

### **What the community has said so far**

Since May 2008, the residents of Area 'A' have been working towards the creation of a new Official Community Plan. Throughout the process the community has indicated a strong desire to:

- Make Cassidy a more complete community;
- Preserve the rural character of the Cassidy Village; and,
- Protect groundwater resources.

### **What is a rural village?**

In the context of Electoral Area 'A', a Rural Village is a community where residents can meet some of their daily needs within close proximity to their home. It is recognized, that due to low population densities and proximity to urban centres such as the City of Nanaimo and the Town of Ladysmith, that the rural village in Cassidy is not likely to fulfil all of the daily requirements of its residents, but is more likely to reduce the dependence on going elsewhere for employment and to fulfil daily needs.

Rural villages integrate a range of housing types and sizes in close proximity to both commercial and public services. Development within rural villages is intended to be in scale with and complement the rural ambiance of the surrounding countryside.

### **What are the components of a rural village?**

Rural villages are compact complete communities which include a mix of uses ( i.e. residential, commercial, institutional, recreational) that provide places to live, access services, work, learn, and play. The compact form of a rural village provides residents the opportunity to walk or cycle to work and to meet their daily needs. The higher population of rural villages, in comparison to surrounding rural lands, may also support additional community services and infrastructure including transit, community water and sewer, and parks and trails.

### **What is missing in Cassidy?**

The Cassidy Rural Village has limited commercial services within its boundaries which are not sufficient to support self-sufficiency and reduce automobile trips to Nanaimo or Ladysmith. Cassidy currently has:

- limited opportunities for local employment;
- a lack of parkland, trails, or greenspace;
- no community gathering places;
- no community water or sewer servicing and therefore, a high dependence on individual water and septic disposal systems in an area with known high aquifer vulnerability;
- no grocery store or convenience store for daily needs; and,
- a lack of public transit service.



### **What are the benefits of a rural village?**

A rural village is intended to create a more complete community which provides local employment and opportunities for residents to meet some of their daily needs within the community without having to drive to the nearest urban centre. Generally, the benefits of rural villages can be divided into the following five groups:

#### **Community Benefits**

- Encourages people to walk or cycle by placing employment, shopping, services, and housing in close proximity to one another.
- Revitalizes and enhances social interaction and helps build community identity and pride.

#### **Environmental Benefits**

- Reduces urban sprawl and the demand for development in areas valued for their resource or ecological values.
- Helps preserve open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the need to drive and by supporting more efficient building types.

#### **Agricultural Benefits**

- Helps preserve important agricultural lands and reduces the pressure to develop them.
- Focusing growth within rural villages helps maintain agricultural land which improves our food security and generates employment for the larger community.

#### **Public Health Benefits**

- Promotes community health and wellness, including reduced rate of obesity and chronic illness, through active transportation and less automobile reliance.
- Helps preserve air quality by reducing the number of people driving to obtain goods and services.

#### **Economic Benefits**

- Reduces infrastructure costs.
- Support a diversity of affordable housing options.
- Creates opportunities for local employment.
- Supports local shopping and retail.
- Support community services such as transit and sewer.

### **How do rural villages help the community achieve its vision and how are they consistent with the sustainability principles?**

A rural village is based on the concepts of sustainability and 'smart growth'. Directing growth into rural villages helps meet the needs of village residents while also protecting the environment and maintaining land for local food production. The creation of more complete and diverse communities is consistent with the draft Official Community Plan's sustainability principles.