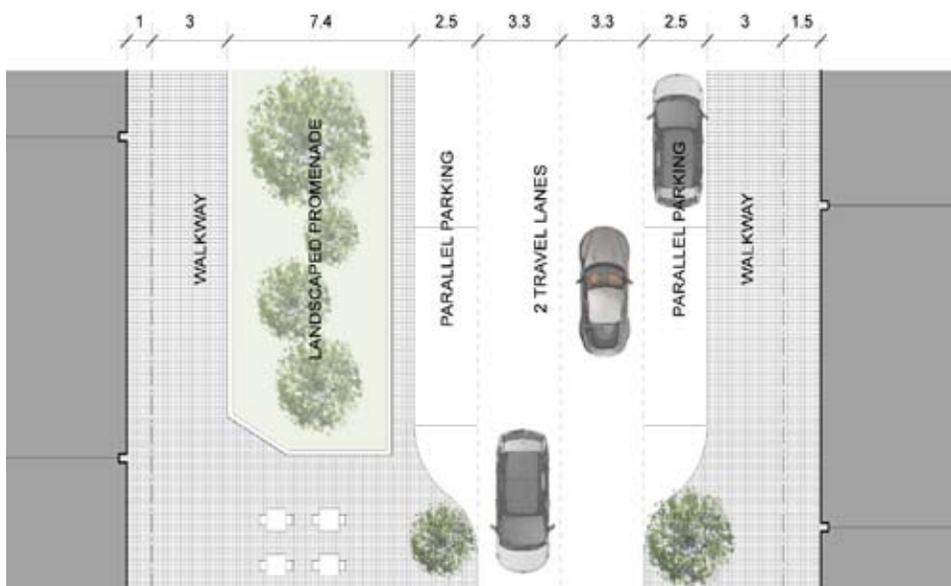
## WATERVIEW STREET

Waterview Street will connect Sooke Road to the waterfront with a landscaped linear park promenade and will focus future development along and around it. Commercial uses along the street-front of the ground floor will create vitality along the street and will provide amenity for the residents in the neighbourhood as well as visitors to the Town Centre. Parking will be accommodated on the street and, to further enhance the pedestrian environment, parking lanes will be interrupted at intervals by trees in landscaped areas. Textured paving, bollards, mountable and conventional curbs will be used in combination along with special seating, lighting and other street furniture.



CONTEXT PLAN - NTS

SECTION - A



DETAIL PLAN

TOWN CENTRE LOCAL - ANGLED PARKING OPTION

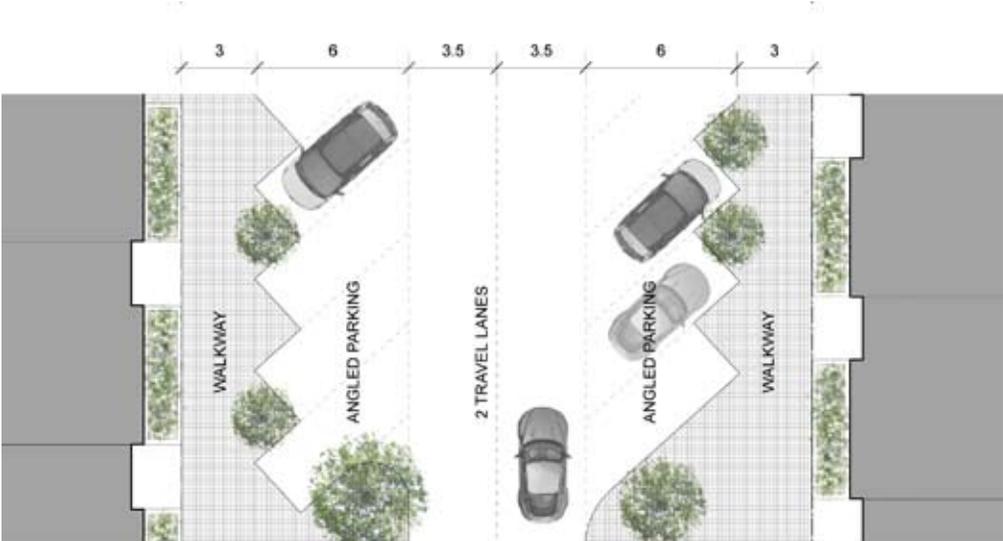
Just off of Waterview Street, Lincroft Road and Goodmere Road will accommodate extra street parking to serve residents and shoppers. Street trees, generous sidewalks and landscaping will create an enjoyable and safer pedestrian environment.



CONTEXT PLAN - NTS



SECTION - C  
0 1 2 5  
SCALE IN METRES



DETAIL PLAN

TOWN CENTRE LOCAL - PARALLEL PARKING OPTION

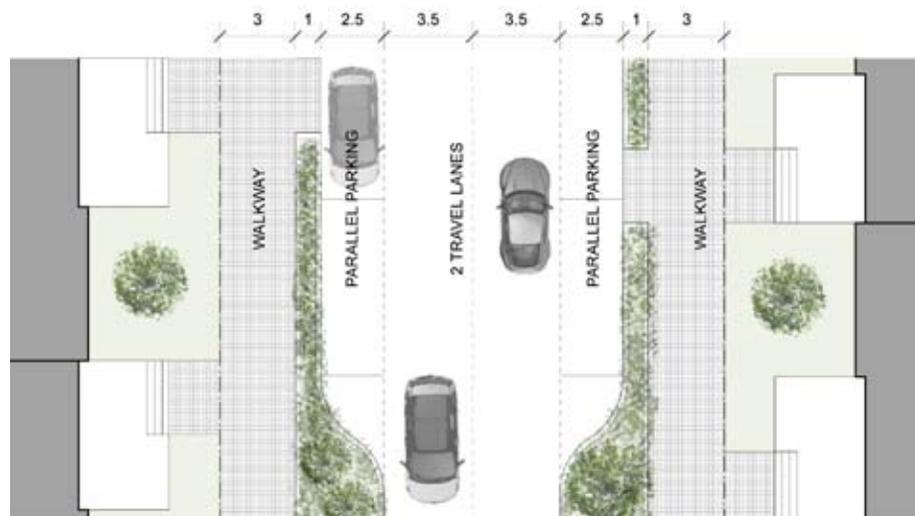
The rest of Lincroft and Goodmere will take the form of a typical residential street within a 20m right-of-way. Two-way traffic lanes will be flanked by parallel street parking. As with Waterview Street, parking lanes will be interrupted at intervals by landscaped areas and trees providing a buffer between the sidewalk and the traffic.



CONTEXT PLAN - NTS



SECTION - D



DETAIL PLAN



# TRANSPORTATION



## STREET NETWORK

The Town Centre street network sets out the framework upon which the Town Centre will develop as the civic heart of the District. The street network is designed to encourage walking as the primary travel mode while keeping vehicle operational needs in mind. Streets have been arranged in a grid pattern and connected with existing roadways in the area. Each block is designed at a scale that is manageable to the pedestrian and includes mid-block gaps that offer additional pedestrian route options. The grid system introduces a regularity of streets, allowing vehicle traffic to be diffused over a network of roads rather than being concentrated on major thoroughfares. The Town Centre area is set on a hillside and presents topography issues. Where roads are typically a maximum of 8% slope, there may be cases in the Town Centre where there is a need to exceed the typical standard, and these should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

## WATERVIEW STREET

The Waterview Street cross-section is to be applied specifically to the route between Sooke Road and the Sooke Harbour, intersecting directly opposite the Sooke Centre Mall. Waterview Street is developed to serve as the civic backbone for the Town Centre. It includes two travel lanes with parallel on-street parking, as well as three-metre sidewalks on either side. The west side of the street includes a 7.4-metre amenity area that is to consist of landscaping and formalized public gathering space. This area will serve to define Waterview Street and serve as a continuous community promenade that encourages pedestrian travel between Sooke Road and the Harbour.

If the proposed 25 m right of way is reduced care must be taken to maintain the continuity of the building line. The street cross section detail should also be maintained during redevelopment of adjacent properties.

## TOWN CENTRE LOCAL

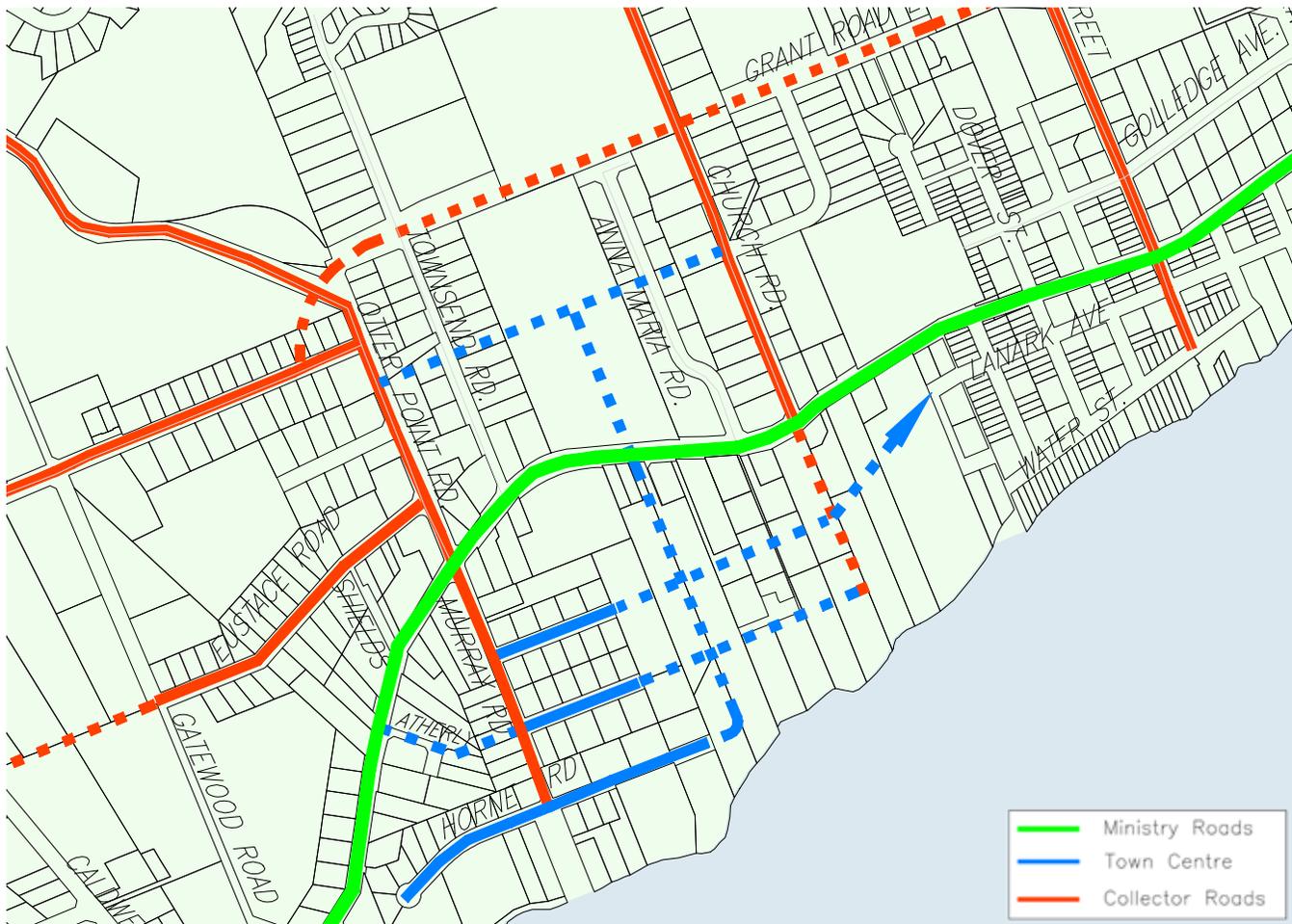
The Town Centre Local cross-section is to be applied to the remaining roadways in the Town Centre area. The Local street has a total right-of-way of 20 metres, with travel lanes and three-metre sidewalks on either side. Where angle parking is recommended, the right-of-way should be increased to 25 meters. Local streets are meant to accommodate a considerable portion of the Town Centre parking demand, eliminating the need for off-street facilities and allowing for higher overall density. Local streets may include parallel parking, rather than angled, in those situations where the parking demand of the surrounding land uses is low.

## SOOKE ROAD/GRANT ROAD

In 2004 the District of Sooke completed a series of conceptual plans for the redesign of Sooke Road and Grant Road. The Sooke Road redesign covered the area between Atherly Circle and Charters Road, and included a three-lane cross-section with considerable landscaping and sidewalk improvements. The Grant Road improvements are to result in a continuous parallel route to Sooke Road, connecting the existing Grant Road with the small portion north of Sooke Elementary School, and with Throup Road to the east.

While virtually all the Grant Road improvements fall outside the Town Centre boundary, they are important to physically realizing the Town Centre vision. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) has stated that future traffic volumes will necessitate either a continuous roadway connection paralleling Sooke Road or the redevelopment of Sooke Road to accommodate two travel lanes in either direction. Our stance, which was confirmed in our public consultation exercises and in other concurrent projects, is that an expansion of Sooke Road would further divide the Town Centre and waterfront from the rest of the community and be detrimental to the Town Centre vision. As the MoTI has approving authority over all land development in close proximity to Sooke Road, this Plan recognizes the Grant Road connection as a key piece of the Town Centre development.

MAP 1 - PROPOSED ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS



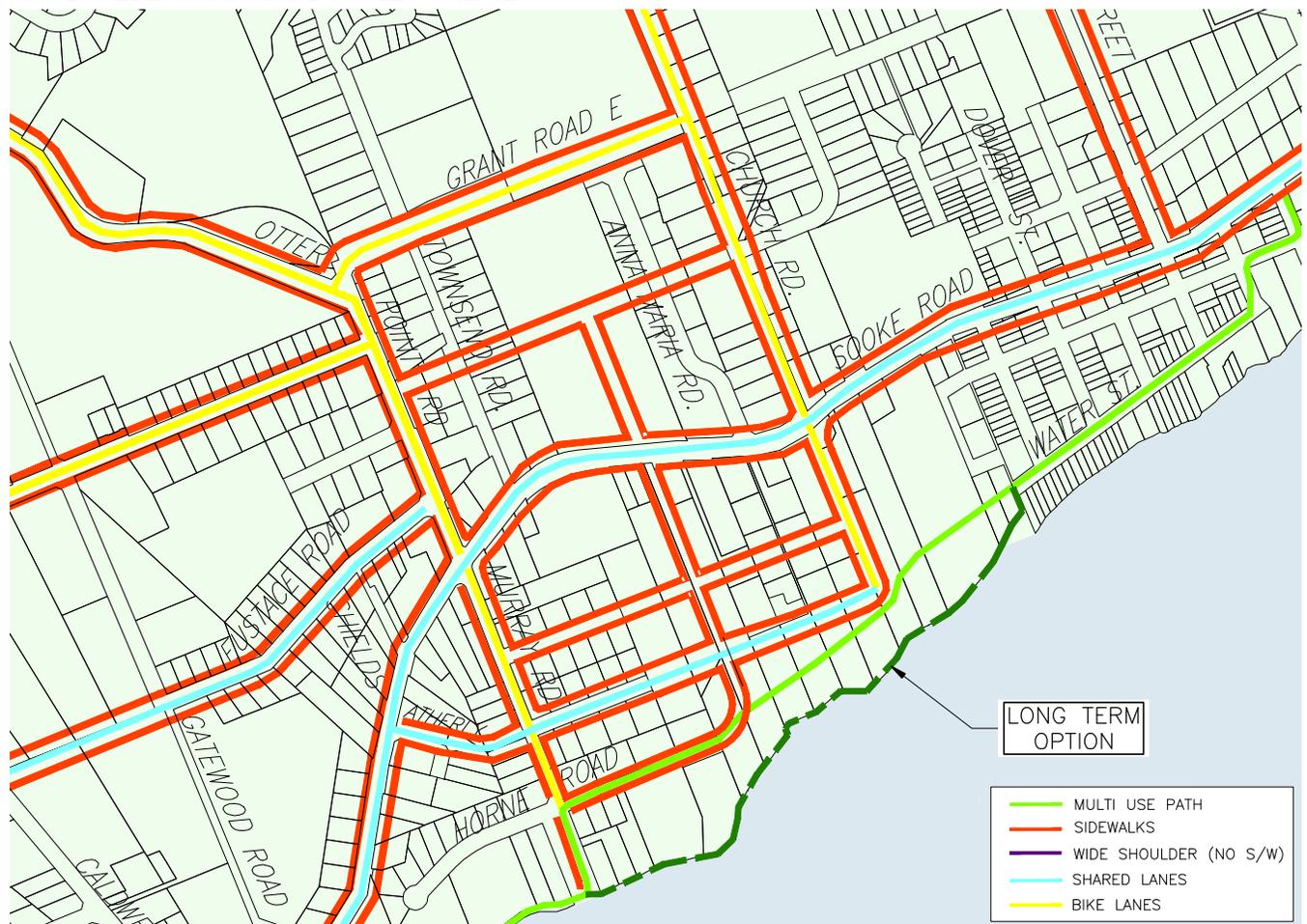
## PEDESTRIANS

The Town Centre Plan incorporates a number of elements designed to encourage walking as the preferred travel mode in the Town Centre. As explained above, each Town Centre street has been designed with a 3 metre sidewalk to ensure pedestrian travel is comfortable and sufficient space is leftover for casual community gathering/interaction. Waterview Street, the major north-south street, has been designed with a 7.4 metre amenity area, which is to include considerable landscaped areas and pocket plazas for informal gathering. The provision of sidewalks that exceed typical dimensions provides for an environment that is attractive to walking and places the needs of the pedestrian ahead of those of the vehicle user.

## WATERFRONT TRAIL

The Town Centre Plan includes the Waterfront Trail, which is a continuous multi-use link along the Sooke Harbour. It is envisioned that the Waterfront Trail will follow the waterfront where public properties are available, but would deviate onto adjacent sidewalks where waterfront private property makes continuation of the Trail impossible. The Trail is also identified as a key pedestrian route in the Transportation Master Plan and the Parks and Trails Master Plan. The development of a waterfront trail may be possible in the long term as these properties redevelop.

MAP 2 - PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES



## TRANSIT

There are currently three (3) transit routes that serve Sooke – Sooke/Downtown (61), Otter Point (63) and East Sooke (66). Each of these routes meet at the exchange provided on Sooke Road, directly in front of the Evergreen Mall and Sooke Town Centre. The existing exchange consists of two (2) bus bays on the south side of Sooke Road, which is sufficient for the number of buses that currently use the exchange. As bus service to the District increases, the exchange can be expanded to include at least two (2) more bus bays on the south side of Sooke Road, and up to four (4) bays on the north side, which is assumed to meet future demand.

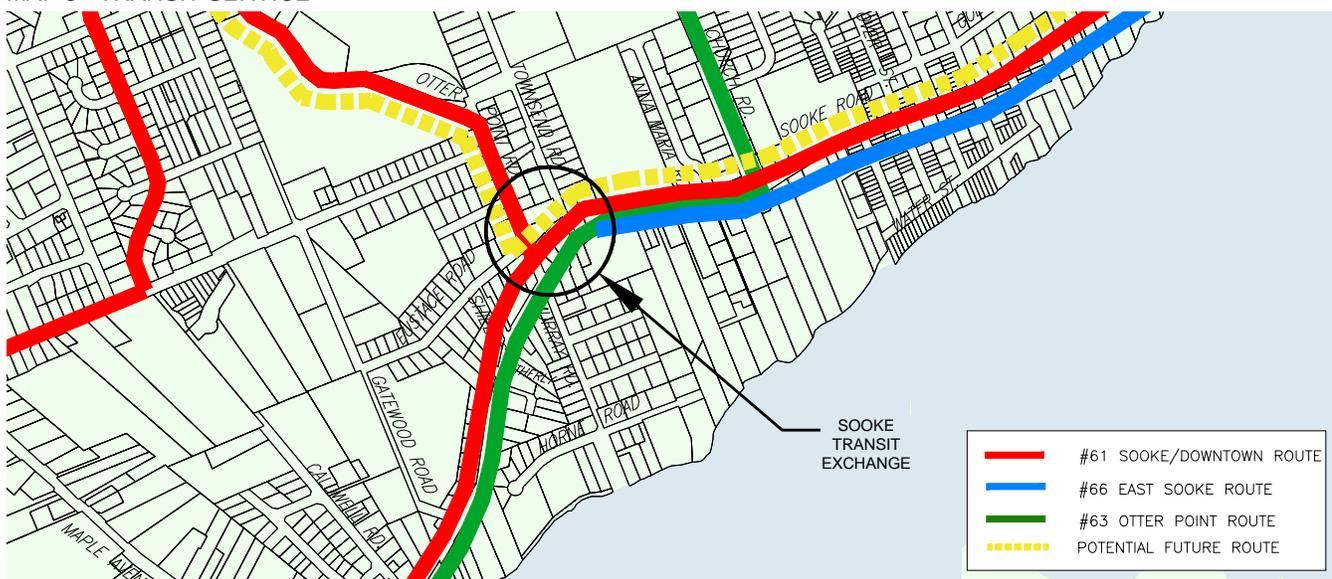
The exchange is ideally located in relation to the Town Centre, with virtually all of the proposed Town Centre within 400 metres. The Town Centre Plan presents attractive pedestrian routes to/from Sooke Road and offers a high level of pedestrian connectivity, both of which will facilitate comfortable, direct pedestrian access.

## PARKING

The development of a Town Centre involves mixing land uses, increasing densities and generally creating a more active, vibrant core area. And while the Town Centre is being developed with the pedestrian in mind, vehicle parking is integral to its successful functioning.

Parking is to be provided so that it meets the demand of the various uses contained in the Town Centre. In particular, retail uses require a sufficient parking supply otherwise they will not be attracted to the Town Centre. It is important, however, that parking supply does not exceed demand otherwise vehicles will become the preferred travel mode and the pedestrian-scaled environment sought for the Town Centre will not take form. The Town Centre Plan aims to satisfy a large portion of the Town Centre's parking demand as on-street parking, with the goal of integrating parking within the overall public realm, rather than provide it as large off-street surface lots. The mixed land uses proposed for the Town Centre aid in ensuring that parking is used efficiently, as each of the land uses experience their parking demand at different points in the day.

MAP 3 - TRANSIT SERVICE



# DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



## INTRODUCTION

The existing District of Sooke Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw outlines minimum standards for the design and construction of infrastructure in the District. It includes a series of legal and regulatory preambles and a number of attached Schedules. Of importance to this report are Schedules A, B and C.

- **Schedule A** - Service Level for Works and Service identifies the service areas (ie. urban, suburban, rural) in the District;
- **Schedule B** - Standards for Service outline the standards for various infrastructure elements, including roads, storm water management, water and fire service and street trees; and
- **Schedule C** – Supplemental Detail Drawings includes a number of sketches that illustrate the design standards outlined in Schedule B.

The Sooke Town Centre Plan outlines a number of objectives for the future development of the Town Centre area, particularly with regards to sustainability and urban design. To help meet these objectives, the District's Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw needs amending. The following section outlines recommended amendments for the Bylaw, summarized as follows:

- The inclusion of a Town Centre Area designation in the Schedule A service areas map to identify the area subject to Town Centre-specific infrastructure;
- Content additions and/or changes to Schedule B of the Bylaw, which are to be applied to the Town Centre area identified in Schedule A; and
- New detail design standard drawings for inclusion in Schedule C of the Bylaw that illustrate some of the new content recommended for Schedule B.

## SERVICE LEVEL FOR WORKS AND SERVICE (SCHEDULE A)

### SERVICE AREAS

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw indicates the location of the urban, suburban and rural areas of the District as they relate to levels for works and services, shown on Figure 1 of the Bylaw. To allow for development standards to be applied to an area more focused on the Town Centre core, it is suggested that a Town Centre Area designation is added to the Bylaw. The Town Centre Area would follow the boundaries of the Town Centre Plan study area, which is entirely within the centre of the existing Urban Area.

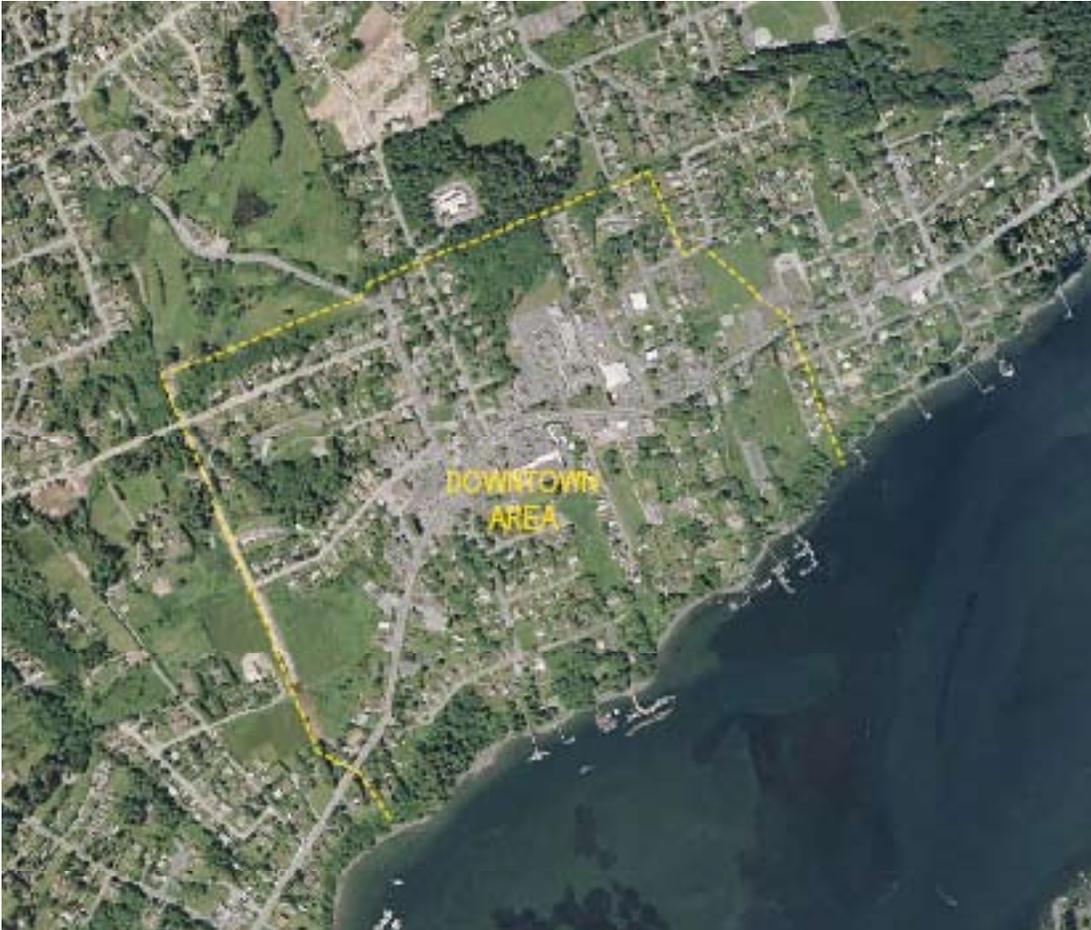


FIGURE 1:  
TOWN CENTRE  
PLAN AREA

*It is recommended that Schedule A (1) and Figure 1 of the Bylaw are amended to include a fourth service area, called the Town Centre Area. The Town Centre Area should encompass all properties included in the Town Centre Plan study area, shown above.*

## SERVICE LEVEL

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw outlines service levels for the three (3) existing service areas (urban, suburban, rural). Generally, Urban Area service levels are greater than Rural Areas because of higher development densities and the resulting increase in demand on each infrastructure system. Each service area includes required service levels for the following:

- Storm Water management;
- Roads;
- Sanitary sewerage systems;
- Electrical, telephone, street lighting and other services supplied through wires;
- Water service and fire protection;
- Walkways and trails; and
- Street trees.

The Town Centre Area should be similar to the Urban Area, as it is similar in location and context, but must be amended to include the Town Centre-specific sustainability and urban design standards.

*It is recommended that Schedule A (1) of the Bylaw is amended to include service level requirements identical to those for Urban Areas, outlined in Schedule A(2), except that the following changes shall apply:*

- *Walkways, trails, and sidewalks are to be provided at Service Level 2.*

## **STANDARDS FOR SERVICE (SCHEDULE B)**

### **STORM WATER STANDARDS (Section D)**

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw outlines a conventional approach to stormwater management where all precipitation is collected and transferred into central drainage systems and deposited into rivers and streams en masse. While this approach is operationally adequate, it presents some issues from a sustainability perspective.

Prior to human settlement, precipitation would hit the earth's surface and much of it would infiltrate the subsurface and replenish the underground water table. Conventional stormwater management interrupts this natural cycle by collecting surface runoff in centralized stormwater systems and depositing it into rivers, lakes, and eventually oceans. As a result, subsurface water supplies are diminished. Also, precipitation gathers atmospheric and surface toxins which in a conventional stormwater system, travel with stormwater and are deposited into rivers. This is problematic because large quantities of toxins are deposited into water systems without being treated. There are more effective systems of stormwater management that come closer to replicating natural drainage cycles.

### **BIOSWALES**

Bioswales are a simple, but effective method by which stormwater is channelled through an engineered drainage swale that naturally filters toxins from stormwater and permits infiltration into the subsurface. Bioswales typically include vegetation that aids in absorption of contaminants and engineered soil that permits stormwater infiltration. Bioswales have a given capacity and any stormwater that is not absorbed into the subsurface enters the conventional stormwater system. Bioswales are designed in a simple fashion and are easily integrated into new infrastructure or into retrofitted existing infrastructure. They require a minimum 2.5m swale at the roadside and a gap in the roadside curb for water to pass through. They also require a stormdrain at the end of the swale to collect excess stormwater. It is important that any bioswale designs take into consideration the high levels of precipitation typical of Sooke and the steep grades present in the Town Centre area.

*It is recommended that Section D (1.4) is amended to state that in Service Level 2 areas where a drainage system is required, a roadside bioswale acceptable to the Municipal Engineer and the Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection should be considered prior to designing a conventional system; and*

*It is recommended Section D (1.4) refer the reader to a bioswale design standard sketch to be included in Schedule C.*

### **PERMEABLE SURFACES**

Permeable pavement surfaces are porous surface finishes with an underlying sand/stone base that permit surface stormwater to infiltrate into the subsoil, rather than collecting it in stormwater sewer systems. Permeable surfaces also act as filters, eliminating a portion of contaminants that accumulate

in stormwater. Permeable surfaces are effective in low vehicle traffic areas and can contribute to streetscape beautification efforts. The existing Subdivision and Standards Bylaw does not include consideration for permeable surfaces and they are best integrated into the Road Standards (Section R) section.

*It is recommended that Section R includes a new comment stating that permeable surfaces should be considered as a surface treatment for all parking lots and low volume roadways, and should be designed to the satisfaction of the Municipal Engineer.*

## ROAD STANDARDS (Section R)

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw identifies eleven (11) road classifications for the District. During the Town Centre Plan process it was noted that the intended streetscape design concepts could not be accomplished within any of the existing road classifications. The District is also undertaking a Transportation Master Plan concurrently with the Town Centre Plan, which is likely to recommend a consolidation of the large number of road classifications to increase consistency within the District and make them more usable for staff and developers.

Accordingly, two new Town Centre road classifications have been developed – Waterview Street and Town Centre Local. Each street type serves a specific purpose in the make-up of the Town Centre and is designed according to the function it is intended to serve.

*It is recommended that the Waterview Street and Town Centre Local road classifications are included in the Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw under Schedule B, Section R (12); and*

*It is recommended that Section R (12), where it states that road classification designations are included in the OCP or as specified by the Municipal Engineer, is amended to include the Town Centre Plan as a source for road classification designations.”*

## ROUNDBABOUTS

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw does not give specific design standards for roundabouts, other than stating that all roads are to be developed in accordance with the Transportation Association of Canada’s (TAC) Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads. The Town Centre concept plan includes a series of roundabouts that serve both a traffic and a beautification purpose. Each roundabout should be specifically designed for the immediate context in which it is applied, relating to roadway width, approach angle, and so on, but should be designed with consistent design criteria.

*It is recommended that Section R is amended to include a statement that all roundabouts must be designed in accordance with the recommended practise outlined in the latest edition of the TAC’s Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads or as accepted by the Municipal Engineer.*

## OTHER STANDARDS (Section W)

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw includes two (2) Service Levels for lighting, with Level 1 not requiring underground wiring and Level 2 requiring underground wiring and ornamental lighting. However, ornamental lighting design criteria only include physical dimensions and performance (ie. luminance, uniformity, etc), it does not specify appearance or style/character. It is important that lighting standards in the Town Centre area are unique from the rest of the District because the Town Centre will develop with a distinct aesthetic character and will have a decided

pedestrian focus. The form and siting of Town Centre buildings will also create smaller, more intimate urban spaces that will require unique lighting standards.

*It is recommended that Schedule B, Section W.3 in the Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw is amended to include a new comment stating that ornamental lighting in the Town Centre should be in a style/character that is unique from the rest of the District; and*

*It is recommended that further study is undertaken to develop a detailed design plan and is defined as Service Level 3 for walkways and trails.*

## UTILITY TRANSFORMERS

Utility transformers are a necessity for the provision of services provided by wiring (ie. lighting, telephones, etc). However, transformers are a visual blight and, when sited improperly, can detract from the aesthetic character of an area, especially in the Town Centre area where considerable effort is being spent developing a high-quality aesthetic public realm. In addition to care in siting, there are programs in certain municipalities that aim to reduce the negative visual impact of utility transformers by decorating them with the works of local artists, as shown in Figure 2. Sooke already has a successful program in place for the treatment of utility transformers, which should be continued, but formalization of this policy in the Development Standards may be appropriate.

*It is recommended that Section W (1.3) is amended to include a statement that consideration should be given to locating transformers so that they do not detract from the aesthetic character of an area; and*

*It is recommended that the District continue their treatment program for utility transformers.*

FIGURE 2: EXAMPLES OF UTILITY TRANSFORMER ART IN OTHER TOWNS



## TOWN CENTRE SIDEWALK TREATMENTS

It is suggested that, whether brick pavers, stamped asphalt or some combination of concrete and tile is chosen - examples of which are shown in Figure 3 - the colour, shape and pattern of the walkway should be compatible with the overall vision and palette of colours considered for the Town Centre. Thought should be given to choosing colours that are different than the autumn-coloured pavers that are typical of many downtown areas, perhaps a subtler 'natural', 'mocha', or 'sand' shade may be appropriate. Consideration should also be given to choosing a walkway material and pattern that is appropriate for the topography and climate of Sooke. These variables of sidewalk design are important in defining the identity of Sooke Town Centre and should be determined in consultation with the community.

*It is recommended that further study is undertaken where a vision for the treatment of Town Centre sidewalks is established and defined as Service Level 3 for walkways and trails; and*

*It is recommended that Section WT is amended to include reference to a design detail drawing for textured sidewalks.*

FIGURE 3: EXAMPLES OF SIDEWALK TREATMENTS USED IN OTHER TOWNS



## STREET TREES (Section T)

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw includes the requirement that in areas designated as Urban and Suburban Areas, street trees must be planted on all new roads, extensions of existing roads, and in the frontage of any property of an existing road. The Town Centre Plan determined street trees to be an essential part of the public realm and encourages their use throughout the Town Centre area.

*It is recommended that Section T (1.2) is amended to include a requirement for street trees on the property frontage of all development in the Town Centre Area; and*

*It is recommended that Section T (2.5) is amended to include Town Centre Road as a road type and that the minimum tree sizes for Collector Roads are applied to Town Centre Roads.*

An overriding objective of the Town Centre Plan is to create an identity for the Town Centre that is unique from the rest of the District, which can be addressed through a tailored street tree/landscape program. It is suggested that the list of suitable street trees is reduced in number so that street trees are more consistent in the Town Centre and a more distinctive character is achieved.

*It is recommended that Section T (2.4) is amended to include an abbreviated list of street trees appropriate for the Town Centre Area.*

## XERISCAPING

Xeriscaping involves choosing species that do not require artificial irrigation after they are planted. Xeriscaping often consists of native plant species that are well adapted to the local climate and is drought-resistant. Xeriscaping can be combined with stormwater management systems to take advantage of water harvested in roadside swales.

*It is recommended that Section T is amended to include a new comment (1.3) that speaks to Xeriscaping and consideration for street trees that require minimal artificial irrigation.*

## FURNISHING AND SIGNAGE (Section F)

The existing Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw does not include a section with design standards for street furniture or street signs. The Town Centre Plan objective of creating a distinct character in the Town Centre depends heavily on the provision of street furniture that is distinctive to the Town Centre and effective street signage that is in keeping with the Town Centre aesthetic. It is therefore suggested that a new section is created in the Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw to allow for this.

*It is recommended that Schedule B is amended to include a new section entitled Section F – Furnishings and Signage.*

The Furnishings and Signage section (Section F) should include general commentary about the design and character sought for Town Centre furnishings and signage and how they are to fit in with the overall vision for the area. It should mention the need to integrate the various urban design elements used within the Town Centre to create a distinct, coordinated image for the Town Centre.

*It is recommended that Section F contains commentary around the selection and design of Town Centre street furnishings and signage.*

Most of the standards in the District's Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw refer to the approval of the Municipal Engineer as a requirement. However, since furnishings and signage are largely concerned with urban design and planning, and updates to planning around the Town Centre will be overseen by the Director of Planning, it is suggested that the Municipal Planner is consulted in approvals of any furnishing and/or signage.

*It is recommended that Section F contains the comment that street furnishings and signs must meet approval of both the Municipal Engineer and the Director of Planning.*

## STREET FURNITURE

An intensive system of street furniture should be included in the development of the Town Centre in order to increase pedestrian comfort and overall vitality of the Town Centre public realm. Street furniture should be consistent in its style, character and placement throughout that Town Centre. Consideration should be given to using colours, materials and designs that are compatible with the overall vision for the Town Centre, and are compatible with the other aesthetic components of the Town Centre, including walkways, lighting and signage.

Street furniture components should be developed as a catalogue of items that are from a similar supplier and of a similar style. Street furniture should be chosen with colours and materials that are coordinated with overall approaches to design in the Town Centre and that are indicative of public intention. The street furniture catalogue should include the following items:

- Benches;
- Garbage cans;
- Tree grates;
- Bike racks;
- Bollards;
- Information kiosks; and
- Bus shelters.

*It is recommended that further study is undertaken where a detailed plan for street furnishings standards that are consistent with the Town Centre aesthetic is established;*

*It is recommended that a street furnishings catalogue is developed which includes benches, garbage cans, tree grates, bike racks, bollards, information kiosks, and/or bus shelters; and*

*It is recommended that the proposed Section F includes a link to the street furnishings catalogue and some comment about their appropriate use in the Town Centre.*

## STREET SIGNS

Signage is to be developed for the Town Centre which presents identification and direction information in a clear and concise manner, but which reinforces the theme and character sought for the Town Centre. Town Centre signage is to be distinctive from signage in the rest of the District, mainly so as to differentiate the Town Centre area and strengthen its identity. The chosen Town Centre street sign should be determined through an integrated community consultation exercise, but generally the colours, materials and imagery used are to be coordinated with those used in street furnishings, lighting and any sidewalk textures.

*It is recommended that further study is undertaken where a detailed plan for signage standards that are consistent with the Town Centre aesthetic is established;*

*It is recommended that the proposed Section F includes design standards for Town Centre signage, to include font character and size, colours, materials, and any chosen symbology; and*

*It is recommended that the proposed Section F includes a comment that references a signage standards sketch included in Schedule C.*

## **SUPPLEMENTAL DETAIL DRAWINGS (SCHEDULE C)**

Supplemental Detail Drawings (Schedule C) are a series of technical sketches included in the Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw that illustrate the standards described in the Standards for Service (Schedule B) section. In order to more clearly illustrate the standards suggested for Town Centre development, it is recommended that the Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw is amended to include a number of new supplemental detail drawings. The following detail drawings, also included in Appendix A of this report, should be included:

- Town Centre Local cross section; and
- Waterview Street cross section.

In addition to the design details included in this report, other detail drawings will need adding that will include content that should be determined at a later date. Detail drawings to add include:

- Bioswale detail drawing  
(to be consistent with the design used in the Sooke Transportation Master Plan)
- A catalogue of Town Centre street furnishings;
- Town Centre lighting details;
- Town Centre signage design criteria; and
- Design criteria for textured sidewalks.



## IMPLEMENTATION



### 2009-2011 STRATEGIC PLAN

Implement actions in the Strategic Plan for 2009-2011 as they relate to the Town Centre including:

1. Undertake a review of the Sooke Zoning Bylaw
2. Develop or revise land development policies and bylaws to streamline municipal application processes and better regulate development
3. Work cooperatively with other governmental agencies to develop strategies to reduce homelessness
4. Identify and implement green house gas reduction initiatives to meet commitment to the BC Climate Action Charter
5. Develop and enact implementation strategies for infrastructure upgrades and new construction
6. Develop a strategy to identify phasing of sidewalk improvements and beautification
7. Work cooperatively with other levels of government for upgrades and improvements to Highway 14 and to identify a second route in and out of Sooke
8. Develop and implement appropriate economic development strategies
9. Promote the vitality of the Town Centre (2008 Town Centre Plan) and encourage commercial growth on the waterfront and in the Town Centre
10. Pursue new sources of revenue and alternative ways of financing

### REALIZE THE GOALS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The Sooke Town Centre Plan is intended to give form to the goals and aspirations of a wide cross section of the Sooke community and expressed in the OCP. When used in concert with other policy and guiding documents such as the Downtown Design Guidelines, the Town Centre Plan proposes integrated concepts for the Land-Use, Urban Design, and Transportation Strategies, that combined will provide direction to public and private redevelopment initiatives.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Establish the funds in the Capital Budget, as soon as possible, to complete the final design of specific Highway improvements associated with the Town Center and call contracts for the work, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Transportation.
2. Consider in detail, the placement of the library, wellness center, an entertainment venue in the form of an outdoor or indoor amphitheater and a specific location for a new City Hall in the longer term on the basis of a partnership with a developer to cause further development.

3. Include upgrades to Murray Road access and parking in the Five Year Capital Works program.
4. Include funding assistance in the Five Year Capital Works program for the construction of proposed connector roads within the Town Centre.
5. Establish working relationships between the District of Sooke, property owners, the development community and others in order to develop priorities and cost sharing mechanisms regarding the construction of roads and infrastructure in the town centre.

## REZONING PROCESS

1. The Planning Department will develop a sustainability checklist for rezoning applications based on the Sustainable Development Strategy 2008.
2. The Planning Department will develop a bonus density policy regarding the provision of amenities and affordable housing requested as part of rezoning applications.
3. The Planning Department will develop an approval process that provides for a reduced rezoning timeline where the rezoning application meets the objectives contained in this plan and other relevant documents.
4. Development proposals that propose increased density or height may be supported provided they are within the context of the OCP, Town Centre Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines 2006 and other relevant documents.

## ENGINEERING

1. Engineering and Planning will develop a phasing plan consistent with this plan that identifies the works and services that will be required at each phase and the development of the street network.
2. Engineering will also undertake the further work outlined in the Development Standards including:
  - A. Detail the proposed bioswale in a manner consistent with the Transportation Master Plan.
  - B. Develop a catalogue of Town Centre street furnishings, lighting details, sidewalk finishes and signage.

## PLAN MONITORING

1. Review the plan one year after adoption to ensure that major recommendations regarding rezoning, capital works, development standards, policy work and rezoning process have been implemented.
2. The full implementation of this plan is projected to take place over the next 30-40 years and will need to be monitored and adjusted accordingly to ensure that the major objectives are achieved.
3. This plan will also need to be reviewed and ensure it is consistent with the updated Official Community Plan, Transportation Master Plan and Parks and Trails Master Plan.
4. Consider engaging the Economic Development Commission to assist in communicating, advertising and marketing the Plan so as to attract interest by Developers in the Town Centre development. The EDC will be required to provide quarterly reporting to Sooke Council.

## APPENDIX A – PLAN CONTEXT

There are a number of plans currently underway or already completed which will have a significant impact on the development of the town centre.

### OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The District of Sooke has hired a consultant to begin the process of updating the 2002 Official Community Plan. The District of Sooke has begun the process of reviewing its Official Community Plan (OCP). An OCP is the principle municipal planning tool that develops a vision for the future of the Sooke community and establishes a detailed set of policies in a wide range of areas. The existing OCP was adopted in 2002, and since that time, the municipal boundary has expanded, a community sewer system has been established in the core and new growth and development pressures have emerged. This has prompted the need for an updated OCP that reflects the current vision of the community, and an OCP that will better position Sooke to respond to future opportunities and challenges.

The OCP Update will include:

- An inventory of current community conditions and trends.
- Goals and objectives for the development of residential, commercial and industrial land, including protection areas
- Developing specific policies for the development and maintenance of current and future infrastructure services
- Developing general policies related to social development, including social determinants of health and well being and food security.
- Developing policies related to affordable, rental and special needs housing
- Establishing economic development objectives
- Incorporating a future road network plan, pedestrian paths and sidewalks and bicycle lanes and pathways.
- Incorporating Smart Growth principles and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
- Updating the Development Permit Design Guidelines, and incorporating the Downtown Sooke Design Guidelines
- Incorporating a regional context statement.
- Updating mapping that will be designated for the different land uses.

### PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The intent of this project is to analyze the existing outdoor space network in the District of Sooke and develop a comprehensive strategy to guide future decisions for parks and trails, identify opportunities for acquisition, priorities for expansion of the system and distinguish the trends and demands that will determine the future for outdoor recreation in Sooke.

### TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The District of Sooke has retained a consulting firm to undertake a comprehensive transportation review of all roads, sidewalks and bike lanes within the District. The review will address current traffic patterns and future traffic patterns, confirm horizon year road network as well as pedestrian and cycling network. The 2008 Transportation Master Plan will be used by the District of Sooke for future roadway network improvements and development and as a guide for planning capital projects. In addition, a 2008 Roads Asset Management Plan will be developed for the related infrastructure for sustainable

asset management. This plan will update the 2003 Pavement Plan and be used for planning capital and maintenance expenditures to ensure the roadway network is maintained to an acceptable standard and improved as required. Public consultation will be ongoing throughout the process.

## LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The District of Sooke has embarked on a major liquid waste management plan. The following is an overview:

*The District of Sooke has recently completed construction of sewage collection and treatment facilities under a provincially mandated Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP). This three-stage process is now entering its final stage. The LWMP process also requires the development of planning strategies for the long-term management of rainwater. Enhanced rainwater management will have direct effects on the environment (watercourses and watersheds), public health and well-being and the ways in which municipal infrastructure and private land is developed. The LWMP (Rainwater) Stage 1 provided an investigation of rainwater management options and has been approved by the provincial Ministry of Environment.*

The District of Sooke is now proceeding with Stage 2 & 3 activities that will result in the development of the final plan for the management of rainwater. Council has formed a LWMP Advisory Committee - Rainwater. This committee will be instrumental in providing input to the District of Sooke and its consultants during the final plan development.

## DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES – 2006

In 2004 a Downtown Revitalization Committee was formed and the consulting team of Zeidler Partnership and Boulevard Transportation Group was retained to provide Sooke with a set of design recommendations that would guide future private and public development of the downtown core, aimed at nurturing a strong and healthy community. This was in response to the 2001 Official Community Plan mandate to prepare design guidelines as long term planning objectives, through community collaboration. The Downtown Design Guidelines 2006 were based on three key themes which were Mobility, Built Form and Streetscape/Open Space. Through the public input process three main ideas emerged for the town centre which were “The Town Square”, “Harbour Walk” and “Greenways and Green Streets”. The Design Guidelines were not intended to provide details of location for redevelopment or detailed building form but rather to provide a general guide of the future character of the town centre.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – 2008

In 2008 Sooke adopted a Sustainable Development Strategy which outlined a number of specific strategies which all relate directly to the development of the town centre. The key strategies identified in the plan are:

1. Create neighbourhood centres and a downtown waterfront that are compact and complete.
2. Develop a transportation system that provides viable opportunities for non-automobile transportation and transit use.
3. Support low-impact, energy-efficient, healthy buildings in which to live, work and play.
4. Celebrate cultural and ecological assets through the management of open spaces and the public realm.
5. Develop low-impact, efficient, green infrastructure.
6. Foster a healthy, resilient, and supportive community.
7. Promote jobs and businesses that contribute to a locally-oriented, green economy.
8. Promote a healthy, sustainable, local food system.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION SURVEY

The Economic Development Commission developed a survey to send to residents and businesses during the month of November, 2007. The purpose of the survey was to solicit public input on questions affecting economic development to help inform an economic development strategy for Sooke. The EDC summarized the results as follows;

*“The strongest agreement was to the statements about making the town core more attractive to business and consumers – including making it more pedestrian friendly, providing better access for vehicles, improved sidewalks, and a more attractive town centre. There was strong support for establishment of a mid-sized hotel/motel and active pursuit of such a facility, additional commercial development in the existing town centre, provision of products and services not available and shopping locally. Respondents also strongly agreed to statements regarding economic development in the areas of youth and seniors services, promotion of healthier options, and through support of arts and culture.”*

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN - 2002

The 2002 Official Community Plan continued to describe the town centre as follows:

*The Town Centre is historically centered around the intersection of Otter Point Road and Sooke Road (Highway 14), but has spread out in a somewhat haphazard manner as larger highway-oriented shopping plazas and mini-malls have been developed to the east. The commercial district is primarily made up of three shopping plazas, each with a variety of multiple retail/commercial businesses.*

*The overall visual character of the Town Centre area is that of a commercial ‘strip’. The pedestrian environment is poor, with most of the public realm devoted to parking and vehicle circulation and access. Sidewalks are not continuous and pedestrian routes are not well-marked as they cross through vehicle access areas. Pedestrian access across the highway is limited. Despite the amount of area devoted to cars, vehicle circulation, access, and turning is restricted because of the piecemeal nature of development.*

*Architectural styles are mixed and of widely varying construction quality. Signs of widely varying and uncoordinated design dominate the view. Natural landscape areas are few and scattered. There is a large amount of impervious asphalt paving in areas not otherwise used for cars or pedestrians. There are a variety of businesses and services (including the library and social services offices) within the Town Centre, but economic viability and retention of business is a continuing problem.*

As part of the implementation of the OCP, the town centre was included in a development permit area with specific guidelines aimed at:

*“shaping new development into ideal forms, as well as suggesting opportunities for the repair and infill of existing problem areas. The emphasis is on compactness, pedestrian comfort, neighbourliness, and high architectural and visual standards.”*

## SOOKE DOWNTOWN STRATEGY - 1996

The documentation regarding the issues facing the Sooke town centre stretches back to 1996 when Sooke was still unincorporated. The Sooke Chamber of Commerce initiated the Sooke Downtown Strategy which addressed transportation, land use, community image and revitalization. The plan iden-

tified critical issues to the success of the plan including promotion of downtown, Ministry of Transportation approval authority; lack of sewer servicing; need for municipal incorporation; and impediments to development of private waterfront land.

## OTHER PLANS IN PROGRESS

### OCP UPDATE – 2008

The District of Sooke has hired a consultant to begin the process of updating the 2002 Official Community Plan.

The District of Sooke has begun the process of reviewing its Official Community Plan (OCP). An OCP is the principle municipal planning tool that develops a vision for the future of the Sooke community and establishes a detailed set of policies in a wide range of areas. The existing OCP was adopted in 2002, and since that time, the municipal boundary has expanded, a community sewer system has been established in the core and new growth and development pressures have emerged. This has prompted the need for an updated OCP that reflects the current vision of the community, and an OCP that will better position Sooke to respond to future opportunities and challenges.

The OCP Update will include:

- An inventory of current community conditions and trends.
- Goals and objectives for the development of residential, commercial and industrial land, including protection areas
- Developing specific policies for the development and maintenance of current and future infrastructure services
- Developing general policies related to social development, including social determinants of health and well being and food security
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- Incorporating Smart Growth principles and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
- Updating the Development Permit Design Guidelines, and incorporating the Downtown Sooke Design Guidelines
- Incorporating a regional context statement
- Updating mapping that will be designated for the different land uses.

## TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The District of Sooke is undertaking a comprehensive transportation review of all roads, sidewalks and bike lanes within the District. Part of the work will include a proposed design for Sooke Road and an alignment for the proposed Grant Road collector. This will have significance for the Town Centre plan in terms of the function and appearance of Sooke Road in the future.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

Historically new construction in Sooke has been approximately 100 units per year. This has been a minor percentage of the regional construction which has been focused primarily in Victoria and Langford. As these communities have built out, there has been increased activity in Sooke. CMHC

statistics indicate 111 housing starts for January- August 2008. This is an increase of 26% from the same period in 2007. Most of this construction has been single family dwellings in major development projects outside the Town Centre.

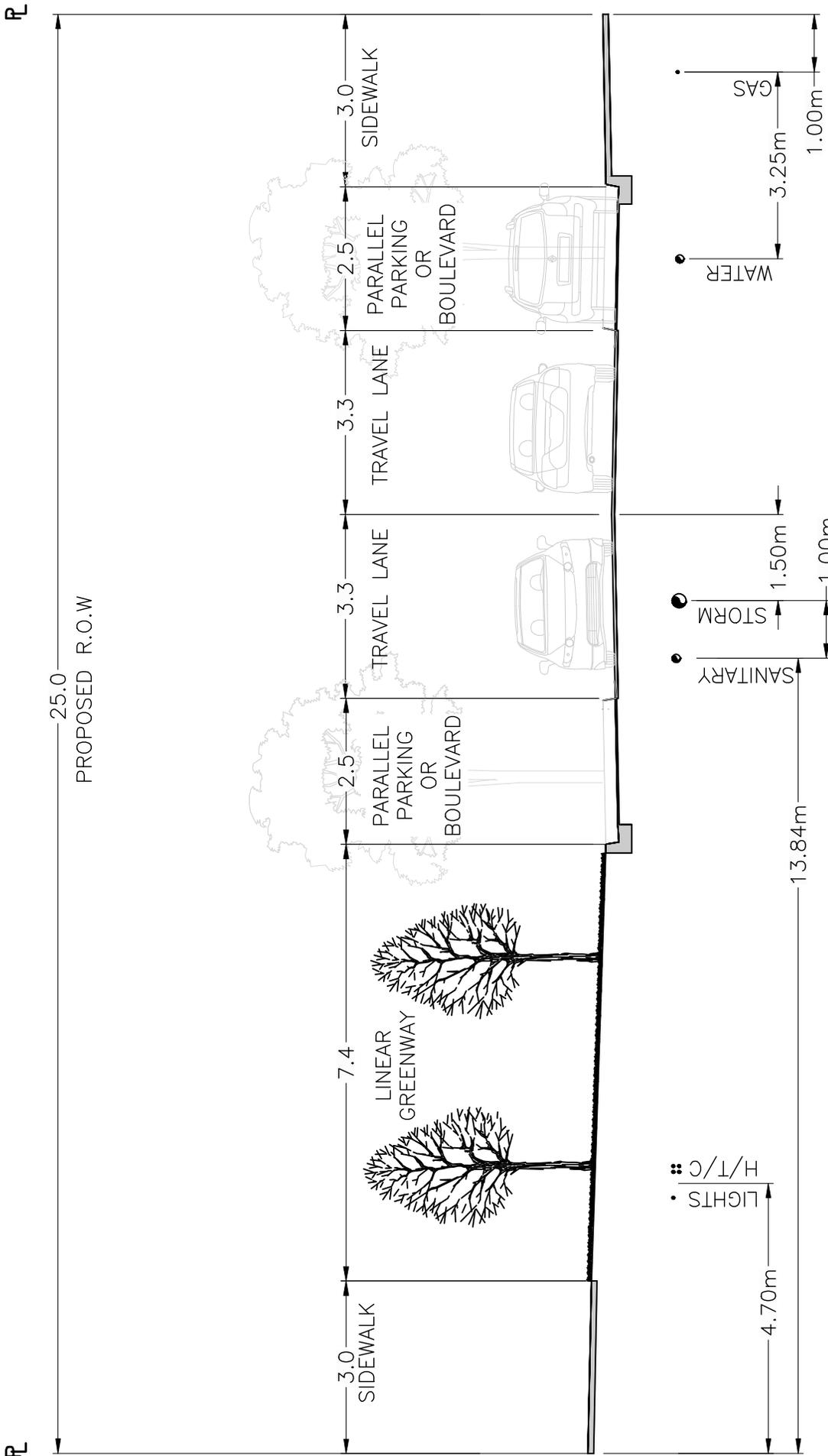
The Town Centre Assessment undertaken prior to the development of the plan indicated a perceived lack of confidence in the ability of the community to clearly identify a strategic direction for the Town Centre and the lack of follow through on initiatives that have already been identified. This uncertainty has hampered both public and private investment in the Town Centre.

Fractured ownership and narrow lot configuration particularly south of Sooke Road was also identified as an impediment to development.



## **APPENDIX B**

Recommended Supplemental Detail Drawings for Subdivision and Development Standards Bylaw,  
Schedule C



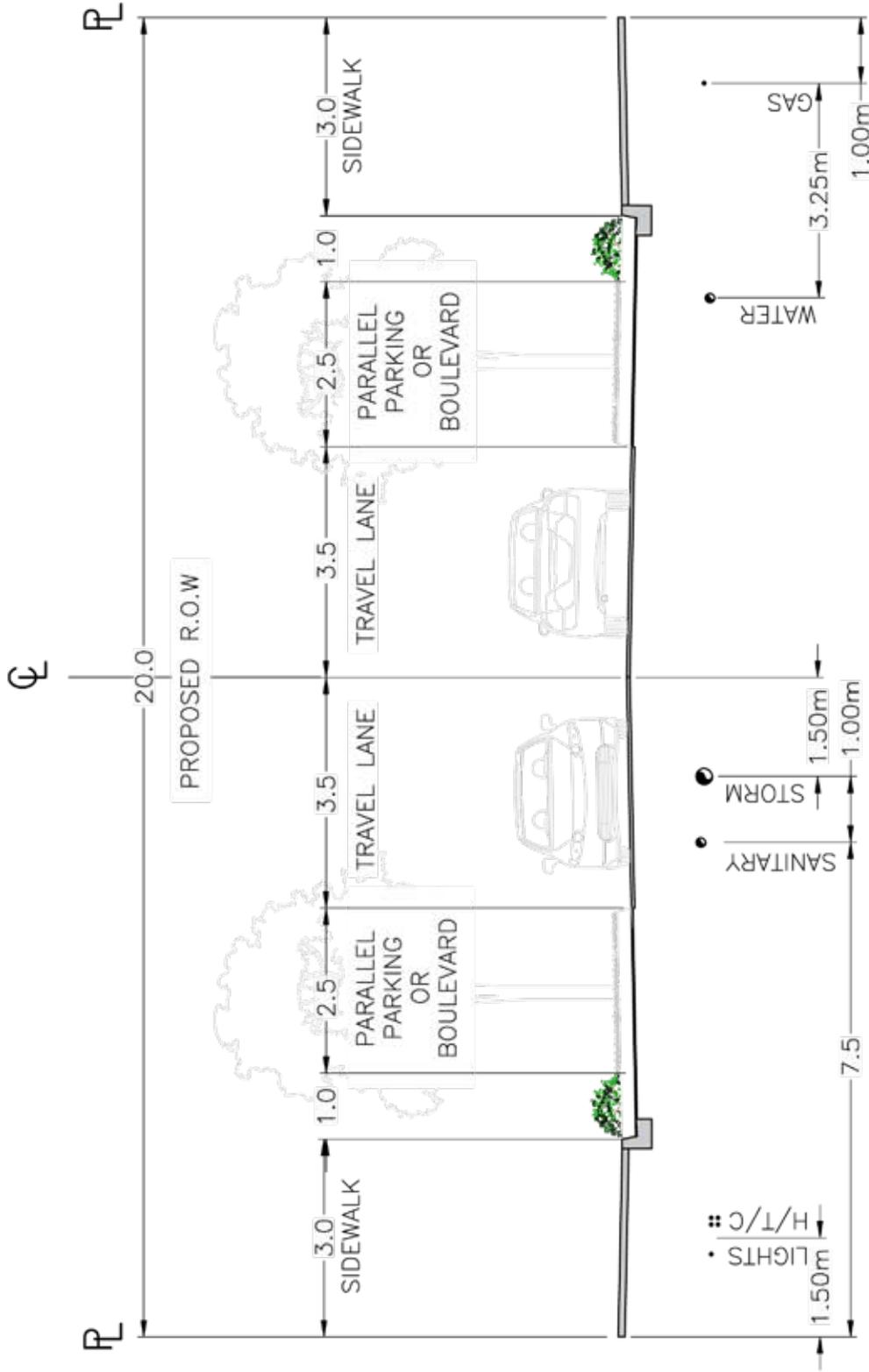
TITLE:

**WATERVIEW STREET**  
TYPICAL CROSS SECTION  
Sooke Town Centre Plan

DESIGNED: DC	DRAWN: gs	SCALE: 1:100
DATE: Nov 04-08	DRAWING NO: 892_Sk_204	REV: 1

**TRANSPORTATION GROUP**

**Boulevard**



**NOTE:** CERTAIN TOWN CENTRE LOCAL ROADS MAY REQUIRE ANGLED PARKING, IN WHICH CASE A 25.0m RIGHT-OF-WAY IS REQUIRED.

TITLE: TOWN CENTRE LOCAL			
TYPICAL CROSS SECTION			
SOOKE TOWN CENTRE PLAN			
DESIGNED: DC	DRAWN: gs	SCALE: 1:100	REV. 1
DATE: Nov 04-08		DRAWING NO: 892_Sk_202	





# APPENDIX C

## TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY

