

# PLANNING FOR SCHOONER COVE & THE LAKES DISTRICT

For Immediate Release

**Schooner Cove and Lakes District Neighbourhood Plans Presented to Electoral Area Planning Committee**  
***International award-winning planning firm outlines new oceanfront village surrounded by neighbourhoods***  
***featuring parks and trails***

June 22, 2010, Nanoose Bay, BC: Over two years and more than 50 public consultations in the making, leading edge neighbourhood plans for Schooner Cove and the Lakes District at Nanoose Bay have now been presented to the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) Electoral Area Planning Committee (EAPC).

The Planning Team and landowner, in consultation with the Regional District, undertook a comprehensive public planning process directed at engaging and documenting local participation in the drafting of the Plans. "The resulting Neighbourhood Plans seek to implement the RDN's Regional Growth Strategy and establish a more sustaining and complete community for Nanoose Bay", said Paul Fenske, Principal of Ekistics Town Planning, the lead planning and design consultants.

Urban Designer Paul Fenske, one of the key authors of the Neighbourhood Plans, presented the Plans at the Committee's regularly scheduled meeting on June 8.

The Plans describe a vibrant new oceanfront village for Nanoose Bay, on the east side of Vancouver Island south of Parksville, as the centerpiece to sustainable residential neighbourhoods that respect and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Fenske told the Committee that the Plans set a new standard for sustainability, meeting and exceeding all regulatory requirements. Environmental data for the Lakes District and Schooner Cove was prepared and verified through two separate, independent registered professional biologists.

"Our approach was to design with – not on – the land," said Paul Fenske. "And the vast majority of ecologically significant areas are protected in perpetuity through dedication as parkland."

Highlights of the two projects include the revitalization of Schooner Cove into an oceanside village, adding a public waterfront boardwalk, shops, cafes and services, an upgraded marina, parks and walkways. The Plan for the Lakes District, a 287-hectare area around Enos Lake adjacent to the current Fairwinds Community & Resort, envisions a neighbourhood of single and multi-family homes, connected by trails in a park setting.

The planning process began over two years ago, when Fairwinds' management decided to take a visionary approach to the redevelopment of its land on the Nanoose Bay peninsula, and realize the full potential of the area, which is designated by the RDN as an urban growth area.

"Given the RDN's mandate and desire to demonstrate leadership in creating a thriving community for the long term, we worked with the community to evolve the plans over a two-year comprehensive consultation process," Fenske told the EAPC.

Fenske's planning firm, Ekistics Town Planning Inc. of Vancouver, which recently won a coveted international sustainable community award for the Whistler Athlete's Village, had a key role in creating the plans.

Russell Tibbles, VP, Development & Operations of Bentall LP, made an unprecedented commitment on behalf of the landowner to work with area residents. This process led to more than 50 community consultations, ensuring that the finished product was truly a collaborative effort.

Taking direction from the RDN's Regional Growth Strategy, the Lakes District Neighbourhood Plan reconfigures the currently approved 1,675 units into a mix of single- and multi-family residences in clusters to conserve surrounding natural habitat: the Lake District plan protects 100% of the Garry oak meadows and 90% of identified riparian and environmentally sensitive areas through dedication of more than 129 hectares of public park.

The plans feature a unique, continuous, interconnected network of wildlife corridors to preserve existing forest habitat. The Plans incorporate Provincial “Develop with Care” environmental guidelines, which include setting buffers to ensure ecological interactions between wetland and upland habitats to protect ecosystem integrity.

The Schooner Cove Neighbourhood Plan proposes a centre with a vibrant mixed-use village surrounded by 395 new residences, supporting the RDN’s own sustainability goals including:

- Opening the Schooner Cove waterfront to much broader public access, with 700m of waterfront boardwalk linked directly to forested pathways that lead to and through the Lakes District;
- Exciting new businesses suited to locals, such as a public market, pub and restaurant, bakery café, beer & wine shop;
- A Quarter Deck multi-purpose room for community use;
- Expanded housing choice providing opportunities for people to age in place and sufficient density to support transit; and
- Green building practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), energy consumption and waste.

As the next step in the process, the RDN will hold an open house and public information meeting on Monday June 28<sup>th</sup>, at Nanoose Place. RDN Staff and Fairwinds representatives will be available to answer questions about the Schooner Cove and Lakes District Neighbourhood Plans. For more information about this public event, see <http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wplD=2239>.

For interviews with the planners and landowners of Schooner Cove and the Lakes District, please contact:

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