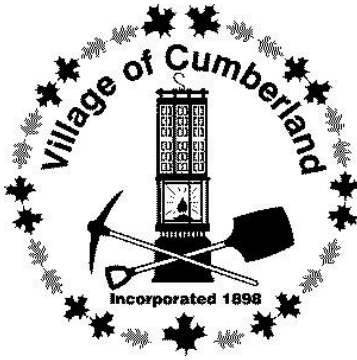




SUMMARY OF CHANGES PROPOSED IN THE NEW OCP

September 5, 2025

Background

The draft Official Community Plan (OCP) bylaw updates the OCP Bylaw 990, 2014 to bring it up to date and respond to the needs of a growing community. The updates are informed by the 2024 Complete Communities Assessment, the 2024 Cumberland Housing Needs Report, feedback from K'ómoks First Nation, feedback received from the community during phase 1 and 2 public engagement, and input from the Advisory Planning Commission, the Heritage Committee, the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee and the Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee.

The staff report presented at the November 4, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting ([item 7.3 p. 137](#)) further summarizes the process leading up to the development of the draft OCP. That report also introduced recommendations for key updates to the existing OCP.

The following highlights the key updates and changes in the draft OCP bylaw.

Vision and Goals (p. 26 – 32)

The new vision statement expresses the desire for a healthy natural environment, the importance of continuing to foster the sense of belonging residents feel in Cumberland, the commitment to reconciliation with First Nations and the respect for diversity, equity and social inclusion. Food security, keeping growth within the limits of infrastructure capabilities, site adaptive development and climate action are also key elements of the vision.

The draft OCP identifies twelve goals, four foundational and eight complete community goals and describes each (p. 27). The vision and goals guide the OCP objectives, policies, development permit area guidelines and heritage conservation area guidelines in the remainder of the document.

Climate Actions (p. 34 – 40)

The draft OCP bylaw places policies on climate change and the natural environment at the beginning of the land use directions section, as these policies underpin many of the policies and actions in the sections that follow.

The Climate Change section is entirely new, replacing what is in the current OCP with the new greenhouse gas reduction targets, the climate change mitigation and adaptation goals and actions drawn from the [2024 Climate Action Plan](#) (p. 36 -39).

Natural Environment (p. 41 – 48)

Protection of the natural environment remains a priority for the Village. The objectives and policies in this section were largely retained. A diagram and additional policy were added under the Views and Landscape Character heading to guide the protection of valued views from the Village to the surrounding landscape (p. 44 - 46).

A new subsection containing Urban Forest Policies was added (p.44).

The natural environment policies are supported by **Map B: Active Transportation Corridors, Parks, Trails and Conservation Lands**. The map shows proposed conservation lands which include a migration corridor in the Bevan industrial area and aquatic ecosystems (lakes, wetlands and streams) and surrounding buffer areas.

Map B also shows an area of land southeast of the Village that contains recreational trails as well as sensitive aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Not necessarily the entirety of the area, but the values they contain were identified as a priority for future protection within municipal or regional parks and/or within conservation lands by the community.

Built Environment

Land Use Designations (p. 49-52)

This section contains a table which lists the land use designations and their development intent. The land use designations are shown on **Map A: Land Use Designations** of the draft OCP bylaw.

Key changes to the land use designations are:

- Change of the land use designation of the industrial properties along Cumberland Road to **Commercial** to enable future rezoning to a commercial zone that provides opportunities for the location services and retail-oriented uses that require loading areas, large areas for storage and handling of goods and equipment and can generally not be accommodated in downtown spaces. The recent and ongoing development of the Bevan industrial area ensures there is additional area within the Village for heavier industrial uses.
- Addition of a **Freshwater** designation to be able to zone the surface of the water and restrict structures on Comox Lake and Maple Lake in particular.
- Change to the development intent of the **Interchange Lands** to express the desire for a planning process to determine future use while protecting wetlands, sensitive environments and recreational trails on the lands.
- A new **Mixed-Use Civic Facility** designation that allows for redevelopment of Village-owned properties with mixed institutional, commercial and residential use developments. For example, this would allow for future redevelopment of the municipal hall property to include residential and commercial components.
- Update to the development intent of the existing **Mixed-Use** designation to specify that where it occurs close the downtown commercial core, that is on Derwent and Penrith avenues between First and Fourth streets, this designation is to enable professional service to locate off Dunsmuir Avenue, possibly through adaptive use of a heritage home. The intent is that by providing this additional option for the location of professional services, more space opens up on Dunsmuir Avenue for uses that animate the street, such as restaurants and retail shops.

- A new **Open Spaces, Parks and Greenways** designation which consolidates the former Greenway designation with the Parks designation.
- Changing the previous Recreation designation to **Recreational Residential**. The designation now only encompasses the area containing the recreational cabins at the west end of Comox Lake. Formerly, a portion of the Interchange Lands was also included in this designation.
- A larger **Residential Infill** area to include the additional area within Cumberland where the provincial Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing regulations apply, permitting up to four units. The land use designation applies to residential properties under 4050 m² which are located within the urban containment boundary.
- An update to the development intent of the **Multi-Unit Residential** designation (name changed from Multi-Family Residential) to clarify that multi-unit residential is intended to absorb some of the projected population growth. The current OCP states: There is no identified need to expand multi-family land use over the term of this OCP". This land use designation has an upper limit of 160 units per hectare. This is the density permitted on the Second Street Affordable Housing Project. Higher density land uses would have to apply for an OCP amendment.
- Deletion of the **Agricultural** designation. As most areas within Cumberland, the area designated Agricultural in the current OCP does not have the types of soils needed for conventional farming without considerable efforts to build and enrich the soil. Instead of designating a specific area, the draft OCP includes policy to support urban agriculture and community gardens in many Village zones. A policy has also been added to review permitted uses in industrial zones to include non-soil based agriculture (p. 89).

Policies for Amendment Applications (p.54)

The draft Bylaw adds a few items to the list of desirable amenity contributions such as contributions to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund, conservation of heritage resources, and public EV charging stations.

Future Housing Demand (p. 56-58)

As per the new provincial requirement, this new section provides information on 5- and 20-year housing demand and how the draft OCP is meeting that demand.

Growth Management Objectives (p. 58)

The draft OCP establishes an urban containment boundary for residential growth. This new containment boundary is intended to:

- Contain residential growth while meeting the housing need projected in the Village of Cumberland's 2024 Housing Needs Report.
- Minimize urban sprawl and retain working forest, parks, and greenspace around the Village.
- Create a complete community where most residential areas are located within a 15 – 20-minute walk of services and/or areas that can be efficiently serviced by transit and active transportation corridors.

- Reduce the impact of new development on the lifecycle maintenance and replacement costs of Village infrastructure.

Housing (p. 60-63)

This section has been updated with most recent (2021) census data. Housing policies include additional policy on housing diversity, rental housing, and non-market housing as per discussions with the Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee. The non-market housing policies include policies to explore a non-market housing component as part of future redevelopment of civic properties and more rental tenure zoning; reduce parking requirements for non-market housing; and seek additional transit connections into Courtenay.

The above updates seek to reduce barriers and costs to develop non-market housing in the Village.

Heritage Conservation (p. 64-69)

The updated introduction to this section includes an acknowledgement of the K'ómoks First Nation's traditional territory and their peoples' early presence in the area that is now Cumberland.

An updated Heritage Conservation Area, as shown on **Map L: HCA-1 Heritage Conservation Area**, has been extended to include the lands designated for mixed use on the south side of Penrith Avenue and the north side of Derwent Avenue abutting the commercial area along Dunsmuir Avenue.

The current OCP also designates those lands for mixed use. The Zoning Bylaw review is exploring to pre-zone those lands to facilitate the integration of commercial-residential mixed use in that area.

The draft OCP includes a new **Map L: Historic Neighbourhoods** which shows the historic neighbourhoods in the Village which still include some of the original heritage homes. The idea for this map emerged during discussions with the Heritage Committee. An earlier (2004) OCP also included such a map. The intent of the map is to help with future planning, heritage interpretation signage, education and communication to increase appreciation and understanding of the character of historic Cumberland neighbourhoods. It may also form the basis for future exploration of additional heritage conservation areas in the Village. The neighbourhoods are described in Table 9 (p. 66).

The updates to the heritage conservation policies in this section are based on a review of the current policies with the Heritage Committee. During that review, the Committee expressed concern about increased redevelopment pressure on (a) residential heritage buildings due to the provincial regulations on Small Scale Multi-Unit housing and (b) on commercial heritage buildings due to the density permitted in the Zoning Bylaw which exceeds that of properties developed with historic buildings in the Historic Village Commercial Core. In light of those pressures, the Committee recommended that the Village review possible incentives for the protection of heritage buildings.

The following policy was included under section 7.4.3:

9. Encourage the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and heritage designation of privately-owned heritage resources through a heritage revitalization agreement offering incentives such as the following:
 - a. Additional density (e.g. addition of a mezzanine in a heritage building or addition of a new building behind a heritage building)
 - b. Relaxation of Zoning Bylaw requirements (permitted uses, site coverage, parking requirements, set-backs, etc)
 - c. Partial or full property tax exemption for a period of 5 or 10 years

Other heritage conservation policies that have been added include: support for a subdivision to facilitate the preservation of the Saito House (policy 5), and future exploration to establish limited area Heritage Conservation Areas outside of the HCA-1 boundaries to capture significant heritage properties.

Municipal Infrastructure (p. 70-82)

Some of the general infrastructure policies formerly in the Growth Management section were moved into this section. All the introductions to the subsections were updated. Major future infrastructure projects are identified on *Map C: Public Facilities, Major Roads, Sewer and Water Systems*.

Solid Waste Management (p. 73)

The Solid Waste Management section was rewritten to identify that the Comox Valley Waste Management Centre will be the only waste disposal facility within the Comox-Strathcona Waste Management Area within 5-10 years. The impacts of hosting the facility are clearly identified in the introduction and policy 7 (p.72).

Stormwater Management (p. 73-75)

The previous stormwater management policies were updated to reflect the recommendations in the [2024 Complete Communities Assessment](#) related to promoting infill and higher density development (p. 58-59 of the Assessment)

Liquid Waste Management (p.76)

The Liquid Waste Management section includes planned infrastructure projects and the commitments in the draft Liquid Waste Management Plan.

Transportation and Connectivity (p. 78)

The Transportation and Connectivity section has been updated to reflect the 2024 Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Multi-modal pathways to the City of Courtenay boundary and to Comox Lake, have been identified as key transportation projects. Those projects are not only identified in the 2024 TMP but were also mentioned by many participants during phase 1 and 2 engagement on the OCP.

The existing and proposed active transportation network is shown on ***Map B: Active Transportation Network, Parks, Trails and Conservation Lands***. Proposed future road connections are shown on ***Map C: Public Facilities, Major Roads, Sewer and Water Systems***.

Sand and Gravel Extraction (p. 83-84)

This section has been updated to further describe the soils within the area suitable for sand and gravel extraction. The accompanying map, **Map D: Areas Suitable for Sand and Gravel Extraction** identifies an area at the north end of the Bevan Industrial area as suitable. This area is assumed to accommodate future heavy industrial development. The identification is a change from the corresponding Map I in the current OCP which identifies only existing sand and gravel pits.

Economic Development (p. 85-94)

This section presents most recent (2021) census data on the local labour force, income levels and place of work, as well as a brief summary of economic challenges and opportunities.

The economic development objectives and policies focus on supporting local businesses, fostering entrepreneurship and home-based businesses, capturing higher value from tourism and working toward more affordable and diverse housing options to help businesses attract and retain employees.

To support small businesses, policies were added to review zoning regulations to allow for a diversity of spaces to support business start-ups, shared spaces, live-work artist and artisan studios, permit a broad range of home occupations, and reduce parking requirements for new commercial tenants in the downtown core.

Arts and Culture (p. 88)

A separate section on arts and culture was added, recognizing the arts and culture industry as a key economic driver for Cumberland. The need to review how murals in the downtown core are approved is included as one of the policies in this section.

Local Food Production (p. 91)

The policies in the section on Local Food Production integrate recommendations made by the Comox Valley Food Security Council to Cumberland Council. In particular, policies were added to support food production, processing, and post-production facilities. The industrial zones are identified for their potential to house non-soil based agricultural operations, greenhouses, food processing and post-production facilities.

Updated policies support more options for establishing community gardens and local food sales.

Tourism (p. 93)

The updates to this section put an increased focus on capturing greater economic returns from existing tourism. A key policy is to enable and incentivize the development of small and medium-scale overnight accommodations.

Community Well-Being (p. 95-98)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (p. 95-97)

Policies from the previously titled Health and Wellness section are now included under this section. An introduction has been added to explain key concepts related to diversity, equity and inclusion. A number of policies were added and policies related to other sections, such as arts and culture, were moved to those sections. Since diversity, equity and inclusion cuts across many policy areas, related policies in other sections are cross-referenced.

A notable policy addition is to update the Village's street naming policy to ensure street names are more inclusive and reflect Cumberland's diverse heritage and culture.

Recreation, Leisure and Parks (p. 97-101)

Updates under this section include references to regional parks and greenways, a future regional parks plan, and to the 2024 Climate Action Plan. Key policies are to develop a long-range Recreational Facilities Plan and to update the Parks and Greenways Master Plan.

Implementation (p.101-end)

DPA 1 - Environmental Development Permit Area (p. 114-127)

The language in the Environmental Protection DPA was tightened up. To reduce the considerable overlap between the guidelines for the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, they were combined into a single section. Some guidelines were not guidelines but conditions of the development permit. They were removed on advice of legal counsel. Depending on relevance to a particular development, they will be included in the development permit itself.

Key requirements such as stormwater management planning consideration of guidelines in the provincial *Develop With Care* document are retained.

A new section was added to the guidelines on docks.

DPA 2 - Groundwater Protection Development Permit Area (p. 128-132)

The groundwater protection development permit area was changed to correspond to the provincially mapped unconfined aquifer underlying most of the Village. The guidelines will apply only to industrial development which has a higher potential impact on groundwater quality than other land uses.

DPA 3 - Farmland Protection Development Permit Area (p. 133-136)

This DPA applies to those properties that abut Agricultural Land Reserve in the Comox Valley Regional District. It was reduced in size since some properties, such as Morrison Creek Headwaters, do not permit for development that would trigger this DPA.

DPA 4 - Wildland-Urban Interface Development Permit Area (p. 137-142)

This development permit area was enlarged to include all of the currently undeveloped parcels of the Village that have the potential for some type of development in the future (even if it requires prior rezoning). Undeveloped parcels that are not expected to be developed (e.g. Cumberland Community Forest, Village Drinking Water Supply Lands, and Morrison Creek Headwaters) are not included.

Also included within this DPA are properties within a 100 metre buffer of the developed edge of the Village. Redevelopment of property within that area will require a Wildland-Urban interface Development Permit.

Form and Character Development Permit Areas -

Key form and character DPA guidelines (residential infill, multi-unit and mixed use, commercial and industrial) have been illustrated with precedent image to serve as inspiration and guidance.

Stormwater management and sediment and erosion control guidelines were removed from the form and character DPAs and will be addressed at time of Building Permit when the building footprint and amount of impermeable surfaces are known. The design of the stormwater system are regulated by the Village's [Municipal Stormwater System Regulation and Fees Bylaw 1024, 2015](#). This does not represent a reduction in Village standards but streamlines the development process with regards to timing of required reports.

A requirement for drought resistant and FireSmart landscaping was included in all DPA's that require landscaping.

Following are key updates to specific DPA's.

DPA 5 - Industrial (p. 143 – 150) and DPA 6 Commercial Development Permit Areas p. (162-172)

The guidelines for commercial and industrial DPA's require visual treatment of large blank walls, provide more specifics on landscape buffers, include FireSmart guidelines for buildings (roofs, gutters, vents, and eaves) and encourage green roofs.

Residential Infill Development Permit Area (previously DPA 6)

To encourage infill development, there is no longer a residential infill development permit area . This extends the current practice *not* to require a development permit for accessory dwelling units or secondary suites to all types of infill within the Residential Infill land use designation (**Map A: Land Use Designations**). Up to four units are allowed in this designation. Regulations with respect to landscaping and private amenity areas on infill properties will be added to the Zoning Bylaw.

DPA 6 - Multi-Unit Residential and Mixed-Use Development Permit Area (p. 151 -161)

The previous multi-family and mixed-use DPA's have been consolidated into a single DPA. This provides more clarity if a development includes both stand-alone multi-unit residential buildings and mixed-use buildings.

The requirement for a playground also now applies to both types of development, whereas before, it only applied to multi-unit residential developments. However, the requirement has been adjusted to be triggered only if there are 20 or more residential units within a rental building or a multi-unit strata.

New guidelines have been included to promote or require bird friendly windows, visual treatment of large blank walls, landscaping of common areas, fire smarting buildings, and green roofs.

DPA 8 – Intensive Residential- Carlisle Lane and DPA 9 Interchange Lands

These two development permit areas received formatting edits to align them with the format of the DPAs above. No changes were made to the content as the lands included within these two development permit areas have covenants on title which direct the type of uses and, to an extent, the form and character of those uses. Substantive changes to these DPA guidelines would require amendments to the covenants.

HCA 1 - Heritage Conservation Area (p. 189 – 211)

The Heritage Conservation Area was increased in size to include the mixed use designation on the south side of Penrith Avenue and the north side of Derwent Avenue (See **Map L: HCA-1 Heritage Conservation Area**). As part of the concurrent Zoning Bylaw review, the Village will be exploring with Council to pre-zone the additional area. This would open up that area for new commercial and mixed land use.

The HCA includes an exemption from requiring a heritage alteration permit for the conversion of single-detached residential buildings to a commercial or a mixed use, as for example, a physiotherapist office on the ground floor and a suite above, provided there are no exterior alterations. This is to encourage the retention of some of the significant residential heritage buildings on the south side of Penrith and north side of Derwent. New builds require a heritage alteration permit. Adding accessibility features to those buildings (and others within the HCA-1) is also exempt from requiring a permit.

In updating the guidelines, an attempt was made to make it easier and more economical to maintain and repair heritage buildings while retaining their character and heritage value:

- The guidelines add an exemption for the replacement of wood siding with fiber cement panels (e.g. Hardie) to permit property owners of heritage building to firesmart their buildings and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.
- The guidelines no longer prohibit vinyl windows outright. While wood frame windows give a unique character to a building, they may be hard to source or more expensive. due to their greater cost and the difficulty of sourcing them.

When it comes to new builds, the guidelines emphasize the importance of connecting the building to the public realm and more clearly direct new buildings to fit into the streetscape and to reduce the massing by, for example, setting back top floors.

Signage guidelines were relaxed by not restricting the location of fascia signs to above the main entrance.

The guidelines now include a list of “protected heritage properties”, language used in the *Local Government Act*. Owners of heritage properties have access to more flexible requirements in the Building Code when renovating their buildings.