

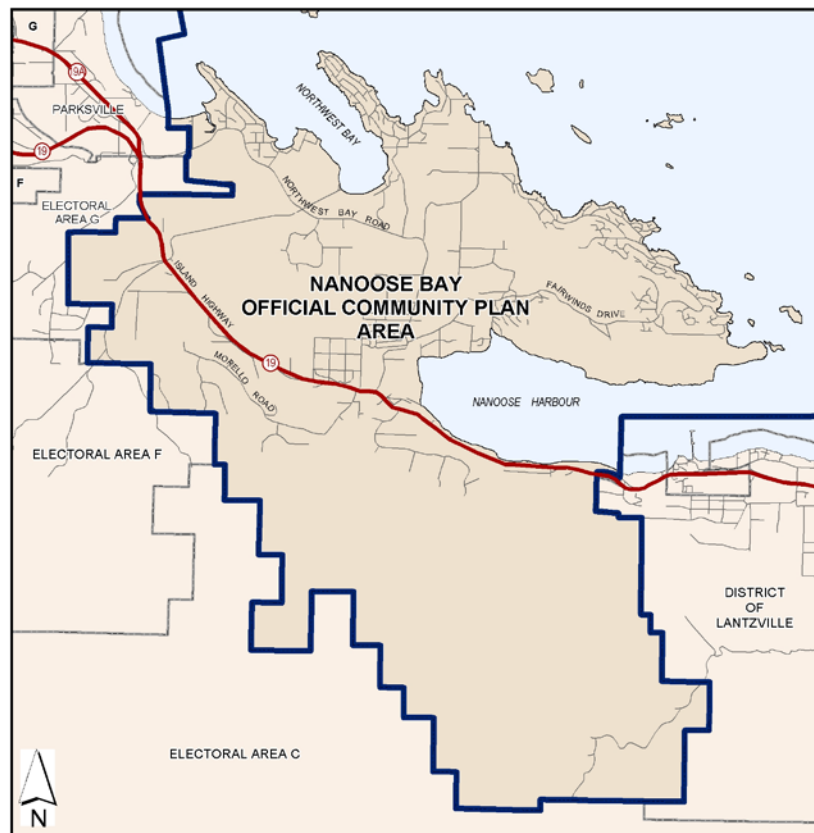
## Section I

# INTRODUCTION

The *Local Government Act* defines an Official Community Plan (OCP) as a general statement of the broad objectives and policies respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land uses and servicing requirements in the geographic area covered by the Plan. It is reflective of local interests as well as regional, provincial and, in some cases, federal interests.

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan has been developed with participation, consultation and evaluation by the community through countless hours of community involvement in the OCP Working Group and other public events. In addition, this OCP has benefited from the community's work completed on the previous Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan, Nanoose Bay Parks and Open Space Plan and the Regional District of Nanaimo's Regional Growth Strategy.

**Map No. 1- The Plan Area**



The intent of this OCP is to provide direction on the evolution of land use and development in Nanose Bay over the next 5 years.

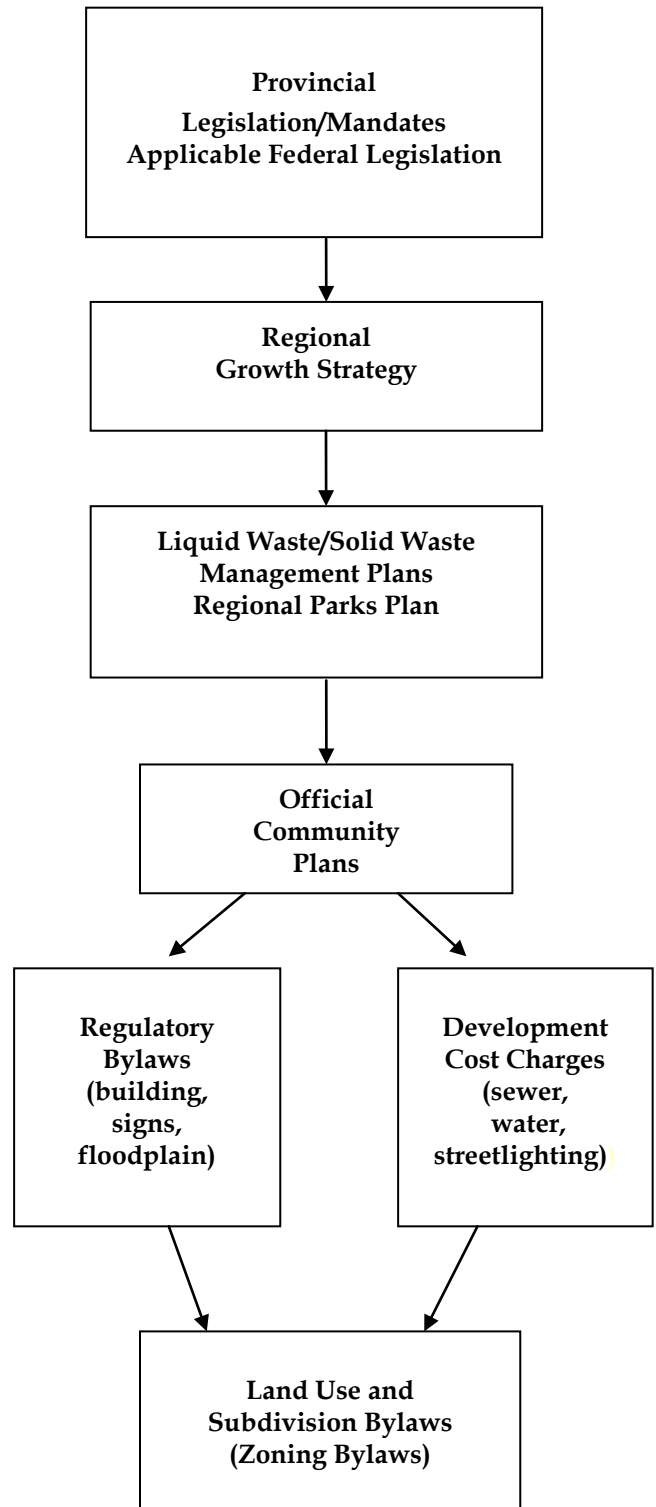
This OCP recommends that amendment applications prompted by new development proposals not be considered for a period of at least 2.5 years (midway through the regular review cycle) following the adoption of the OCP. A general review of this Official Community Plan is not contemplated for at least another 5 years or until it no longer serves community and regional needs. That is, the community may remain confident that the spirit and intent of this OCP will remain unthreatened for the life span of the OCP.

However, it is recognized that changes to the Official Community Plan may be required to address new legislation, new planning issues, new information and changes to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The community will have opportunities to participate in making any potential changes to the Official Community Plan.

During the OCP review, it quickly became apparent that the community was seeking a Plan to use as a working document—unambiguous, providing clarity and certainty to property owners and local residents.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the hierarchy of planning tools and legislation. As shown, an Official Community Plan must comply with the Regional Growth Strategy and senior legislation. It is intended that all RDN land use bylaws comply with the intent and direction provided by the policies in the OCP.

Figure 1.1: Legislation and Plans



## 1.1 THE PLAN AREA

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan Area is bounded by the District of Lantzville to the west and the City of Parksville to the northwest; as well as Electoral Areas C, F, and G of the Regional District of Nanaimo to the east and south. The size of the Plan Area is approximately 7,382 hectares. It is within the traditional lands of the Snaw Naw As First Nation.

The Plan Area includes the neighbourhoods of Madrona, Beachcomber, Dolphin Beach, the Rocking Horse area, Claudet Road, Morello Road, Hillside, Garry Oaks, Seablush, Wall Beach, Dorcas Point, Nanoose Beach, and the Red Gap area, as well as the Fairwinds golf and residential development.

Approximately 5,000 people live in the Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan Area (late 2004). At a rate of 22% (1996 to 2000), Nanoose Bay is one of the most rapidly growing electoral areas in the RDN. Compared to other electoral areas, Nanoose Bay contains a larger proportion of residents over the age of 65 (18% for the RDN in total vs. 22% for the Plan Area). The proportion of young persons (aged 0-19) has remained constant at 19% since 1986 in Nanoose Bay, compared to an RDN proportion for the same age category of 26%. Of all age categories, this 0-19 cohort is increasing at the fastest rate (by 92% between 1996 and 2000).<sup>1</sup>

Based on current rates of growth, population projections calculated for the Area estimate increases to between 7,000 and 11,000 people by 2021. However, it is anticipated that the lesser rate of growth is more likely due to demographic changes, a decreasing developable land base, and

community objectives which place a high value on future sustainability initiatives.

The potential for growth can be illustrated through 'build out' calculations for the Plan Area. These calculations reveal the capacity for development in an area over a specified time frame (25 years), based on current zoning and official community plan land use designations. Consideration is also given to the objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy and current provincial regulations regarding parkland provision and requirements for infrastructure.

In Nanoose Bay, future growth will be concentrated within the Urban Containment Boundaries and Village Centres. Some infill development is anticipated in the Coastal Residential and Rural Residential Land Use Designations; limited residential development is expected for the Resource Lands. Under existing zoning (late 2004), the residential development potential of Nanoose Bay is approximately 6850 units. Should the development objectives and policies of this OCP be fully implemented, it is anticipated that the buildout of the Plan Area will be reduced.

This Plan Area is designated a 'development approval information area' pursuant to the RDN's Development Approval Information Bylaw No. 1165, 1999. This bylaw outlines information requirements for zoning amendments, development permit applications and temporary use permits.

## 1.2 GEOLOGY & GEOMORPHOLOGY<sup>2</sup>

Three major geologic groups dominate the Nanoose Bay area: The Upper Cretaceous Nanaimo Group, the Karmutsen Volcanics

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic data excerpted from the RDN Demographic Indicators Report.

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<sup>2</sup> Provided by Rick Guthrie, MSc, P. Geo. Regional Geomorphologist, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

and the Buttle Lake Group. The Nanaimo Group is a sedimentary complex that includes sandstone, conglomerate, shale and coal.

The Karmutsen Volcanics are a series of submarine and subaerial flood basalts up to 6 km thick in places that form the backbone of Vancouver Island. They formed island arcs in the Middle and Upper Triassic and are the most common group of rocks on Vancouver Island.

The Paleozoic Buttle Lake Group is a siliciclastic group of sedimentary rocks. While they may contain fossils, they are not carbonaceous and rocks like chert and argillite are common. Two intrusive rock types are found in the Nanoose Bay area: the Jurassic aged Island Plutonics, and the Late Triassic Mt. Hall Gabbro. These are granitic and gabbroic respectively.

Approximately 13,000 years ago the Nanoose Bay area was covered with ice over 1 km thick, having advanced south eastward down the Strait of Georgia toward Victoria. The intense erosive burden of ice accounts for the orientation of several features of the area including the general trend of Nanoose Hill, Northwest Bay, Nanoose Harbour, and several smaller lakes and streams. Like most of Canada, glaciation also fundamentally changed the landscape. Glaciation scraped clean rocks and steepened and deepened valleys, and pressed soils onto mid and lower slopes with sufficient force as to render them almost impenetrable (thus the common development term hardpan which typically describes a basal till). Where the shoreline met the ocean, vast quantities of pro and post glacial sediments were deposited and landforms such as deltas, terraces, and valley floors were created under regimes that are today almost unimaginable. Post glaciation has seen a further reworking of the landscape, primarily by water in the

form of streams, but to a lesser extent by wind and biota.

The coastline around the Nanoose Bay area is unusual for eastern Vancouver Island south of Campbell River, probably in part due to the resistant nature of the Buttle Lake Group type rock that forms much of Nanoose Hill. Consequently there are rocky cliffs and rocky beaches around Nanoose Hill, interspersed with little gravel pocket beaches on the seaward side. In contrast Nanoose Harbour is a sheltered estuary and associated tidal flat, and the beaches on the landward side are more typical of the sand and gravel beaches found up and down the east coast. In general, the beaches and estuary are much more sensitive to development pressures than exposed resistant rock.

The combination of volcanic activity, glacial land shaping, and the influence of water, wind and biota have shaped Nanoose Bay into a landscape of unique natural features that is highly valued by residents.

### **1.3 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Throughout the building of the OCP, the citizens of Nanoose Bay have shown an interest in the development of their community as evidenced in community involvement in the drafting of the Plan and attendance at public events.

A wide range of public consultation techniques, including a series of public meetings and open houses, a Government Agencies Forum, newsletters, internet resources, a site office, and a public hearing were employed to establish community priorities and outline the vision for growth and change in the Plan Area.

A critically important component of the OCP process was the Nanoose Bay OCP Working Group. This volunteer-based group, with representation from across the

Plan Area, met bi-monthly and weekly through the latter part of the process to discuss aspects of the OCP and set out direction for the Plan's goals and objectives.

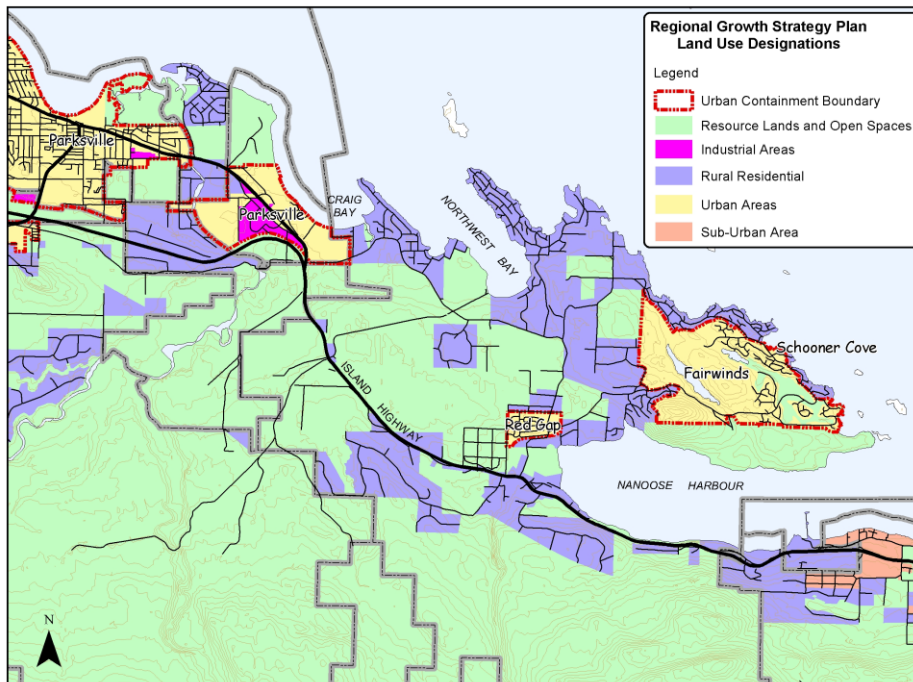
From the start, it has been the project's intent to ensure the widest possible public consultation and input during this review. The Working Group, instead of being a small appointed or selected group, has consisted of those members of the community willing and able to come along and debate important OCP issues. Thus, if an individual had a particular interest in only one aspect of the OCP, they were welcome to come along and join in for that session only. Throughout there has been a core of committed regular attendees: it has been particularly helpful to have good representation from Nanoose Bay's four Residents' Associations.

The OCP review began with an advertised public meeting on March 8, 2004. A public visioning event followed one week later. By late March, the Working Group began bi-monthly meetings to discuss OCP issues. In

April, the RDN and OCP Working Group sponsored a 'Government Agencies Forum' and invited the involvement of representatives of approximately a dozen government agencies. In June, an Open House was held to inform the public of progress to date and seek public comment.

In Fall 2004, the Working Group reconvened to focus its efforts on the preliminary draft of the OCP. After some refinement, a draft was presented to the public at an Open House in late November 2004. In 2005 additional public consultation included public information meetings and a public hearing prior to the OCP being adopted as a bylaw by the Regional Board.

Community involvement in planning does not end with the adoption of an official community plan as a bylaw. The implementation of the OCP requires ongoing community involvement. Residents will continue to play a key role in shaping their community through their support of initiatives to implement official community plan policies.



## 1.4 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

While the Official Community Plan and the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) are separate documents, their content is inter-related. The Regional Growth Strategy for the RDN (Bylaw No. 1309, 2002) describes a vision of a desirable future region and a strategy for attaining that vision.

Official community plans are the means of implementing the RGS. Through the integration of RGS goals into official community plans and the translation of RGS policies into official community plan policies, residents can work together towards the future desired for the Region.

The eight goals of the RGS are to:

1. contain urban sprawl;
2. create complete, livable communities;
3. protect rural integrity;
4. protect environmentally significant features and ecosystem functions and other biologically sensitive ecosystems;
5. improve mobility;
6. create a vibrant and sustainable economy;
7. improve servicing and resource use efficiency; and
8. encourage cooperation among jurisdictions.

## 1.5 REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan works to achieve consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy through the incorporation of regional goals and policies into the official community plan's objectives and policies. It is recognized that any

additions, deletions or amendments to the policies in this OCP may result in inconsistencies with the Regional Growth Strategy. Inconsistencies requiring amendment of the RGS require the consensus of all member municipalities and electoral areas.

Further, it is noted that a review of this OCP is not contemplated for at least five years, or until it no longer serves community and regional needs. In addition, OCP amendment applications prompted by new development will not be considered for 2.5 years (the half life of the OCP).

All policies in the Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan are consistent with or complementary to the goals and policies of the RGS, with the exception of those relating to urban containment boundaries. The OCP's response to the RGS is outlined below.

### 1.5.1 Urban Containment

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan designates Urban Containment Boundaries (UCBs) consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy around three areas- Red Gap, Fairwinds, and Schooner Cove. The community supports the development of more sustainable and economically efficient servicing enabled by these UCBs. This OCP proposes an expansion of the Urban Containment Boundary contiguous with the boundary of the Red Gap Village Centre. It is anticipated that an enlarged boundary will assist in attracting a greater mix of commercial uses and residential housing forms and densities to the Red Gap area. This boundary adjustment will require a Regional Growth Strategy Amendment, is subject to review pursuant to the Urban Containment and Fringe Area Management Implementation Agreement, and the changed UCB will not take effect unless approved pursuant to the Agreement. In addition, notwithstanding that all future

residential development that is denser than one unit per hectare will be directed to the Urban Containment Boundary areas, it is noted that there are residential areas of Nanoose Bay that have been historically subdivided to less than 1.0 hectares. These lands are designated Coastal Residential in the OCP; the future development potential of these lands is limited to infill development.

### ***1.5.2 Creating complete, nodal communities***

The three areas delimited by Urban Boundaries are also the focal points for growth in the Plan Area. Of these three, it is intended that the primary commercial and service centre for Nanoose Bay will be the Red Gap Centre. Schooner Cove will remain as a tourism focused service centre, and a node will eventually be developed within the Fairwinds UCB as the Fairwinds Community develops. It is intended that the communities develop from collaboration with the local community to determine the size, scale and design of these nodes, with an appropriate scale and range of retail, residential, employment opportunities, public amenities and travel alternatives. It is noted that throughout the public process, citizens supported focusing attractive, planned future development in the Red Gap Centre and the Area's neighbourhood centres.

### ***1.5.3 Protecting rural integrity***

The OCP supports the preservation of large rural holdings and maintaining the rural land base in Nanoose Bay for forestry, agricultural and resource uses. The OCP only supports parcels sizes that are as large as, or larger than, the parcel sizes supported in the previous OCP, with the exception of the lands that were within a Community Water Service Area when the Regional Growth Strategy was adopted. In addition, the Plan is consistent with and fully supports the mandate and policies of the

Provincial Agricultural Land Commission. The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan designates land considered to be rural into four designations: Coast Residential Neighbourhoods, Rural Residential Neighbourhoods, Rural Lands and Resource Lands. The Resource Lands designation provides for forestry and agricultural uses. Policies are included for each land use designation to protect and enhance the rural characteristics of these lands. Citizens in Nanoose Bay place a high value on protecting the quality of life in the Area and keeping growth focused away from rural lands. The OCP designates a Farmland Protection Development Permit Area to reduce land use conflicts between agricultural areas and adjacent non-agricultural areas.

### ***1.5.4 Protecting the natural environment***

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan includes mapping of environment features, sensitive areas and natural hazard areas, and designates development permit areas to protect these important features. Many sections of the Plan discuss the importance of the natural environment to sustaining life and the lifestyle of Nanoose Bay residents. Policies for water, sewer and storm water management also reference the importance of protecting the quality of life in Nanoose Bay. Residents have placed the highest value on the protection of the natural environment - including watercourses, green spaces, viewscapes, beach accesses, and sensitive ecosystems as defined and inventoried in the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory: East Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands. The plan supports the protection of undisturbed green spaces for the use and enjoyment of wildlife and native species.

### ***1.5.5 Improving mobility***

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan supports the RGS policies to encourage non-automobile modes of transportation along

safe pathways and trails. Within UCBs, it is intended that the provision of a mix of uses (including opportunities for recreation, employment, institutional uses and intensive residential development) will promote walking, cycling and other modes of 'human powered' travel within these boundaries. In addition, the OCP recommends a new alignment route for the Inland Island Highway at the Northwest Bay Road crossing. The continuing need for automobile transportation is recognized in the OCP through the Road Network Plan. Citizens in the area maintain a high level of interest in development in their community, and anticipate community involvement in the issues that affect Nanoose Bay.

#### ***1.5.6 Vibrant and sustainable economy***

Policies that support the expansion of complete communities and encourage local employment are key to creating a vibrant and sustainable local economy in Nanoose Bay. It is anticipated that retail and service sector activities will be directed to the Red Gap Centre (and the neighborhood level centres) and that economic activities compatible with the rural character in Nanoose Bay will locate within lands designated Industrial, Tourist Commercial, and Resource. Residents support the development of new cooperative local employment opportunities, with emphasis on focusing these opportunities within the urban containment boundary areas. The OCP supports the expansion of community services (sewer and water) to attract desirable economic development. Tourism related uses are encouraged on lands designated Tourist Commercial (as well as within the UCBs). Aggregate extraction and other resource uses are supported in those areas designated as Resource Lands.

#### ***1.5.7 Improving service and resource use efficiency***

The OCP fully supports cooperation in servicing among the electoral areas and member municipalities for providing community services, and anticipates that community servicing will be expanded throughout the UCB areas to accommodate future growth and development to Restricted Community Service areas for the purpose of addressing environmental or public health hazards and not for the purpose of facilitating additional development. Joint initiatives that require partnerships in servicing and operating community water, sewer, storm water, solid waste and recycling are all supported in the Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan. Other community facilities, such as parks, recreation facilities and schools, are also referenced in the OCP. Nanoose Bay residents support the development of sustainable, economically efficient servicing, where supported by the Regional Growth Strategy.

#### ***1.5.8 Cooperation among jurisdictions***

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan fully supports the interjurisdictional cooperation of electoral areas, member municipalities, First Nations, and provincial and federal agencies in advancing the shared goals of the RGS. The policies and goals of this official community plan are consistent with the collective efforts of these parties in creating a livable, vibrant region.



## 1.6 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan is structured around the six Community Values. These values were drafted early in the OCP process and have served as a 'touchstone' as the Plan evolved. The Plan also includes a section on climate change and energy which local governments are now required to include pursuant to the Green Communities Act

The Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan contains three appendices. The first two appendices are maps. Appendix Map No. 1 is an inventory of Natural Environment Features and Appendix Map No. 2 is an inventory of Existing Service Areas. Appendix No. 3 includes web references for documents that are identified in the Plan.

Each section (with the exception of the appendices) includes objectives and policies.

*Objectives* express community values and long-term aspirations. They are the community's statement of what is important and its vision of the future.

*Policies* express the community's position and response to community values and regional goals and policies. Policies guide decision-making. They provide direction on issues, and establish a favoured course of action or state a preferred scenario, circumstance, set of conditions or outcome. Generally, these policies provide guidance to the Regional District and other levels of government when addressing planning-related issues or situations.

