

# PART 3

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND LAND USE

When a municipality's population grows, new housing, services, amenities, green spaces, and institutions are developed to meet demand. The strategic planning of the location, amount, type and character of development is called "growth management."

Growth management through land use policies enables local governments to strategically direct and shape development to align with a community's vision and goals. The policies in this section describe a compact growth strategy to protect ecological and agricultural areas, offer more housing and transportation choices, support economic prosperity and diversity, reduce the cost of municipal infrastructure, enhance community well-being, and support our transition to a net-zero community.

## 3.1 GROWTH MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Growth management is one of the most powerful mechanisms to guide change in a way that supports a community's priorities. At the core of this OCP is a growth management concept and land use plan (**Figure 6**) that reflect Sooke's collective vision for the future and responds to the evolving and diversifying needs of the community.

Policies in this OCP strategically focus future growth to protect ecological and agricultural areas, offer more housing and transportation choices, support economic prosperity and diversity, prioritize sustainable municipal infrastructure planning, enhance community well-being, and support our transition to a net-zero community.

### Focused Residential Growth in the Town Centre

The greatest residential intensities and majority of residential growth are focused within the Town Centre-Core, and Town Centre-Waterfront. The Transitional Residential designation provides a deliberate buffer between the Town Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods, allowing a graduated shift in building form, scale, and intensity, while supporting commercial services within the Town Centre. This is complemented by commercial, civic, and cultural uses and a renewed relationship with the waterfront.

In contrast, maximum densities and minimum lot sizes in other residential land use are intended to limit the scale of growth outside of the Town Centre designations.

### Other Residential Growth

Outside of the Town Centre-Core, Town Centre-Waterfront, and Transitional Residential, moderate residential growth and some limited small-scale local-serving commercial uses are supported in established lower-density neighbourhoods.

### Infrastructure

With new residential and commercial growth focused in areas serviced by municipal sewer infrastructure, community growth supports a sustainable relationship with the District's long-term **asset management** and reduces the impact of land uses on Sooke's significant ecosystems.

## Future Neighbourhood Planning

To better understand neighbourhood-scale dynamics, evaluate infrastructure and servicing options, and ensure focused, meaningful engagement with community partners, the District will lead the development of Neighbourhood Area Plans for the Kaltasin/Billings Spit and Whiffin Spit neighbourhoods (**Figure 6**). Other neighbourhoods within the District of Sooke may be considered through Council direction for neighbourhood plans throughout the life of the OCP, based on community need, infrastructure priorities, or development pressures.

## Commercial and Employment Lands

As a key community priority to foster complete neighbourhoods, mixed-use commercial development and expanded employment opportunities are focused within the Town Centre - Core, and Town Centre - Waterfront as well as existing employment lands.

## Agricultural Lands

Agricultural lands – specifically those in the Agricultural Land Reserve – are protected from non-agriculture development and are not intended to accommodate urban development that is not in support of agriculture.

## Parks

Parks are not intended for future growth or development, but rather are established to help maintain important ecological characteristics and natural areas within the community and to provide access to diverse recreation and leisure opportunities.



**Figure 5.** Scale of Potential Residential Development in Sooke, per s. 3.2 Land Use Designations

## 3.2 LAND USE

A diverse land use mix is central to achieving the vision and goals established by the OCP. In short, land use diversity supports compact, complete, and connected communities – which offer more diverse housing and transportation choices, increased access to services, amenities, and jobs, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and improved community well-being.

The OCP includes a range of land use designations to guide long-term planning decisions. The table below summarizes the details of OCP land use designations and associated densities.

Maximum densities within each designation will be informed by the policy direction of the OCP and the site-specific zoning provided in the **Zoning Bylaw**. Detailed policies for each designation are provided within this section.

OCP Designation	Land Use	Maximum height	Maximum Density	Potential Growth
<b>Town Centre - Core</b>	Mixed-use residential, commercial, and institutional	6 storeys	2.5 FAR	High
<b>Town Centre - Waterfront</b>	Mixed-use residential, commercial, recreation, tourism, and institutional	4 storeys east of Ed Macgregor Park, scaling down to 3 storeys moving westward, and 6 storeys along Brownsey Boulevard	2.0 FAR 5.0 FAR (Where building fronts Brownsey Boulevard)	Medium -High
<b>Town Centre Transitional Residential</b>	Multi-unit residential with neighbourhood-scale commercial, and institutional	4 storeys	2.0 FAR	Medium
<b>Community Residential</b>	Single family dwellings, multi-unit residential mix with Neighbourhood-scale commercial, and institutional	3 storeys	1.5 FAR 70 units per ha*	Low-Medium

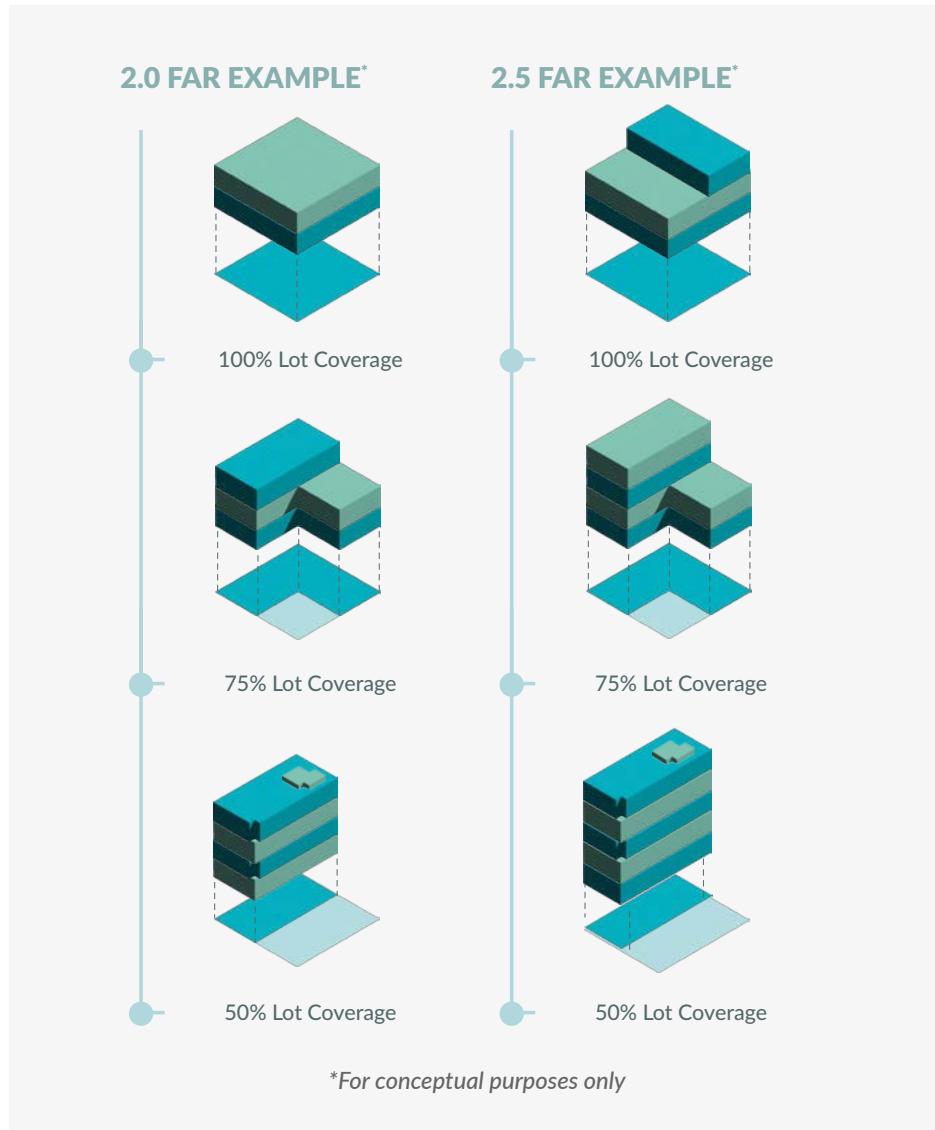
**Table 5.** Land Use Summary Table

\*A maximum density of 70 units per ha does not apply for single lot development up to 4 units.

OCP Designation	Land Use	Maximum height	Maximum Density	Potential Growth
<b>Gateway Residential</b>	Large lot single family dwellings with some opportunities for limited <b>infill</b> , neighbourhood-scale commercial, recreation, tourism and agriculture	3 storeys	Minimum lot size: 0.25 ha	Low
<b>Rural Residential</b>	Large lot single family dwellings, agriculture	3 storeys	Minimum lot size: 4 ha	Low
<b>Comprehensive Development</b>	As per Area Plan process	As per Area Plan process	As per Area Plan process	n/a
<b>Employment Lands</b>	Mix of employment-oriented uses, including commercial, light, general, and heavy industrial	N/A	N/A	n/a
<b>Agricultural</b>	Farming and agri-tourism	N/A	As per ALC approval.	n/a
<b>Parks and Trails</b>	Active and passive parks, trails, fields, recreation facilities, community gardens. Preserved natural open spaces.	N/A	N/A	n/a

## What is FAR?

**Floor Area Ratio** (FAR) is the calculation of a building's floor area in relation to the size of the land parcel on which it is located. It divides the total area of the building by the total area of the parcel, which helps convey the bulk of a building.



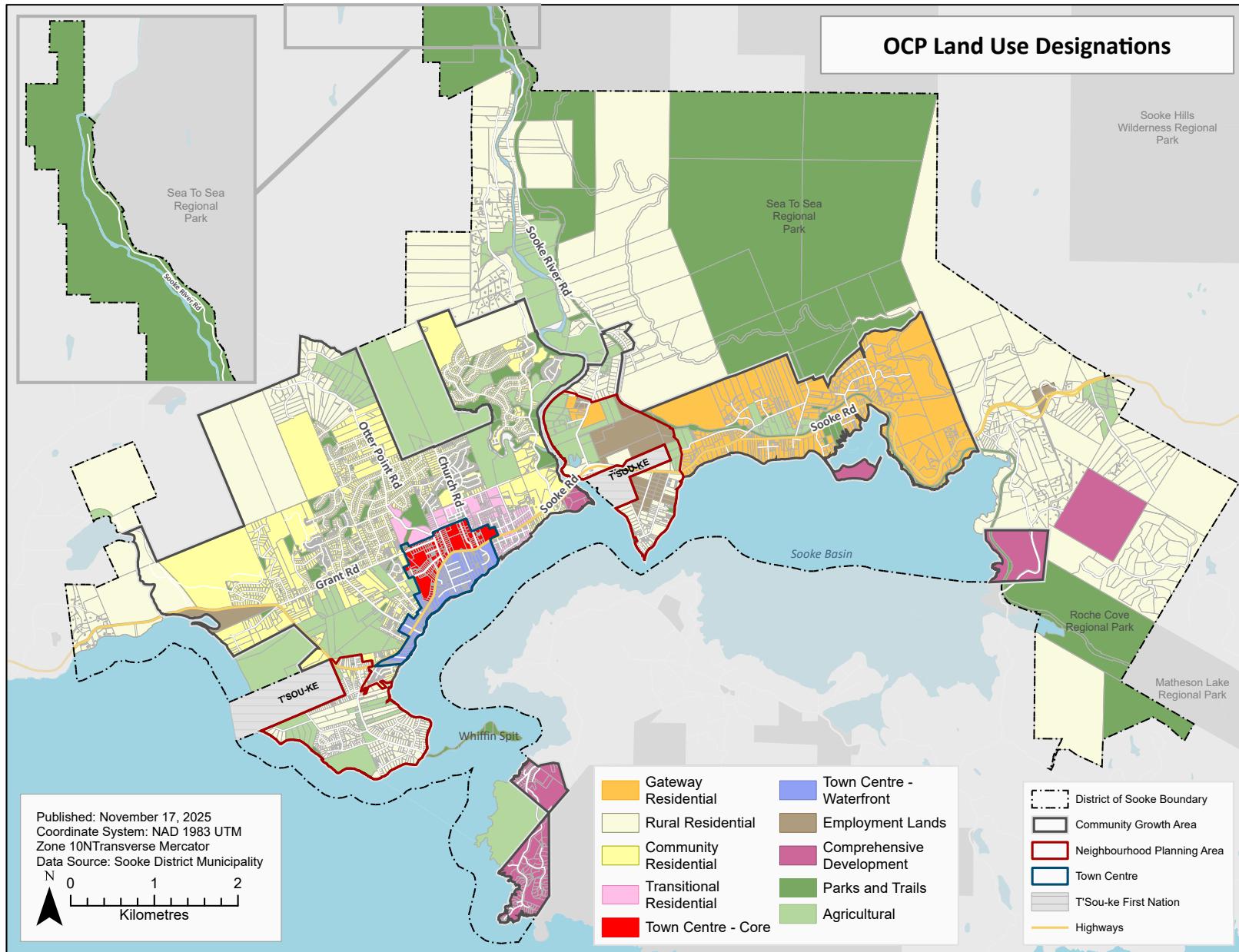


Figure 6. OCP Land Use Designations.

## 3.3 GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES

**Policy 3.3.1** Discourage urban **sprawl**, which is the non-contiguous, low-density expansion of urban areas.

**Policy 3.3.2** Concentrate new residential development in existing developed areas, in areas currently serviced by municipal infrastructure.

**Policy 3.3.3** Support mixed-use development, such as commercial with residential above the ground floor, in areas that are served well by existing infrastructure, transit, major roads, and trails.

**Policy 3.3.4** Support the establishment of compact, neighbourhood-scale commercial activities in Community Residential and Gateway Residential designations, adhering to the following parameters: to primarily serve neighbourhood residents in meeting their daily needs by walking or rolling; and ideally situated on a corner at a controlled intersection.

**Policy 3.3.5** Ensure at-grade uses along the streetfront have a pedestrian-scaled urban form, including frequent entrances, transparent glazing, minimal setbacks, and the absence of surface parking between the building and the street in the Town Centre.

**Policy 3.3.6** Take an integrated approach to all land use and transportation planning, consistent with the District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan.

**Policy 3.3.7** Foster an active, accessible, and diverse public realm, improving pedestrian and cycling connections, and contributing to Sooke's sense of place.

**Policy 3.3.8** Provide and encourage a range of housing types, tenures, and densities – as well as affordable and attainable housing opportunities – to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families of varying income levels and demographics.

**Policy 3.3.9** Support home-based businesses.

**Policy 3.3.10** Protect and enhance natural amenities including tree stands, view potential, **natural features**, creeks, rivers, wetlands, and view corridors throughout the development process.

**Policy 3.3.11** Minimize negative impact of development on the natural environment and avoid hazardous land conditions and **environmentally sensitive areas**.

**Policy 3.3.12** Development along the waterfront should take advantage of topographic variations, prioritizing stepped building heights to preserve views and minimize visual impact of the built environment.

**Policy 3.3.13** Hold the preservation and protection of the Sooke Harbour and Basin and foreshore as a priority for any future development.

**Policy 3.3.14** Encourage the use of **green infrastructure** for rainwater management in all land uses including groundwater infiltration, rainwater detention, and **rain gardens** in landscaped areas.

**Policy 3.3.15** Encourage food production opportunities to be integrated into public and private lands and buildings throughout the District. Examples include community gardens, Indigenous harvesting spaces, edible landscaping, and small-scale farms.

**Policy 3.3.16** Encourage the use of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design LEED-ND (Neighbourhood Development) rating system or equivalent, in exchange for density bonuses or other incentives.

**Policy 3.3.17** Encourage underground or concealed parking in exchange for incentives such as density bonuses.

**Policy 3.3.18** Support public utility land uses in all land use designations provided appropriate approvals are in place from different levels of government.

**Policy 3.3.19** Parks, trails, natural open space and public outdoor recreation areas are considered compatible and supportive uses and are permitted in all land use designations, unless otherwise restricted by zoning or development permit guidelines.

**Policy 3.3.20** Recognize the high archaeological potential of areas along the waterfront and other historically settled lands. Consider developing a Heritage Management Policy to guide how heritage and archaeological values are considered during land use planning and development review.

The following objectives are specific to each land use designation and are intended to assist in the interpretation of built form and use policies.

## 3.4 COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL

### Purpose

- To support low to medium density ground oriented residential uses, including gentle **infill** opportunities that increase housing choice and retain existing neighbourhood character.
- To focus residential growth within the Community Growth Area, where most municipal services can be provided or accessed in an efficient manner – ensuring future and existing residential development minimizes the impact on municipal infrastructure and protects existing natural areas.
- To allow for some appropriately scaled local serving commercial opportunities. These spaces will serve as neighbourhood focal points, offering greater access to daily needs such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and social settings.

### Uses

- Single family dwellings
- Suites, attached and detached
- **Ground-oriented** residential, including townhouses, rowhouses, and duplexes
- Small-scale neighbourhood-serving commercial and mixed-use (Refer to Policy 3.3.4)
- Institutional
- Public Utilities

*\*A maximum density of 70 units per ha does not apply for single lot development up to 4 units.*

### Built Form

- Attached and detached buildings up to 3 storeys

### Density

- Maximum 70 unit per ha\*
- Maximum 1.5 FAR



## 3.5 GATEWAY RESIDENTIAL

### Purpose

- To create a welcoming, vibrant, and accessible gateway to Sooke.
- To encourage a balanced mix of rural agriculture, single family dwellings, recreation, and appropriately-scaled commercial.
- To preserve the rural and agricultural character of this area.
- To ensure future and existing residential development minimizes the impact on municipal infrastructure and the natural environment

### Uses

- Single family dwellings
- Suites, attached and detached
- Duplexes
- Farming
- Tourism, including bed and breakfasts, farm tours, horseback riding, or similar land uses
- Recreation
- Small-scale, neighbourhood-serving commercial (refer to Policy 3.3.4)
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- Attached and detached buildings up to 3 storeys

### Density

- Minimum lot size: 0.25 ha

### Additional Directions

- Encourage agri-food system activities and businesses, such as local food production and processing and agri-tourism, as well as other tourism uses.
- Support improved pedestrian and cycling connections to existing trails within the area, including the Galloping Goose Trail, in conjunction with the Capital Regional District.
- Work with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Island Health towards agreement on appropriate on-site sewage disposal options for proposed rezoning and subdivision applications in the area. The agreement will be based upon the recommendations in the District of Sooke Liquid Waste Management Plan and regulated through the Sooke **Zoning Bylaw** regulations.

## 3.6 RURAL RESIDENTIAL

### Purpose

- To preserve the rural and agricultural character of the lands in this area.
- To ensure future and existing residential development minimizes impact on municipal infrastructure and services by limiting development in rural areas.
- To provide opportunities for sustainable rural development such as farming and agricultural tourism.
- To protect and maintain the natural environment.

### Uses

- Single family dwellings
- Suites, attached and detached
- Duplexes
- Farming
- Agricultural-related tourism, including bed and breakfasts, farm tours and farm education, horseback riding, or similar land uses
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- Attached and detached buildings up to 3 storeys

### Density

- Minimum lot size: 4 ha

### Additional Directions

- Encourage agri-food system activities and businesses, such as local food production and processing and agri-tourism, in alignment with Agricultural Land Commission Act where applicable.
- Encourage small-scale agricultural uses as well as community gardens.
- Work with appropriate government agencies to inventory sensitive habitat and wildlife within rural areas.



## 3.7 TOWN CENTRE - CORE

### Purpose

- To be the primary focus of major commercial and residential growth, and home to the District's highest density residential development and the primary commercial hub of the community.
- To create more options for homes and enhance the Town Centre as a self-sustaining neighbourhood.
- To be the primary focus of new government facilities and office development.
- To support the broader Town Centre vision, including enhanced connectivity to key amenities such as the waterfront, where appropriate.
- To enable job growth and strengthen the Town Centre as a major employment area.

### Uses

- Multi-unit residential
- Mixed-use
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- Up to 6 storeys

### Density

- Maximum 2.5 FAR



## 3.8 TOWN CENTRE - WATERFRONT

### Purpose

- To foster an active, pedestrian-oriented waterfront that offers diverse destinations and activities throughout days, weeks, and seasons.
- To encourage a diversity of residential uses, including housing choices and densities that support waterfront commercial uses, diverse household types, and visitor accommodation opportunities.
- To enable commercial development that provides a differentiated and complementary commercial experience relative to the Town Centre-Core area.
- To establish a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly waterfront that complements adjacent Town Centre areas by promoting active ground-floor retail along key corridors such as Murray Road and Brownsey Boulevard, enhancing walkability and reinforcing the area's role as a commercial and cultural destination.
- To protect and restore ecological values through remediation of contaminated foreshore and uplands, land use and the design of buildings, open spaces, and infrastructure.

### Uses

- Multi-unit residential
- Mixed-use development
- Commercial, including retail and visitor accommodation
- Institutional
- Recreational
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- Building heights up to 4 storeys east of Ed Macgregor Park with heights scaling down to 3 storeys moving westward, and up to 6 storeys where buildings front Brownsey Boulevard

### Density

- Maximum 2.0 FAR
- Maximum 5.0 FAR where building fronts Brownsey Boulevard



## 3.9 TRANSITIONAL RESIDENTIAL

### Purpose

- To provide a transition in building forms and densities from the Town Centre to surrounding existing neighbourhoods.
- To support housing choices and a greater concentration of people within a short walk or roll to the commercial services and community spaces of the Town Centre.

### Uses

- Multi-unit residential
- Neighbourhood-scale commercial and mixed-use (refer to Policy 3.3.4)
- Institutional
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- Building height up to 3-4 storeys

### Density

- Maximum 2.0 FAR



## 3.10 EMPLOYMENT LANDS

### Purpose

- To support a diverse local economy, including commercial, industrial, and service uses with a focus on employment generation and **low carbon resilience**.
- To encourage industries that are consistent with the objectives outlined in Part 4, Section 4.7 Community Economic Development.
- To ensure the provision of sufficient land to meet the economic requirements of the community, and open up additional employment opportunities to current and future Sooke residents.

### Uses

- Industrial
- Commercial
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- N/A

### Density

- N/A

### Additional Directions

- Encourage and promote the development of:
  - Jobs that offer living wages at a minimum
  - Environmentally friendly industries and protection of the environment
  - The development of an **eco-industrial park** and/or business park.
- Support office and commercial uses in industrial areas, which complement light industrial redevelopment.
- Associate and implement the policies and actions in Part 4, Section 4.7: Community Economic Development on Employment Lands designated properties.
- Apply special consideration for properties adjacent to residential and mixed-use areas, including but not limited to the T'Sou-ke Nation Reserve. Ensure compatibility of neighbouring uses and appropriate buffering if applicable.
- Ensure Employment Lands outside of the Community Growth Area are rural in nature, will not require servicing and will act as a local community hub.



# 3.11 AGRICULTURE

## Purpose

- To protect and expand the agricultural industry in Sooke.
- To preserve and utilize capable and suitable agricultural lands to foster food self-reliance, promote **food sovereignty**, protect the environment, and improve economic diversity.
- To ensure the continuation of small-scale farms, encourage local small-scale agricultural production, and options for increased agri-tourism.

## Uses

- Farming and agricultural tourism
- Single family dwellings
- Suites, attached and detached
- Public Utilities

## Built Form

- Farming with detached buildings up to three storeys

## Density

- As per ALC approval.

## Additional Directions

- Encourage agri-food system activities and businesses, such as local food production and processing and agri-tourism, in alignment with ALC Act where applicable.
- Encourage regenerative and other sustainable farming practices.
- Ensure sufficient buffers, including roads and rights-of-way, between agricultural lands and adjacent, non-agricultural properties; use of 'best practices' guides from the ALC should be considered during the planning or development processes, e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Guide to Edge Planning and Ministry of Agriculture and Land's Guide to Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas.



## 3.12 PARK

### Purpose

- To preserve, connect, and enhance access to natural areas, open spaces, and outdoor recreation and stewardship opportunities.
- To protect and expand active and passive parks, trails, fields, recreation facilities, and supporting infrastructure.
- To sustainably manage park resources for the protection of their **natural features**, inherent ecological value, recreation or stewardship opportunities, and to support equitable population health outcomes.
- To ensure the continued and improved ecological function of Sooke's lands and waters, through initiatives such as sustainable forest and watershed management and biodiversity enhancement.
- To assist in implementing the [District of Sooke's Parks and Trails Master Plan](#).

### Uses

- Recreation
- Protected ecological areas
- Institutional
- Accessory dwellings and outbuildings
- Public Utilities

### Built Form

- Variable to support park use

### Density

- N/A



## 3.13 COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

### Purpose

- To allow for flexible, innovative development options for larger parcels of land targeted for development within Community Growth Areas (CGA).
- To ensure that proposed developments within Comprehensive Development (CD) designated areas shall be planned, designed, and constructed in alignment with the goals, objectives, and policies of the OCP.
- To integrate commercial, residential, recreational, and institutional land uses, where appropriate
- To leverage development opportunities to secure community amenities and infrastructure.

### Uses

- To be determined through Area Plan process

### Built Form

- To be determined through Area Plan process

### Density

- To be determined through Area Plan process

### Additional Directions

- Comprehensive development zoning proposed outside of the CD designation is permitted but must meet with the policies detailed in the designation within which they are located.
- As CD lands have been identified as culturally significant for the T'Sou-ke Nation and Scia'new Nation, consultation with the T'Sou-ke Nation and Scia'new Nations for development must be a part of the application and planning process.
- Comprehensive developments proposed in areas without access to sewer shall be required to provide on-site options that protect the harbour, basin, and environment, and must be approved by the District and Island Health.
- Comprehensive development areas will require preparation of an Area Plan by the applicant that details land uses, built forms, densities, servicing, amongst others.
- An Area Plan will establish site specific Design Guidelines to be used in evaluating future development applications.

## 3.14 NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA PLANS

### Purpose

- To support a meaningful engagement process with T'Sou-ke Nation and Scia'new Nation, existing residents, partners, and business owners in the Billings Spit/Kaltasin and Whiffin Spit neighbourhoods.
- To explore sewer expansion opportunities, with the goal of improving water quality in Sooke Harbour and Basin.
- To seek complementary land uses that support a shared community vision for the area and honour T'Sou-ke Nation and Scia'new Nation priorities for this land.
- To identify unique land use patterns and community interests that will benefit from future neighbourhood area plans.

### Additional Directions

- Uses, built forms, and densities will be determined through a detailed Area Plan process.
- The Area Plan process shall give due consideration to the extensive shoreline and must include sea-level rise and storm surge analysis.





**Sooke Boardwalk**