

A Shared Community Vision

Electoral Area 'A' OCP Review,
Citizen's Committee Speaker Series

Regional Growth Strategy, Urban Containment Boundary, and Village Centres

March 9, 2009

Visit www.ShapingOurFuture.ca to complete a survey on proposed changes to the RGS. Survey closes May 1, 2009.



The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)

The Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted on June 10, 2003. The RGS is an initiative of the Regional District of Nanaimo, the City of Nanaimo, the City of Parksville, and the Town of Qualicum Beach to respond to concerns about the impact of growth that span jurisdictional boundaries. The RGS is also intended to respond to residents' concerns about increased traffic, loss or open space and natural areas, increased cost of services, and changing neighbourhoods.

Section 865(1) of *The Local Government Act* states that once an RGS is adopted, all subsequent bylaws adopted by a regional district board and all new services undertaken by a regional district must be consistent with the regional growth strategy. This means that the new Official Community Plan for Area A must be consistent with the RGS.

Should the community wish to see changes in the new Official Community Plan which are not consistent with the RGS, the Official Community Plan can identify the desired changes for consideration during the next available RGS update and/or review. These changes could also be brought forward by a property owner wanting to proceed with a development supported by the Official Community Plan.

The Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan designates two village Centres - the Cedar Village Centre and the Cassidy Village Centre. Both village centres are within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB), a line defined by the RGS which separates land that is considered urban from land that is considered rural. All other land in Electoral Area 'A' is outside the UCB.

The intent of having lands within the UCB is to control sprawl, focus development into a well defined areas, and encourage the development of compact complete communities. Compact complete communities have a number of benefits some of which include: more efficient and cost effective servicing, ability to provide transit more efficiently, reduced land fragmentation and loss of agricultural and resource lands, increased environmental preservation, more energy efficient building types, improved parks and recreational opportunities, improved housing affordability, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from driving.

The Official Community Plan envisions that the Cedar Village Centre is the main commercial and service centre for Area 'A', which already includes places for shopping, eating, and social interaction. The Official Community Plan designates the Cassidy Village Centre as a local neighbourhood service centre, which currently includes high density residential development and neighbourhood commercial services. The village centres are intended to act as focal points for the community and places where residents can go to obtain a range of services including places to live, work, play, shop, and access services. Having these services in close proximity to one and other also reduces travel distances, which results in a reduction in greenhouse gases and makes alternate forms of transportation more viable.

Other areas of the Electoral Area 'A' have historically been developed with 'urban-type' densities (smaller lots). These generally include the neighbourhoods/communities of South Wellington, Cedar by the Sea, and Boat Harbour.

The following pages provides detailed information about the village centres and lands within the UCB in Electoral Area 'A' and some options for your consideration.

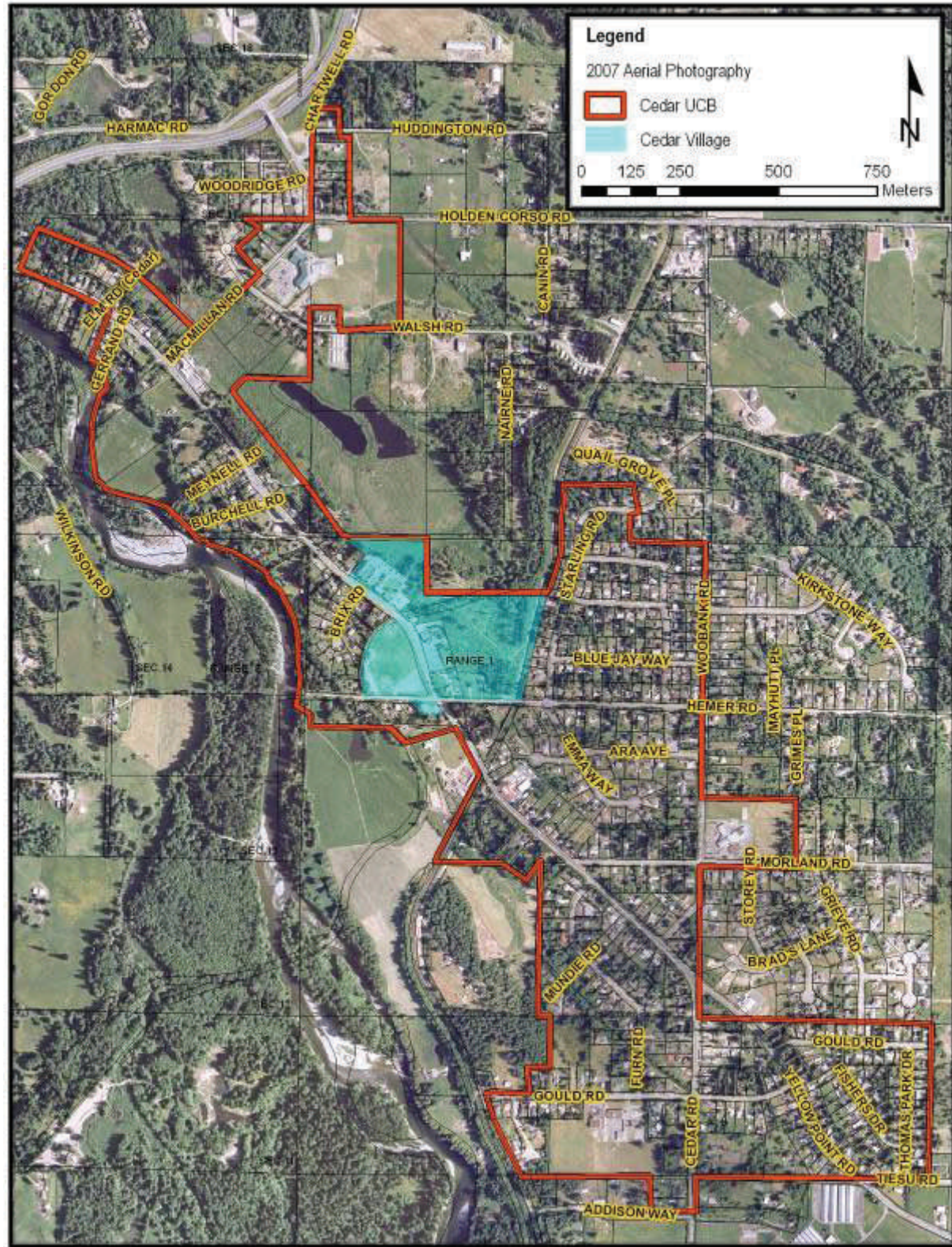
GOALS

The regional growth strategy establishes eight goals to guide growth in the region towards the desired future for the region, as articulated in the vision statement for the regional growth strategy. The eight goals are:

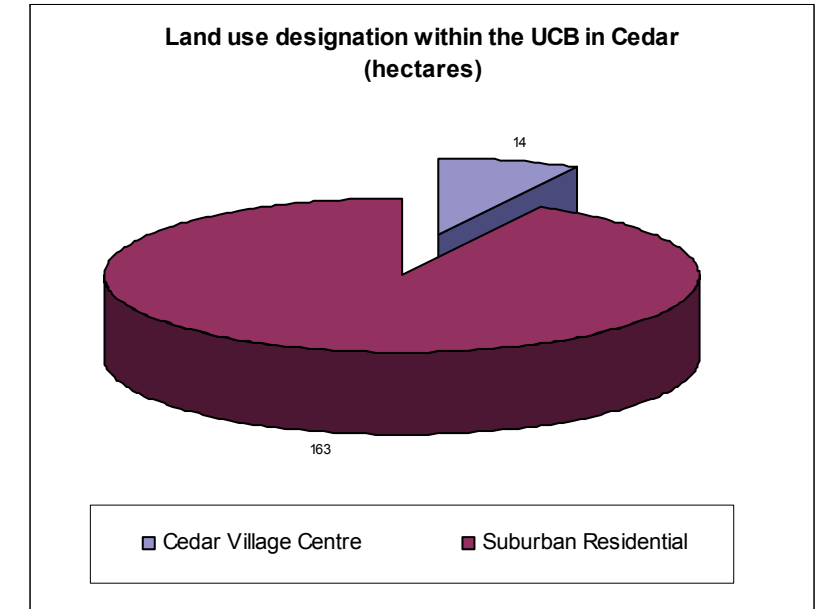
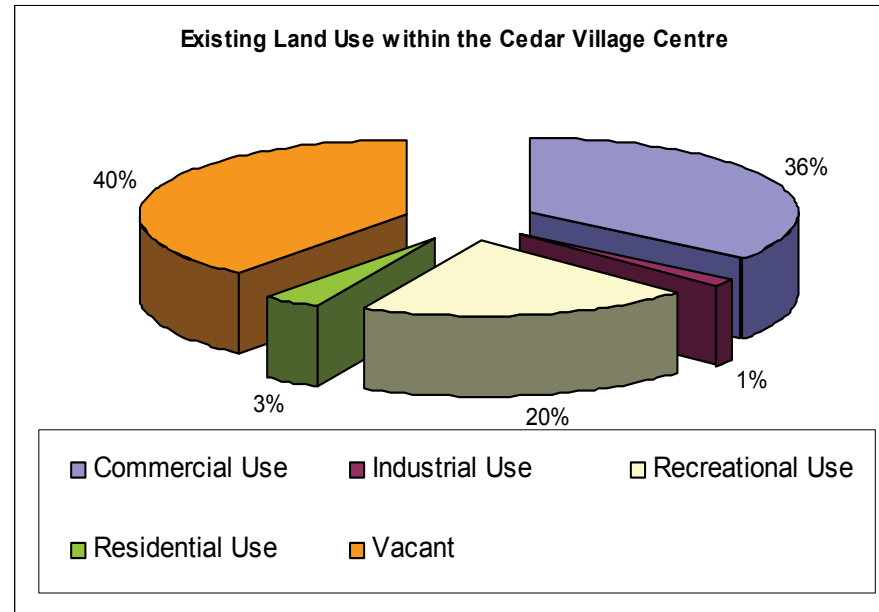
- GOAL 1: STRONG URBAN CONTAINMENT:** To limit sprawl and focus development within well defined urban containment boundaries.
- GOAL 2: NODAL STRUCTURE:** To encourage mixed-use communities that includes places to live, work, learn, play, shop and access services.
- GOAL 3: RURAL INTEGRITY:** To protect and strengthen the region's rural economy and lifestyle.
- GOAL 4: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** To protect the environment and minimize ecological damage related to growth and development.
- GOAL 5: IMPROVED MOBILITY:** To improve and diversify mobility options within the region - increasing transportation efficiency and reducing dependency on the automobile.
- GOAL 6: VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY:** To support strategic economic development and to link commercial and industrial strategies to the land use and rural and environmental protection priorities of the region.
- GOAL 7: EFFICIENT SERVICES:** To provide cost efficient services and infrastructure where urban development is intended, and to provide services in other areas where the service is needed to address environmental or public health issues and the provision of the service will not result in additional development.
- GOAL 8: COOPERATION AMONG JURISDICTIONS:** To facilitate an understanding of and commitment to the goals of growth management among all levels of government, the public, and key private and voluntary sector partners.

The regional growth strategy includes 40-policies. These policies combined with the maps of land use designation provide a program of joint action for the Regional District of Nanaimo and the member municipalities and other interested parties to achieve the desired future for the region articulated in the regional growth strategy vision statement.

Cedar UCB Overview



The Official Community Plan designates two land use designations within the Cedar UCB the ‘Cedar Village Centre’ and ‘Suburban Residential’ as shown on the map to the left. An inventory of these land use designations was undertaken in the spring of 2008 to determine the amount of land available for commercial use. In undertaking the assessment, the Regional District of Nanaimo did an analysis that used property size, zoning, current use, minimum parcel size, Official Community Plan land use, and building permit data to estimate the existing commercial floor area as well as to estimate the remaining commercial potential for the area. The following summarizes the results of the inventory.

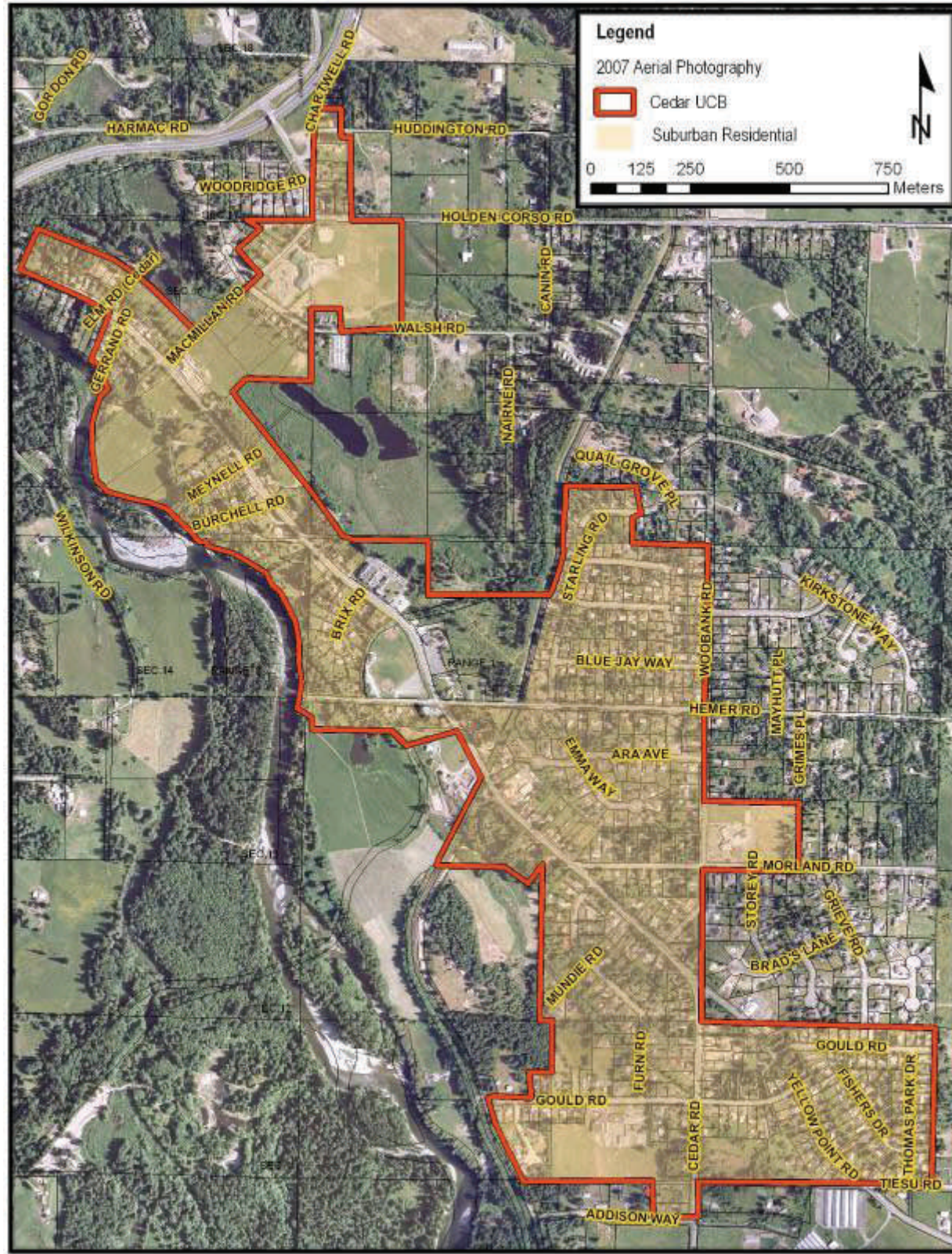


Please note, existing land use means the actual use of a parcel regardless and independent from the current zoning designation.

Current and Potential Commercial Floor Space		
Land Use Designation	Estimate of Existing Commercial Floor Area (m ²)	Conservative Estimate of Potential Additional Commercial Floor Area (m ²)
Cedar Village Centre	5544	5009
Suburban Residential	2656	1685

Please note, there are no vacant or undeveloped commercial or industrial zoned properties within the Cedar Village Centre. Therefore, all future commercial and industrial developments must occur on previously developed sites. This may include infill and intensification of existing developments or redevelopment of existing sites. Alternatively, the new Official Community Plan could designate additional lands within the UCB for commercial and/or mixed use.

Cedar UCB Overview Continued



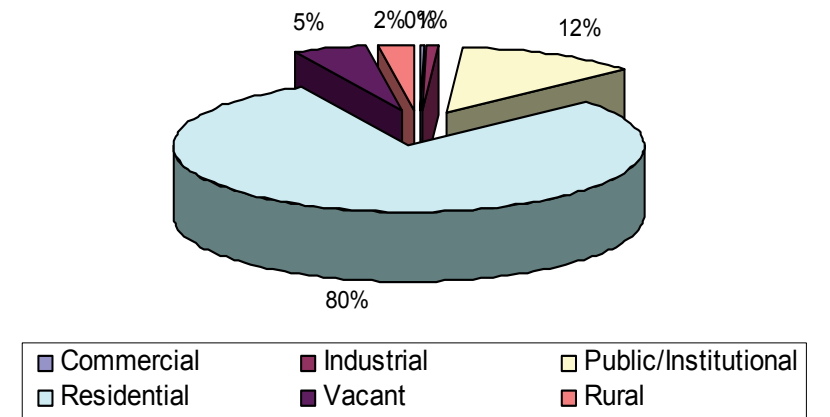
Residential Lot Supply

OCP Land Use Designation	Lot Counts					
	Total number of existing residential lots	Total number of developed residential lots	Total number of vacant residential lots	Potential new residential lots	Potential for additional dwelling units (vacant lots plus new lots)	Long term lot supply (existing lots plus new lots)
Suburban Residential	550	517	33	75	108	624
Cedar Village Centre	2	1	1	55	60 (plus 75 personal care units)	57
Totals	552	518	34	130	168	681

There are currently 550 residential lots within the Suburban Residential land use designation. Of the 550 existing lots, only 33 lots are vacant and the remaining 517 lots are developed. Based on the current zoning there is potential for an additional 75 lots in the Suburban Residential land use designation. If a dwelling was constructed on each vacant lot and on each potential new lot, there could be up to an additional 108 dwelling units within the Suburban Residential land use designation. This represents an increase of approximately 21% over the current number of dwelling units.

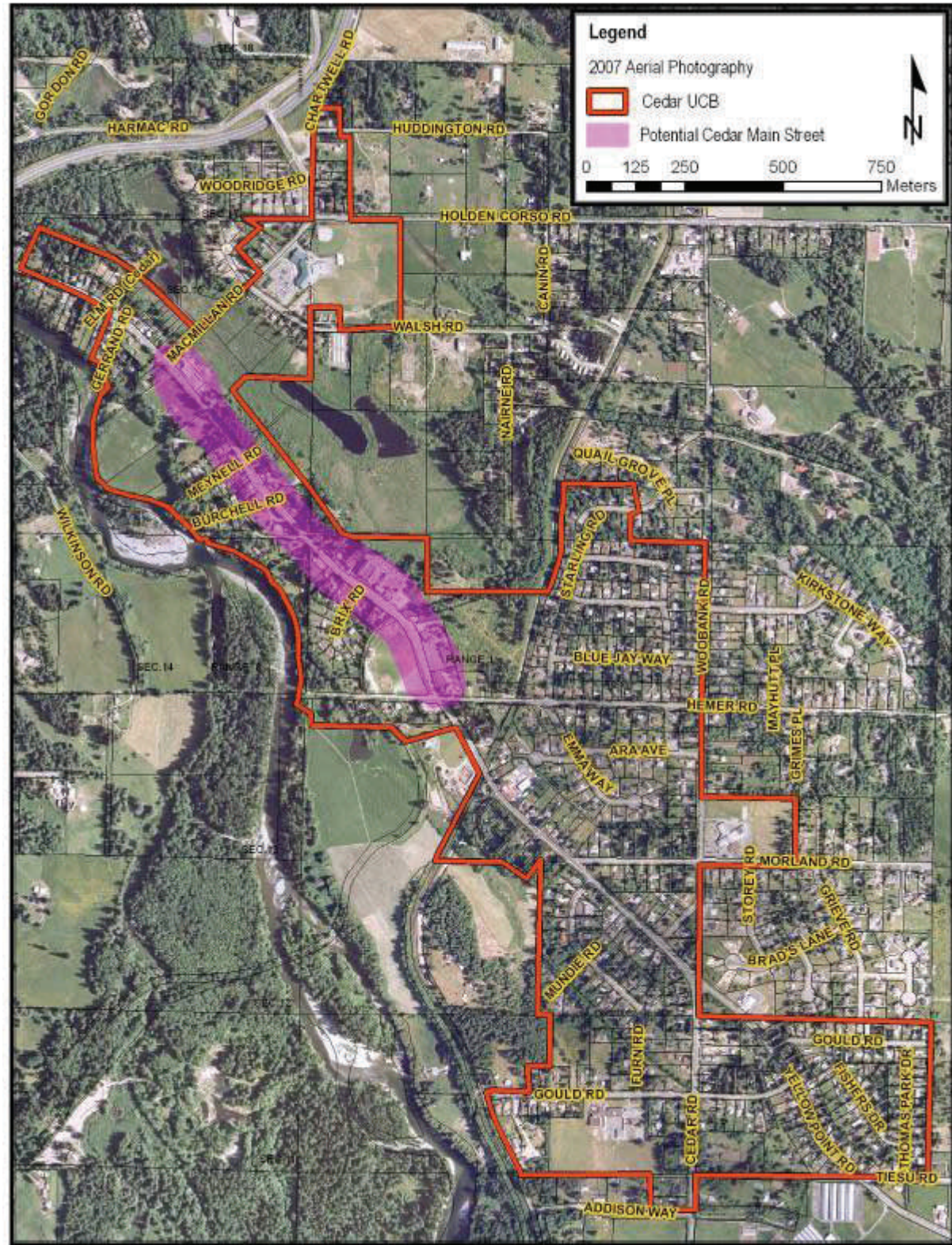
The long term lot supply is estimated at 624 lots and has been calculated by adding the total number of existing lots (550) to the potential new lots (75). Based on the 2006 census, the average household size for Electoral Area 'A' is 2.4 persons. Assuming that 2.4 persons per household is representative of the Study Area, the population of the Suburban Residential land use designation in 2006 was approximately (549x2.4) 1,318 persons. Should the Suburban Residential land use designation be developed to its full potential of 624 lots the estimated population would be about (624x2.4) 1,498 persons given current estimated household size.

Existing Land Use in the Suburban Residential Land Use Designation



Currently, there are two residential lots in the Cedar Village Centre. Both lots are within the Cedar Estates Comprehensive Development Zone 29 (CD29), which is yet to be developed. The CD29 zone supports a maximum of 55 new residential lots that would support an additional 60 dwelling units and a 75 unit personal care facility and accessory retail use. Based on current average household size this would result in an estimated (55x2.4 +75) 207 additional residents in the Cedar Village Centre.

Building Community Identity and a Sense of Place - An option for the Cedar UCB - Cedar Main Street?



Throughout the Official Community Plan review process we have received a number of suggestions and ideas that support urban containment and creating compact communities. A number of community members also thought that we should start to build community identity and a sense of place. At the same time the community felt that it was important to direct and manage growth within designated areas and limit the rate of change. It has become very clear that Cedar wants to remain a rural community. The Community Vision supports this by stating:

“Growth is directed into well-defined village and neighbourhood centres. Growth and development outside of these centres has been largely avoided as agriculture, resource use, and conservation of biodiversity have become the top priority for these areas”.

Making the vision a reality means, among other things, that we have to accept and support the fact that **some** growth will occur within the UCB (or designated areas within the UCB) to accommodate the demand for those who wish to live, work, and/or do business in Cedar. What that growth looks and where it is located like is up to you.

The input we have received so far indicates that there is a desire to provide for a range of community members from young families to seniors to single mothers within the Village Centre and the Urban Containment Boundary. This means providing a range of housing options, local employment, and some neighbourhood services. The community also has indicated that it wants to support the creation of a ‘sense of place’ and to build community pride.

Based on what the community has told us so far, an option has been identified that may help Cedar become a more complete community, build community identity, while still preserving the rural feel of other areas of Cedar. We call it “Cedar Main Street. This option shown of the map on the left involves designating an area between Macmillan and Hemer Roads where a broader mix of uses would be supported. Anchored at the south end by the Wheatshaf ball diamonds and pub and on the north end by Friesen’s Rentals, this option would provide an opportunity to provide a broad range of uses within a compact area.

Uses for the Cedar Main Street area are completely flexible and could, depending on community preference, include uses like local commercial, commercial with residential above, office space, multi-residential, seniors care, single family residential, local retail, recreational uses, and professional services. The area involved is currently developed with a range of commercial and residential uses, which could be left as is, redeveloped, and/or enhanced over time. I would be up to individual property owners to decide the future use of their property. There are a small number of vacant parcels where more comprehensive development proposals could be considered.

The benefits of this option are the ability to develop a stronger community identity and official gateway or entrance to the Cedar Village as well as contribute towards creating a more complete community. The community may want to see an entrance sign on each end saying ‘Welcome to Cedar Village’. There could be policies and/or design guidelines included in the Official Community Plan developed by the community for how landscaping is done, how the buildings look and perform, how pedestrian and cyclist traffic is managed, the scale and height of development, the types building materials that are acceptable, and how parking and traffic are managed. There would also be opportunities for the acquisition of park and/or other desirable community amenities in conjunction with development (Community amenities are often required as a condition of rezoning to a higher use. In this way the increased value of the land enjoyed by the developer as a result of the rezoning is shared with the community).



Options for the Cedar UCB

Do you support a main street concept in Cedar? Why?

If so, under what conditions?

If not, what are your concerns, and how could they be addressed? Is there a more suitable location where additional local services and a range of housing could be provided? Are there other ways to build community identity?

What amenities would you consider important if you support the Cedar Main Street concept?

Options for the Cedar UCB - Location of the UCB

The purpose of having an UCB is to encourage development including residential, commercial, and a range of services within a well defined boundary. The UCB also helps us control sprawl, focus development into a well defined areas, and encourages the development of compact complete communities. Compact complete communities have a number of benefits some of which include: more efficient and cost effective servicing, ability to provide transit more efficiently, reduced land fragmentation and loss of agricultural and resource lands, increased environmental preservation, more energy efficient building types, improved parks and recreational opportunities, improved housing affordability, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from driving

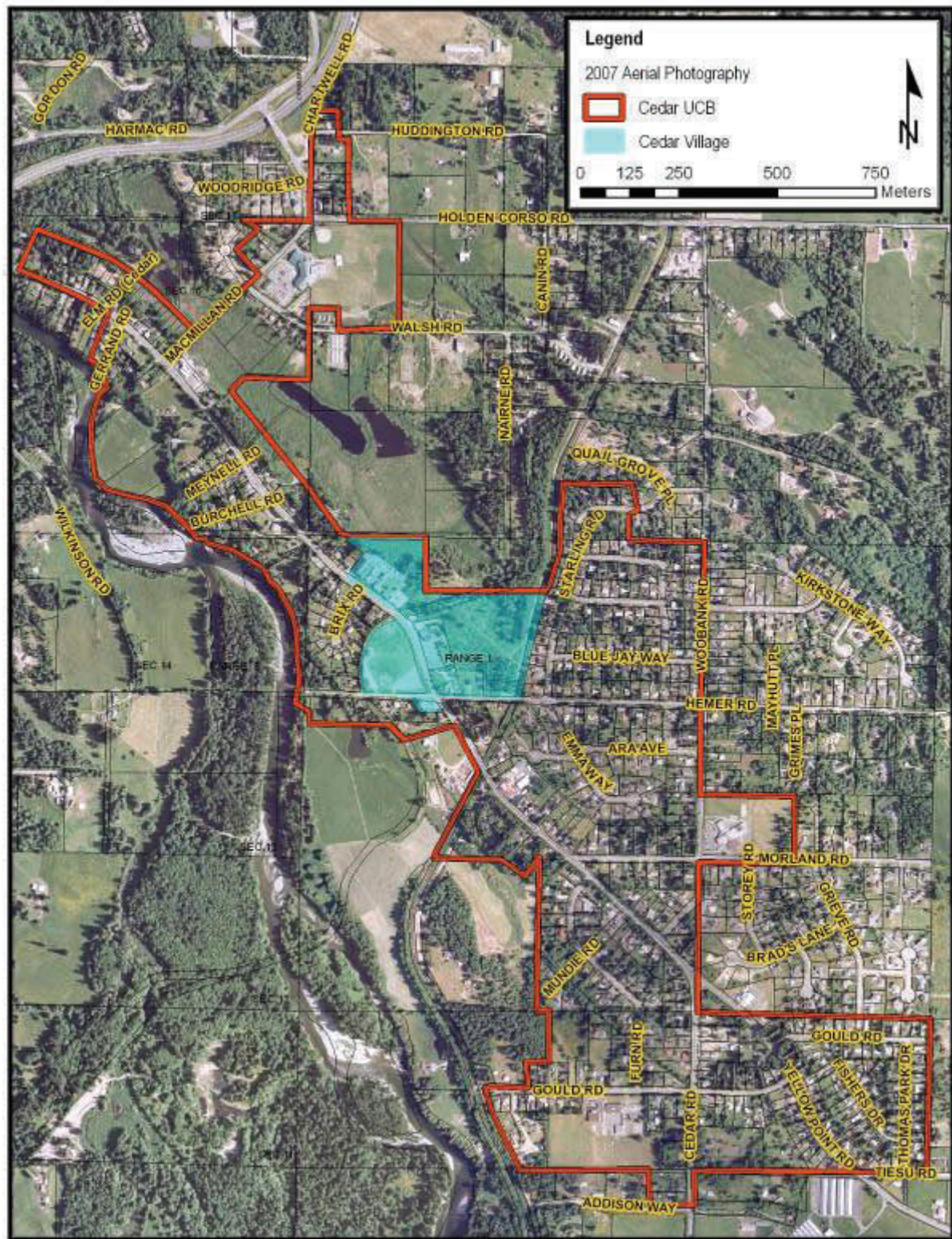
Another way to look at the UCB is to say that lands located within the UCB are growth receiving areas that are intended to be provided with community water and sewer. How much growth and the characteristics of growth are what we are discussing here.

Outside of the Cedar Village centre, the focus has traditionally been on low density single family residential development with lot sizes primarily in the range of 1400m² to 2000m². There are also a number of larger parcels throughout the UCB. In addition, there are many residential parcels located outside of the UCB directly adjacent to the boundary which are generally 2000m². These parcels are designated rural residential and the Official Community Plan supports a minimum parcel size of 1.0 hectare. Despite support for 1.0 hectare minimum parcel size, the zoning continues to support a 2000m² minimum parcel size. This indicates that the Official Community Plan has not been implemented (i.e the zoning was not changed to be consistent with the Official Community Plan) and as a result the UCB is not serving its intended purpose of limiting sprawl and focusing development into well defined areas.

Based on the community input, which supports creating complete communities, providing for a diversity of residents, directing growth into well defined areas, and maintaining a rural village feel, three options have been identified for your consideration which are described below.

<u>Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo</u>	<u>Option 2: Support a limited amount of additional residential growth</u>	<u>Option 3: No More Growth - pull back the UCB</u>
<p>In this option, the UCB remains unchanged. Residential subdivision can continue to occur based on the existing minimum parcel size supported by the zoning. This means that for the most part, the community would continue to see 2000m² parcels being created.</p> <p>Unless new sources of grant funding become available, it is highly unlikely that community sewer would be provided due to the high cost of servicing 2000m² parcels. It is unlikely that improvements to transit would be feasible given the low density. The community would continue to face challenges with providing housing for its young families, seniors, and low income age workers.</p> <p>This option could be considered in conjunction with the Cedar Main Street concept.</p> <p>Very little other changes would be expected.</p> <p>Please refer to the map on the following page.</p>	<p>According to the BC Climate Action Toolkit, using a combination of strategies can result in the benefits of compact communities being realized, including viable local shops and improved transit service. For example, bus service can generally be justified with a residential density of as low as 10 units per acre which translates to 50-by-120 foot residential lots with a duplex or secondary suite on 50 % of the lots, and single-family house on 50 % of the lots. Frequent bus service can be supported with a mix of low-rise apartments, townhouses, and small-lot single-family.</p> <p>This option is presented because of the fact that the purpose of the UCB is to encourage growth within a designated area. Due to the fact that many of the residential lots have previously been developed, many in a fashion that would make further subdivision difficult, there are limited opportunities to create additional lots even if the minimum parcel size were decreased.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, there are opportunities to accommodate additional dwelling units while still maintaining the village feel of Cedar. Therefore this option supports what is often referred to as <i>'invisible density'</i>. The concept of invisible density supports additional dwelling units both on vacant lots and on existing lots that have no impact on outward appearance. It is a low impact way to increase density without changing neighbourhood character. This option also supports areas where smaller lots would be supported, and the integration of well-designed duplexes (aesthetically pleasing, of quality construction, and look as though they are a single family residential dwelling).</p> <p>Some examples of ways that this option supports an increase in density are secondary suites as well as coach houses or granny flats. Coach houses and/or granny flats are detached dwelling units, but can also be the upper storey of an accessory building such as a garage. These dwelling units typically have a restriction on the maximum floor area to ensure that they are affordable and that they do not have a negative impact on the neighbourhood. (We will be talking about housing in more detail during the May 4, 2009 Citizens Committee Meeting).</p> <p>This option would also support the creation of some smaller lots as part of a comprehensive development proposal which may include a variety of housing types and lot sizes on vacant lands within the village centre and/or Main Street to provide a range of more affordable home ownership options.</p> <p>This option would result in more housing options to meet a broader range of community needs with less environmental impacts, reduced infrastructure needs, little impact on community character, and lower costs compared to traditional residential development.</p> <p>The location of the UCB could also be amended if this is the preferred option to include the previously developed lands directly adjacent to the UCB.</p> <p>Please refer to the map on the following page.</p>	<p>If the community does not want to see additional growth outside of the Village Centre and/or Mainstreet, then we must consider the need to remove lands from the UCB. Lands within the UCB are growth receiving areas. Therefore, areas where growth is not supported by the community, do not belong in the UCB.</p> <p>The result would be that the UCB would be scaled back to only include the Village Centre and perhaps the Mainstreet (if supported). Other areas within the UCB where the community supports some additional residential growth would remain inside the UCB.</p> <p>This option has many implications for the future of Cedar. As the population ages, without providing a range of housing that meets the needs of the community, and without keeping and attracting families to the community, it is likely to continue to be difficult to maintain and acquire the services that many people enjoy. This includes services such as schools as well and desirable community improvements such as parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Please refer to the map on the following page.</p>

Cedar UCB Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo



Do you support this option and if so under what conditions?

If you do not support this option, please explain what could be done to address your concerns.

How would this option help us work towards achieving the community vision? Please answer this question even if you don't support this option. (Refer to page 16 for the principles and vision)

Is this option consistent with the direction provided by the sustainability principles? Why or why not? (Refer to page 16 for the principles and vision)

Cedar UCB Option 2: Examples of what additional development might look like if this option were selected



One of these houses may have a secondary suite.



Garage with suite above



Garage with suite above



Both of these homes have a suite.

Which of these three house is a duplex?

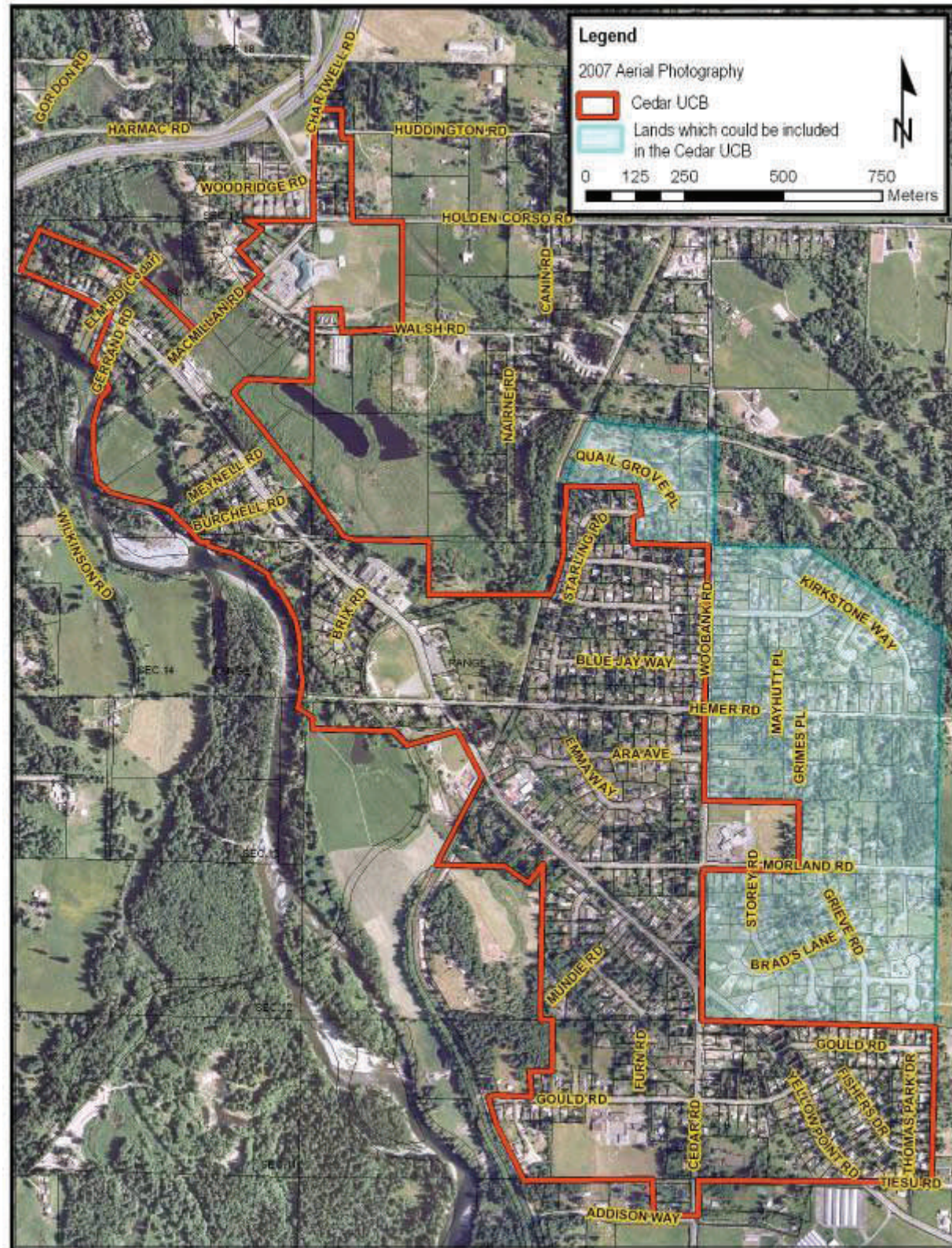


(answer: all 3 are duplexes)



Example of what a granny flat or ancillary dwelling might look like.

Cedar UCB Option 2: Support a limited amount of additional residential growth



Do you support this option and if so under what conditions?

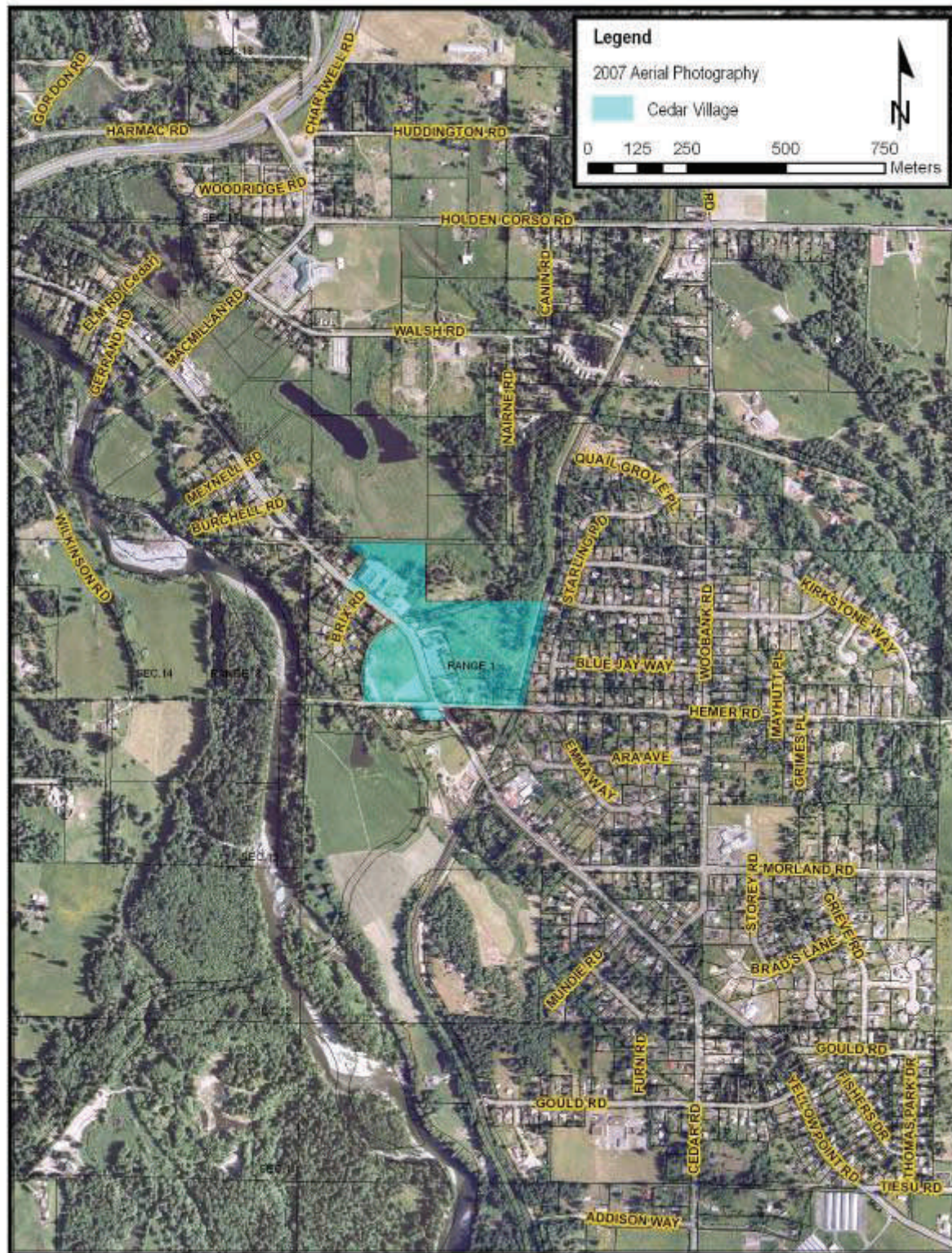
If you do not support this option, please explain what could be done to address your concerns.

How would this option help us work towards achieving the community vision? Please answer this question even if you don't support this option.

If you feel that the UCB should be amended to accommodate this option, please indicate on the map where you think it should go.

Is this option consistent with the direction provided by the sustainability principles? Why or why not? (Refer to page 16 for the principles and vision)

Cedar UCB Option 3 - No more growth pull back the UCB



Do you support this option and if so under what conditions?

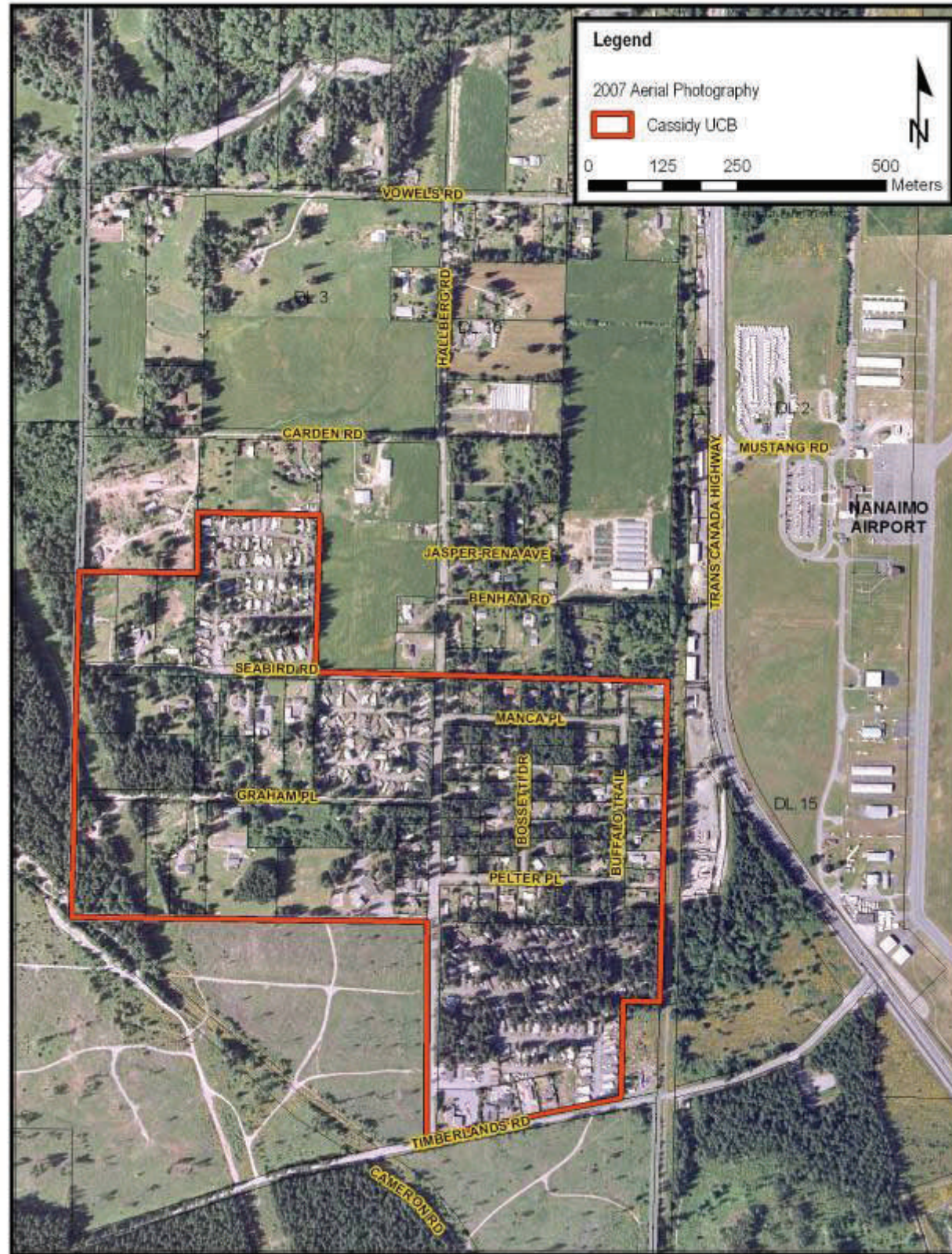
If you do not support this option, please explain what could be done to address your concerns.

How would this option help us work towards achieving the community vision? Please answer this question even if you don't support this option. (Refer to page 16 for the principles and vision)

If you support this option, please indicate on the map where you think the amended UCB should go.

Is this option consistent with the direction provided by the sustainability principles? Why or why not? (Refer to page 16 for the principles and vision)

Cassidy UCB Overview



The Cassidy Village Centre is located in the south west corner of Electoral Area 'A' west of the Trans Canada Highway and across from the Nanaimo Regional Airport. Cassidy includes about 56 hectares of land and is currently developed with approximately 362 existing dwelling units, which is 62 more dwelling units than the OCP supports. A large proportion of these dwelling units are within one of three manufactured home parks including the Seabird Manufactured Home Park, Timberlands Manufactured Home Park, and the Cassidy Manufactured Home Park. In addition to the manufactured home parks, existing development includes single residential dwelling units as well as some local commercial services. The Cassidy Village Centre has some of the highest densities of any of the Urban Areas within the Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Areas. Currently there are no community water or community sewer services provided by the Regional District of Nanaimo within the Cassidy Village Centre.

Cassidy is also home to the Western Maritime Institute, a training facility for the maritime trades, which is located on the former Waterloo School site.

Of the 56 hectares of land within the Cassidy Village Centre, only about 3.5 hectares is currently vacant. In addition, a significant portion of the vacant land in the southwest corner is occupied by utility right-of-ways, which may make the properties unsuitable for further development.

Cassidy faces some unique challenges and opportunities for growth management including:

- There is currently no community water or sewer to support additional development and currently no grants or development potential to assist with financing the creation of services.
- The Official Community Plan does not support additional development to assist the community with acquiring parks, trails, and other community amenities.
- The area is located above the Cassidy aquifer, which is an important water source for the area.
- There are lands located in the Agricultural Land Reserve being actively farmed to the north of the Village boundary, which limits expansion in a northerly direction.
- The Trans Canada highway is located to the east of the Village Centre limiting expansion to the east.
- The land located to the west and south is located within Electoral Area 'C' and is subject to the Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright Official Community Plan.
- The E&N Railway is located to the southwest of the Village Centre limiting expansion in that direction.

In addition to the above, despite the higher density there are no Regional District of Nanaimo parks, trails, or transit services within the Cassidy Village.

Options for Cassidy UCB

Given what we already know about the Cassidy Village Centre, some critical choices have to be made about what Cassidy should become in the future. Throughout the Official Community Plan review process the community has told us that they want to see growth contained into well-defined areas where local services, employment, recreational opportunities, and other amenities can be provided. This is also important to preserve rural land for food production and resource use as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The community has indicated that it is important to provide for a broad range of incomes and age groups. It is apparent that Cassidy is currently playing an important role in providing affordable housing in Electoral Area 'A'.

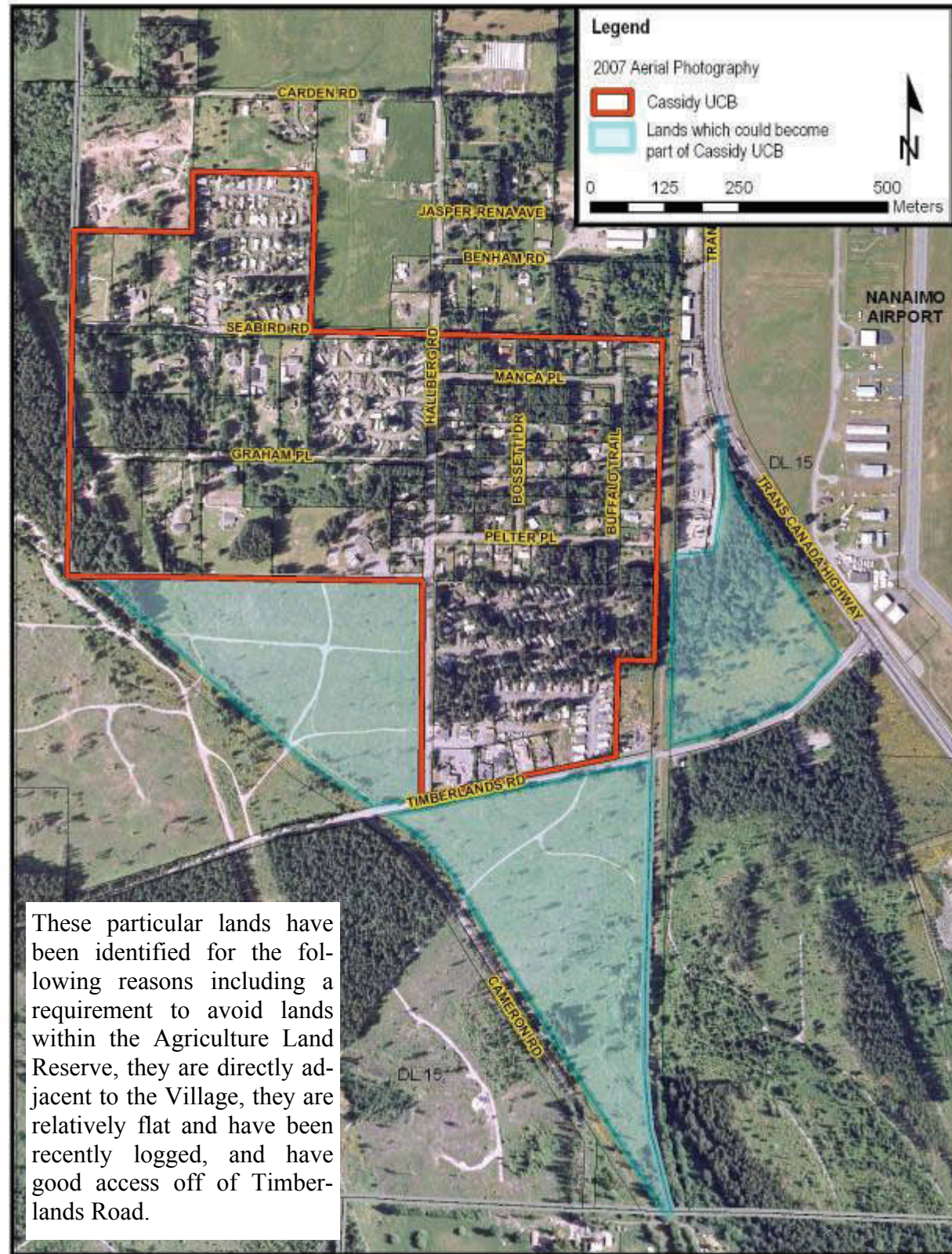
Questions for your consideration:

Is Cassidy currently providing for the needs of its residents? Why or why not?

Is there a desire to make Cassidy a more complete community with a more diverse range of uses and housing types as well as parks, trails, and recreational opportunities, and more viable options for transit? If so under what conditions?

If so, with limited vacant land and limited additional development potential, do you think Cassidy can work towards becoming a more complete community within the current village boundaries?

Options for Cassidy



If you feel that Cassidy should become a more complete community, but is hindered by its boundaries, then we need to look at options to provide the land and resources necessary to achieve the community's goal of creating a more compact complete community. This includes both land and servicing. Development within a newly expanded village may be able to offset the cost of providing servicing and parks elsewhere within the Village Centre. The map to the left identifies some potential areas which could become part of the Cassidy Village should the community wish to expand.

Some of the lands identified for potential village expansion are private managed forest lands which have been harvested. Does the community, in this particular case, support the conversion of these lands to accommodate additional development to meet the needs of the community?

Do you support an expansion to the Cassidy Village to include some or all of the areas identified on the right? Why or why not and under what conditions? Which lands do you consider appropriate for expansion. Feel free to draw on the map.

What other opportunities do you see that Cassidy could take advantage of to help it become a more complete community? How do you see the airport and surrounding lands fitting in with the future of Cassidy?

South Wellington Overview



South Wellington shown on the map to the left has a rich coal mining history. Remnants of the mining era are still found in South Wellington including the most complete above ground remains of a historical coal mine on Vancouver Island located at the Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park. There you will find the reinforced concrete remains of the head frame and tibble once used at the Morden Mine. Other significant landmarks of the coal mining days include large piles of coal slak left behind as by-products of coal mining. South Wellington’s coal mining heritage is still evident on Minto Avenue as miners homes on small lots still exist.

According to the Friends of the Morden Mine Society website, despite its roots in coal mining, other than the head frame and tibble, there are no significant public sculptures dedicated to Vancouver Island’s 100 years of coal mining history and the 600 miners who lost their lives on the job.

South Wellington has evolved over the years to include more residential development, South Wellington Elementary School, a fire hall, as well as a local convenience store. South Wellington also includes a large industrial commercial area which contains a mix of commercial and industrial uses. The industrial commercial area is a regionally significant economic driver and the only area within the Regional District of Nanaimo where Heavy Industrial (Industrial 5) zoning exists.

Despite, the significance of the industrial commercial area, there are a number of residents who have concerns with the current use of these lands. These concerns include environmental impacts, aesthetics, noise, and heavy truck traffic.

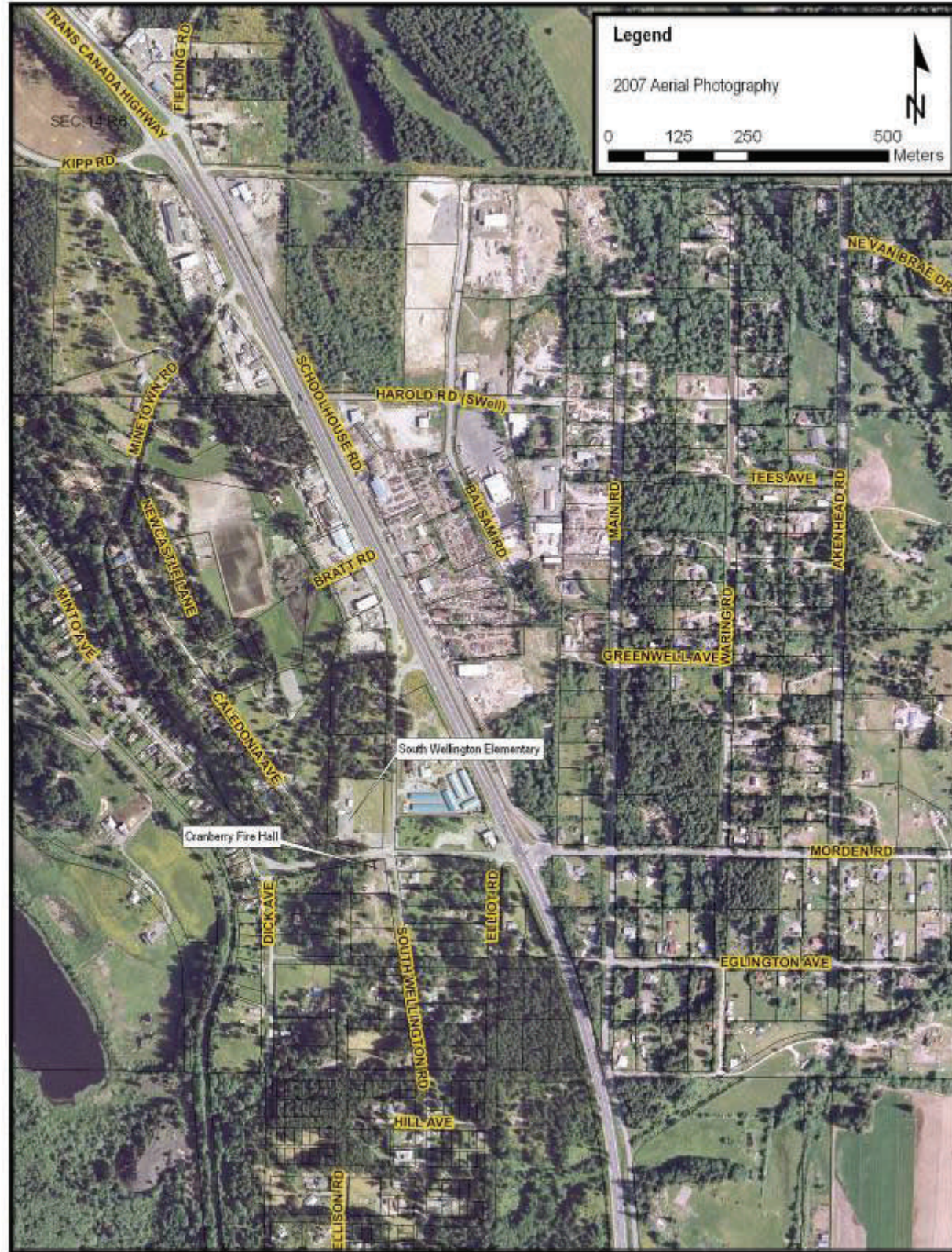
The community is divided by the Trans Canada Highway which splits the community separating the west side from the east side. There are traffic signals located at the intersection of Trans Canada Highway and Morden Road as well as a pedestrian pathway which goes underneath the highway, which is the only pedestrian linkage connecting the west to the east.

South Wellington is not located inside the Urban Containment Boundary and the Official Community Plan does not identify any village centres.

Notwithstanding the above, some community members have identified a desire to include a small neighbourhood centre in South Wellington to provide a range of local services. There is no community water or community sewer in South Wellington, and due to the fact that South Wellington is not within the UCB, these services can not be provided to facilitate additional development. Therefore all future development will rely on onsite water and sewer systems.

Do you think the Official Community Plan should recognize South Wellington’s past? If so, what should the Official Community Plan do to preserve and/or enhance South Wellington’s coal mining history?

Options for South Wellington



Do you support the creation of a neighbourhood centre where a range of local services could be provided? If so under what conditions?

If so, where would it go? Is there an area that already act as a village centre that could be expanded and/or improved. Please draw on the map.

If you do not support a village in South Wellington, What are your concerns and how might they be addressed?

Would creating a village centre in South Wellington help us achieve the community vision? (Refer to page 16 for the principles and vision)

Sustainability Principles

Principle 1	Preserve local history and rural character.
Principle 2	Maintain functioning rural landscapes.
Principle 3	Consider the needs of future generations in today's decisions.
Principle 4	Adapt to nature's complexity, diversity, and unpredictability.
Principle 5	Commit to environmental stewardship and conservation
Principle 6	Nature has intrinsic value.
Principle 7	Build an active community that connects people.
Principle 8	Develop a safe and healthy community for all residents.
Principle 9	Support a wide range of transportation and mobility options.
Principle 10	Economic, social and environmental factors are interdependent and must be considered together.
Principle 11	Support and Strengthen the local economy.
Principle 12	Provide services in an efficient and cost effective manner.
Principle 13	Encourage and facilitate participation by all stakeholders.
Principle 14	Transparency and clarity of process.
Principle 15	Respect the community's diversity

A Shared Community Vision

Electoral Area 'A' is a diverse caring community full of local talent, which respects its cultural and historical roots in agriculture, mining, forestry, and other resource uses. Electoral Area A residents include members of the Snuneymuxw and Chemainus First Nations.

Electoral Area 'A' is also a community with a strong emphasis on the preservation of its existing rural values, which are deeply entrenched in the community and passed down through generations. Rural village feel, lands in agricultural and resource production, quietness, open spaces, opportunities to interact and be in touch with and appreciate nature, and clean air and water are some of the values which contribute towards area residents' way of life and is the reason we call Electoral Area 'A' home.

On December 6, 2008, the community came together to develop 'A Shared Community Vision'. This Vision recognizes that environmental, social, or economic changes may be needed to ensure that the things the community values today are preserved and enhanced for future generations. It also ensures that the community continues to work toward sustainability in consideration of the potential global impacts of climate change.

The community vision is:

It is 2033, and Electoral Area 'A' is a highly desirable place to live, work, and play and as a result has become more socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable. The community has evolved over time through careful planning and guidance provided by the Official Community Plan, which has been upheld by the Regional District of Nanaimo and strongly supported by members of the community. The Official Community Plan is based on the concept of sustainability and 'smart growth', which seeks to minimize the impacts of human activities. This has been accomplished by managing natural resources, as well as economic environmental, and social systems in a way that enhances quality of life, yet does not diminish the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Electoral Area 'A' has become a leader in local food production and sustainability and is often showcased as a model community due to its environmental stewardship and protection policies, growth management strategies, innovative use of alternative technologies, green building programs, recreational and sports opportunities, diverse culture, artistic talent, and excellent multi-modal transportation system.

After nearly 25 years of well managed development, rural values are not only maintained and protected but are also enhanced. Young families and seniors are now attracted to and are staying within the community. There are opportunities for local employment, which contribute to the local economy and have minimal impacts on the environment. Per capita green house gas emissions have been reduced and continue to decline as the economy prospers.

Growth is directed into well-defined village and neighbourhood centres. Growth and development outside these centres has largely been avoided as agriculture, resource use, and conservation of biodiversity have become the top priority for these areas.

The community is a vibrant place to live where a diversity of residents from all economic levels and ethnic backgrounds are welcomed and have an enhanced sense of community pride. Electoral Area 'A' residents feel safe in their community and enjoy the personal freedom a rural lifestyle provides.