

# A Vision for the Lakes District

## Catalyst for A Complete Community

With the launch of the Lakes District planning initiative, Fairwinds' vision continues to evolve as a residential community set within a network of natural space and scenic trails. This revisioning represents the single most important community planning process since the original concept for Fairwinds began to take shape nearly three decades ago.

While the planning of the Lakes District will require the reconciliation of land use, environmental, engineering and economic considerations, the real success of the Lakes District will depend upon the **sensitive integration** of future growth and development in a manner that protects the integrity of existing community values. Through such a **principled approach**, a **lasting legacy for Fairwinds** will be achieved.

In the discussion of sustainable development, there is often tension between needing to be aware of what "is" while imagining what "could be." It is here, in the **realm of possibility**, that ideas can transform into a compelling vision that can catalyze positive, lasting change. This is where visioning for the Lakes District begins.

## Defining the Path Ahead

Today, we are presented with an opportunity to define a future for the Lakes District that moves beyond what is merely "conventional," to a more sustainable lifestyle that integrates and embodies the best of West Coast living.

The information presented here begins the translation of planning principles and policy into analysis and action that express the **form, function and character** of future community development in the Lakes District.



# Fairwinds Today ~ West Coast Living

## Resort Overview

Fairwinds is set within 1,335 acres of ruggedly beautiful landscape on the east coast of Vancouver Island. And while its natural setting lends Fairwinds a distinct sense of place often described as “off the beaten path,” it is but a short distance from the urban centres of Parksville (15 km), Nanaimo (20 km), Victoria (140 km) and even Vancouver (about 60 km via the Departure Bay - Horseshoe Bay ferry or by floatplane).



## Origin and Design

In 1980, Fairwinds began as a dream - the vision of four local men: Bill Benner, Al Slaughter, Neil Scott and Frank Herman. Together they crafted a carefully planned community on 1,335 acres on the Nanoose Bay peninsula.

Initially envisioned as a ‘West Coast golf course community,’ many of its defining characteristics and features were achieved through the foresight of its first developers. Gordon Ralston (Planner) sought a more natural transition between homes and the natural landscape, creating sites that responded to the natural topography. Neil Scott understood the importance of quality public spaces and creating waterfront access, Brickyard Bay Park and the initial Fairwinds trail system. In the summer of 1988, Fairwinds opened its award-winning Les Furber designed golf course as the centerpiece of the community.

Today, almost 30 years since its inception, Fairwinds has realized its initial vision: it is home to a community of approximately 700 homesites, an 18-hole golf course with clubhouse and community centre. Many homesites feature stunning views of the ocean, the golf course and the Coast Mountain Range. Never far from the water, the community also features the full-service marina at Schooner Cove, Brickyard Bay Waterfront Park and the walking trails around Dolphin and Enos Lakes.



## Changing Times

Fairwinds is currently planned to accommodate 2,500 residential units, as envisioned in the Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan and is currently zoned RS1 Single Family (*for additional information, refer to the ‘Exploring Context - Understanding the Regional Framework’ information board*). To date, approximately 700 homesites (less than 1/3 of the approved units) and the golf course have been built.

Fairwinds represents the largest of Nanoose Bay’s three Urban Containment Boundaries, with a vision that includes a town centre, multi-family housing and a marina, in addition to its current offering of golf and single family residential.

In response to today’s shifting community needs and values there is a need to update the original vision, to provide opportunities for additional housing options and to develop a vibrant commercial centre at Schooner Cove.

As we pause to consider the future of the Fairwinds community, we seek to develop thoughtful planning that builds upon the past, recognizes the qualities of the present and designs for the needs of the future.

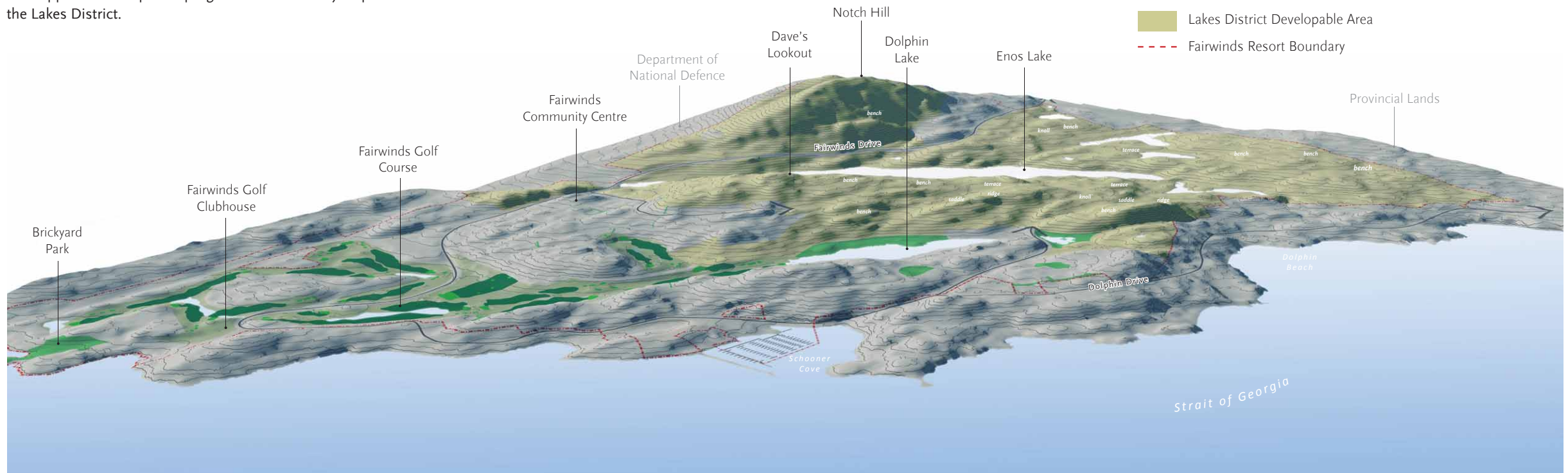
# Understanding Place ~ Biophysical Inventory

## Site Analysis

Information gathering and site analysis are the first steps in a comprehensive development planning process.

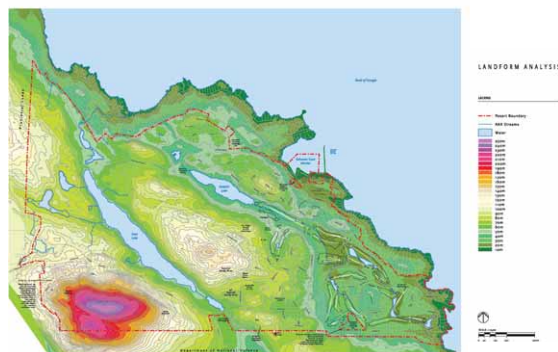
While we have an excellent understanding of landform and function, there are many opportunities for further study.

Ongoing, extensive scientific, professional and local investigation will support a development program that sensitively responds to the Lakes District.



### From Hilltop to Waterfront

Fairwinds is a dramatic landscape of rocky lookouts, wooded uplands, lakes, streams and seashore. 'The Notch' rises more than 250-metres above sea level and the remaining resort lands gradually fall away to the shoreline at Schooner Cove.



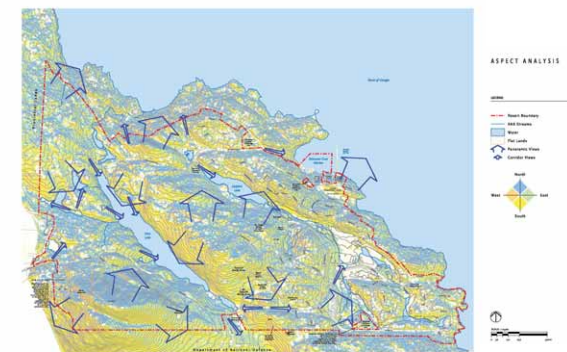
### Fitting the Land

While a portion of the Lakes District is defined by steep slopes, site-sensitive design can tailor the development program to the more gentle terrain, utilizing complex topography to capture its unique sense of place.



### Wide Open Views

Between the high point at the Notch and the low point at Schooner Cove, Fairwinds consists of three generalised ridges offering incredible ocean views to the north and sun-filled views of Mt. Arrowsmith and Mt. Moriarty to the south.



# Understanding Place ~ Landscape Typologies

*Rocky Outcrops*



*Lakes and Wetlands*



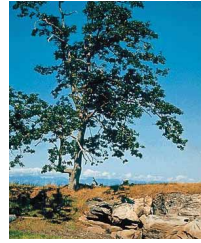
*Forested Hillsides*



# Environmental Stewardship ~ Protection & Enhancement

## Environmental Features of the Lakes District

The Lakes District is home to a host of significant environmental features. The Neighbourhood Plan for the Lakes District will be built upon rigorous environmental planning based on the the principles and best management practices in landscape ecology, conservation planning and recreation management.



### Landscape Ecology

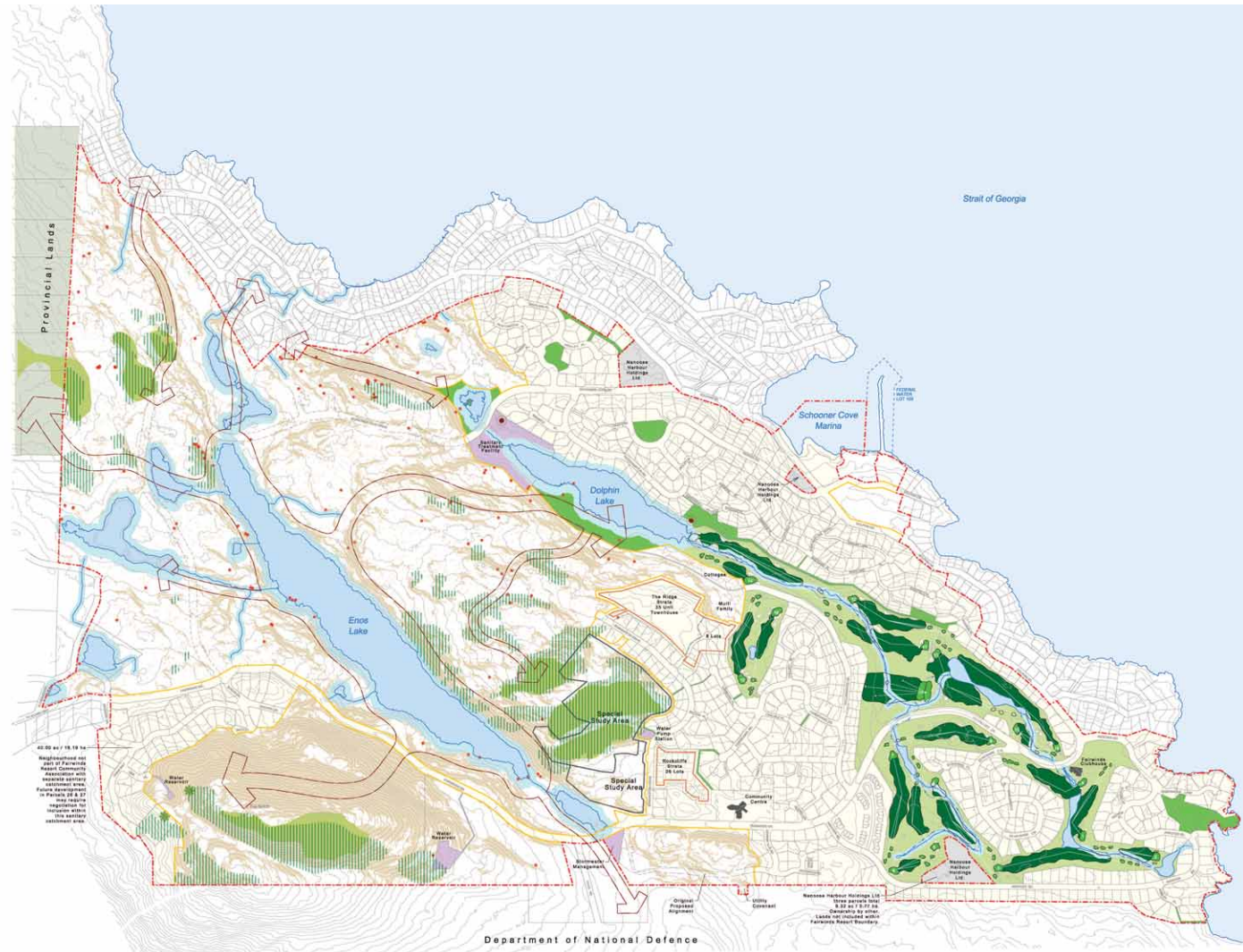
Functional and healthy ecosystems require a diversity of habitat types and ages, connectivity along wildlife movement corridors and an understanding of human impacts.

### Conservation Planning

Regionally significant and sensitive plant and animal communities require protection in both public and private lands. Protection of these sensitive ecosystems is accomplished through a variety of measures including dedication of parklands and environmental covenants. The planning for this would include setbacks from sensitive areas where appropriate, clustering of the development footprint and environmental covenants on homesites.

### Recreation Management

Careful park programming and design, as well as the creation of an interconnected network of protected green spaces and trails, provides community amenities for both passive and active recreation.



### Wildlife Corridors

Protecting wildlife movement and habitat through wildlife corridors is a Provincial and Regional goal. Wildlife corridors between 30-50 metres serve to maintain healthy habitat while linking to the recreation network.

### Blue & Red Listed Species

These protected species including rare wildlife, trees, plants and raptor nesting sites are monitored by the BC Conservation Data Centre. These species which are identified within the Lakes District will be protected through conservation measures.

### Garry Oak Ecosystem

Several pockets of the sensitive Garry Oak Ecosystem have been identified, comprising about 4% of the Lakes District area. Through sensitive design and monitoring, these areas will be preserved and protected

### Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Approximately 12% of the Lakes District area is classified as Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). These are prime areas for conservation and enhanced recreation opportunity such as bird watching, hiking and environmental stewardship.

### Riparian Areas

Riparian areas represent a zone of transition and increased diversity, often as a result of the availability of water, as well as vegetative and structural diversity. The Ministry of Environment Riparian Areas Regulation establishes setback criteria from all established watercourses.

### Water & Wetlands

With 8% of the Lakes District occupied by lakes, streams and wetlands, the protection of waterways and wetlands creates an opportunity to maintain natural features and function as well as natural character for recreational and visual amenity.

### Steep Slopes & Rocky Outcrops

More than one-fifth of the remaining lands are occupied by areas with steep terrain defined by slopes in excess of 30%. While these areas limit potential for some types of development, they create unique opportunities for other home types and help preserve landscape character.

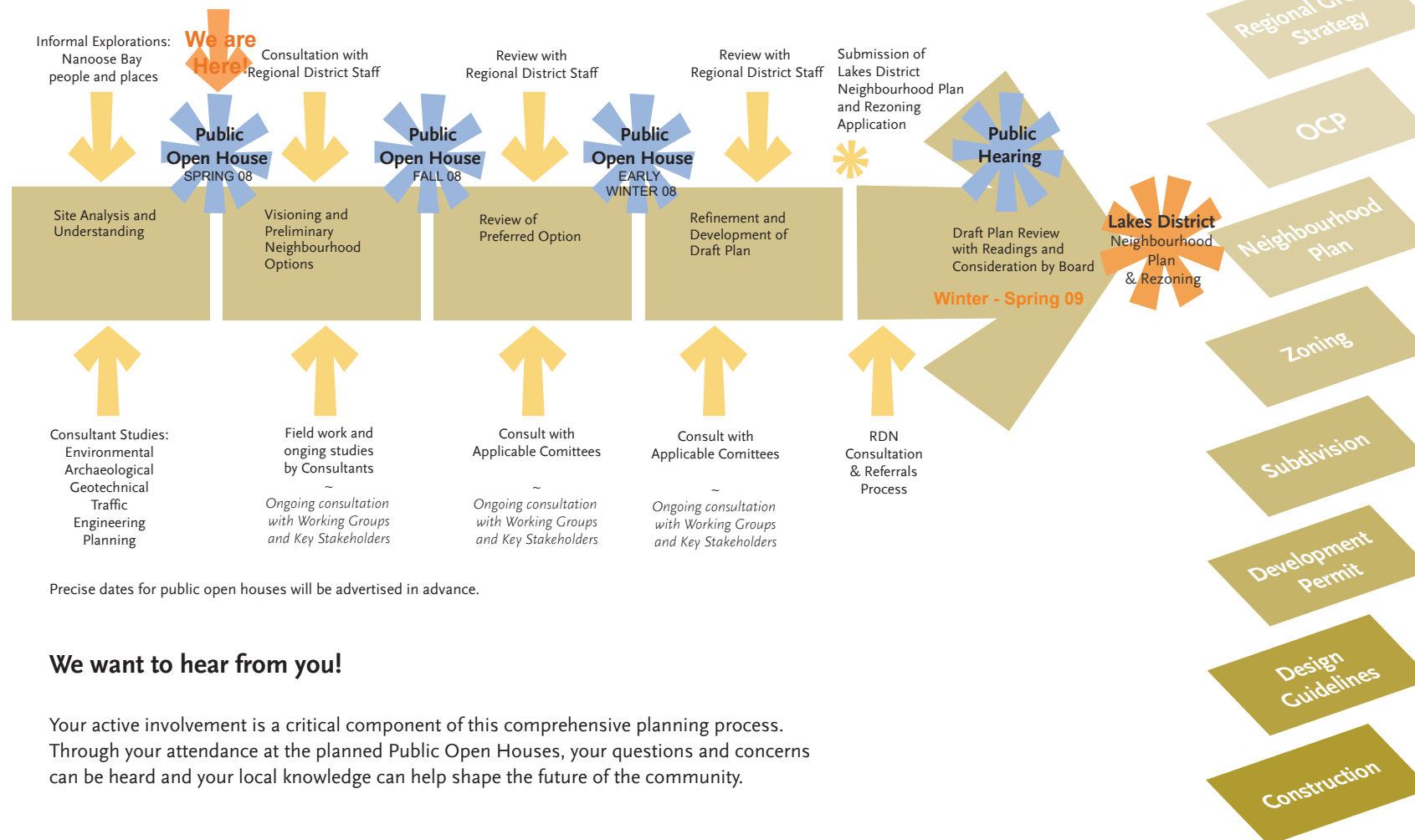
# Planning Framework ~ The Way Forward

## How will the Planning Process Work?

The Lakes District Neighbourhood Plan is being developed by Ekistics Town Planning, a Vancouver-based, multi-disciplinary planning and design firm with local and international experience in sustainable community design.

The process is designed to gather community input through Public Open Houses and Working Groups, and to consult with Regional District staff as well as supporting consultants in environment and ecology, hydrogeology, and archaeology, as well as geotechnical, civil and traffic engineering.

Design solutions are explored and documented, and ultimately a Neighbourhood Plan is developed. Finally, the regional approval process involves the review of the application through several levels of local regulation.\*



Precise dates for public open houses will be advertised in advance.

## We want to hear from you!

Your active involvement is a critical component of this comprehensive planning process. Through your attendance at the planned Public Open Houses, your questions and concerns can be heard and your local knowledge can help shape the future of the community.

## \* Levels of Regulatory Approvals

The RDN's **Regional Growth Strategy** sets out the direction of growth and change in the region, managing development over the long-term.

The application must first meet the intent of the Nanoose Bay **Official Community Plan (OCP)**, or alternatively the OCP must be amended.

The **Neighbourhood Plan** further refines the intent of Nanoose Bay's Official Community Plan (OCP) and serves as a more precise vision for a specific neighbourhood to amend the existing OCP.

**Zoning** The RDN regulates the specific use and development of property through a series of bylaws approved by local government.

**Subdivision regulations** The Ministry of Transportation (MoT) set the standards for road alignments and widths, civic infrastructure, servicing and other associated criteria, as well as approves the subdivision of land.

Through **Development Permits** the RDN regulates the form, character, and in some cases environmental regulations of areas which fall under "special conditions" such as multi-family residential and commercial.

**Design guidelines** for public and private realm help maintain quality standards for neighbourhood form and character in architecture and landscape design.

**Implementation** of the neighbourhood design can occur only after all layers of the RDN and MoT regulatory framework have been addressed.