

# REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO ARROWSMITH BENSON – CRANBERRY BRIGHT OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

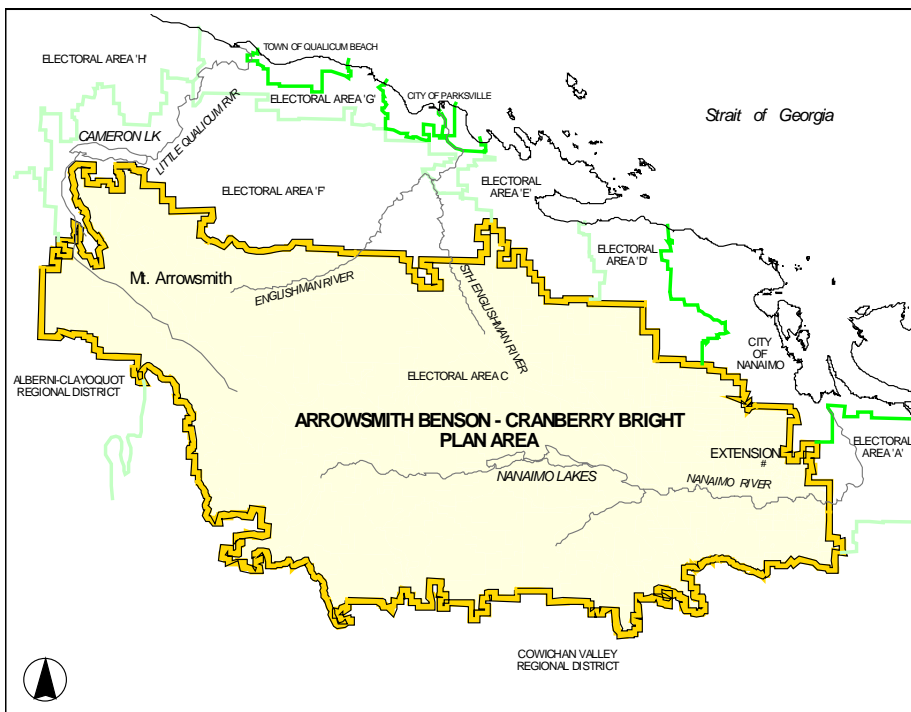
### What is the Official Community Plan?

The purpose of this Community Plan is to provide a comprehensive set of policies and guidelines for managing existing and future uses of land and water surfaces in Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright. Its fundamental aim is to preserve the rural character and natural amenities of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright while allowing for a moderate level of compatible growth and settlement, in appropriate locations. The Arrowsmith Benson–Cranberry Bright, Official Community Plan provides citizens and the Regional District with a framework for decision making in light of pressures for growth and change.

### Plan Area

The Arrowsmith Benson-Cranberry Bright, Plan Area encompasses all of Electoral Area 'C,' which is the largest electoral area within the Regional District (107,484 ha or 53% of the Regional District). The Plan Area borders Electoral Areas 'D', 'E' and 'F' to the north; the City of Nanaimo to the northeast; and Electoral Area 'A' (Cedar) to the east. It also borders the Cowichan Valley Regional District to the south and west, and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District to the northwest (see Figure No. 1).

**Figure 1: Arrowsmith Benson–Cranberry Bright, Plan Area:**



The Plan Area contains the Nanaimo and the Englishman Rivers, the Regional District's largest and most important freshwater sources. Both the Nanaimo and the Englishman Rivers originate in the high mountains and groundwater springs of the western part of Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright.

Land use in Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright is influenced by several significant historical factors:

- An ongoing tradition of forest resource management (most of the land base is reserved for forest harvesting) and aggregate extraction;
- A history of coal mining; (however, there are no active coal mine operations in the Plan Area);
- Agricultural land uses with relatively sparse settlement, in the eastern portion of the Plan Area;
- A concentration of residential lots in the historical “Extension” area; and
- A relatively small population of approximately 1,500 people (*1996 Census*). (Although Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright has a relatively small population, it is growing, reflecting the migration of people to Vancouver Island, and the availability of residential and rural parcels.)

### **Legislative Framework**

It is important to distinguish an Official Community Plan from a zoning bylaw. A Community Plan is a long term strategy for land use, development and servicing. It also contains development guidelines, which respond to **broad** community objectives and concerns (e.g. the protection of watercourses). In contrast, a zoning bylaw provides detailed land use regulations according to specific land use categories called zones. It is through regulatory bylaws, such as a zoning bylaw, that the long term strategy of an Official Community Plan is implemented. Consequently, an Official Community Plan often contains policies directing the amendment of these regulatory bylaws.

### **Other Government Agencies**

The Regional District recognizes the planning and management responsibilities of other government agencies. The goals, objectives and policies of this Plan are complementary to, and coordinated with, those of other levels of government. The Regional District encourages other levels of government to exercise their specific mandate to the greatest extent possible, to achieve the objectives of this Plan.

### **Adoption**

This Official Community Plan has been prepared and adopted pursuant to Part 26, Division (2) of the *Municipal Act*. All bylaws, permits issued and works undertaken by the Regional District must be consistent with the provisions of this Plan.

### **Amendment and Review**

This Official Community Plan is intended to provide direction as to how the Regional District and local residents envisage Arrowsmith Benson – Cranberry Bright developing over the next five to twenty-five years. It is intended that a general review of the Community Plan be considered approximately 5 years after Plan adoption or when the community and the Board of the Regional District find that it no longer serves community needs.

The Community Plan may be subject to periodic amendment by the Board to provide local direction to major issues or changes in the Regional Growth Management Plan. All reviews and amendments will be subject to community review involving public participation to solicit community input.

Application may be made to amend this Official Community Plan in accordance with the *Municipal Act* and the terms of "Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987".

This Plan Area is a development approval information area.<sup>1</sup>

### Community Involvement

The public consultation process conducted for the preparation of this Official Community Plan identified two major objectives of the community:

- *preserve, protect and enhance* the area's natural resources which include not only aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and plants, but also freshwater, agricultural, forest, and mineral resources; and
- *accommodate* a moderate rate of new residential development through appropriate land use designations and policies intended to preserve established rural lifestyles and the general characteristics that have made the area attractive to its residents.

Residents through their actions and participation in the planning process are the final arbiters of community values. For the Plan to succeed, public awareness and understanding of the Plan will be critical.

### Regional Context Statement

The Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright, Official Community Plan is a community based initiative that responds to the Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP) for the Regional District of Nanaimo.

The RGMP, adopted in January of 1997, describes a vision of a desirable future region and a strategy for attaining that vision. The eight goals of the RGMP are as follows:

1. Contain urban sprawl;
2. Create complete, livable communities;
3. Protect rural integrity;
4. Protect the natural environment;
5. Improve mobility;
6. Create a vibrant and sustainable economy;
7. Improve servicing and resource use efficiency; and
8. Encourage cooperation among jurisdictions.

The RGMP includes policies to achieve these eight goals.

The goals and policies of the RGMP guide the preparation and review of official community plans. Official community plans are the means of implementing the RGMP, and provincial statute requires that they must be consistent with the RGMP. Through the integration of the

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<sup>1</sup> Bylaw No. 1148.01, adopted June 13, 2000

RGMP goals into official community plans and the translation of RGMP policies into official community plan policies consistent with community values, communities work together towards achieving a future desired for the region.

In response to the RGMP goal of *containing urban sprawl*, the Arrowsmith Benson - Cranberry Bright, Official Community Plan designates urban boundaries to define the limits of Extension and limits the expansion of urban services outside of these boundaries.

In response to the RGMP goal of *creating complete, nodal communities*, the Official Community Plan recognizes the historical development pattern and existing parcel sizes within Extension. Furthermore, the Plan recognizes that for Extension to develop into a complete nodal community, existing parcels must first be provided with community water and sewer services, storm water management where applicable and development standards reflective of the historic form and character of development within Extension.

In response to the RGMP goal of *protecting rural integrity*, the Official Community Plan identifies the different types of rural neighbourhoods and lands within the Plan Area, and provides policies for protecting and enhancing their rural characteristics. The Plan seeks to ensure that changes, which may occur on these rural lands contribute to, rather than damage, their rural integrity.

In response to the RGMP goal of *protecting the natural environment*, the Official Community Plan identifies the different types of natural features present within the Plan Area, and provides policy supportive of protecting and enhancing these natural features.

In response to the RGMP goal of *improving mobility*, the Official Community Plan identifies existing and potential modes of transportation within the Plan Area.

In response to the RGMP goal of *creating a vibrant and sustainable economy*, the Official Community Plan identifies economic strengths within the Plan Area and provides policy direction to support those strengths in a manner compatible with the rural character of the Plan Area.

In response to the RGMP goal of *improving service and resource use efficiency*, the Official Community Plan establishes a framework for providing parks, community facilities and school facilities.

In response to the RGMP goal of *encouraging cooperation among jurisdictions*, the Official Community Plan provides general policy direction to facilitate better communication and a high level of interjurisdictional cooperation with the City of Nanaimo, abutting electoral areas, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District, and provincial and federal agencies.

### ***Plan Format<sup>2</sup>***

The Arrowsmith Benson — Cranberry Bright Official Community Plan is organized around the eight goals of the Regional Growth Strategy. The first eight sections of the Plan speak to one of these eight goals and the ninth section, Climate Change, encompasses all goals. Each section of the Plan contains specific objectives and policies.

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<sup>2</sup> Bylaw 1148.06, adopted May 25, 2010

*Objectives* are an expression of community values and long-term aspirations. They are the community's statements of what is important and provide a vision for the future.

*Policies* define how the objectives are to be achieved; they establish a favoured course of action or state a preferred scenario. Policies provide guidance to the Regional District and other levels of government, landowners and individuals when addressing planning related issues and situations.

The Community Plan also contains two appendices. Appendix A defines the development permit areas designated within the Plan Area and the zoning bylaw<sup>3</sup> provides a set of guidelines to be addressed in the development of land within each development permit area. Appendix B sets out the implementation strategy for the Plan.

### ***Severability***

If any section, subsection, clause or phrase of this Bylaw is for any reason found invalid by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Bylaw.

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<sup>3</sup> Bylaw No. 1148.07, adopted December 4, 2018