

## 1. (e) Settlement Expansion Areas

*Settlement Expansion Areas* are located on the fringe of *Municipal Areas*. Any growth in *Settlement Expansion Areas* will occur in a phased and orderly manner and will undergo a public planning process in order to determine the appropriate scale and form of development. They have been identified for either, or a combination, of the following: (1) they contain existing settlements with private water and/or sewer servicing that will eventually require the extension of publicly operated water and sewer services, coincident with boundary extensions, or satisfactory servicing agreements, in order to address public health and environmental issues before they arise; or, (2) they have the long-term potential to accommodate future growth subject to boundary extensions and the provision of publicly-owned water or sewer services, provided that appropriate phasing policies are established, new development does not detract from compact growth options within *Municipal Areas* and that infrastructure capacity is available and financially sustainable.

There are a number of existing neighbourhoods, such as Marsden/Arden and Royston, located on the fringes of the *Municipal Areas*. For the most part, these neighbourhoods were built without full municipal infrastructure – in other words, they contain on-site servicing such as septic systems and/or private well or private/public water systems. Many of them are built at densities that today would be considered too high for such private servicing systems because of water quality and public health issues. Experience has shown that private septic and water systems need ongoing maintenance to prevent failure. While most landowners are responsible and keep their systems maintained, over time such systems have proven to fail and need to be replaced at considerable costs to landowners. More typically, a number of systems will fail at the same time (given that they have similar life cycles); creating pressure to extend publicly operated water and sewer services into the affected area.

Given the number and density of private systems located on the fringe of *Municipal Areas*, there is a need to develop a long-term strategy to prevent public health concerns before they arise. Private wells, watercourses and the marine foreshore within the Comox Valley could be seriously compromised should a number of septic systems fail in the coming years prior to detection. As a result, it is the long-term intention of the growth management strategy that existing neighbourhoods within designated *Settlement Expansions Areas* will eventually be provided with publicly owned water and sewer services. Such provision of services will be coincident with a boundary extension that incorporates the settlement expansion area into a municipal area, or a satisfactory servicing agreement, as detailed in the corresponding official community plan.

### Excerpt

Schedule 'A' Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010 – Settlement Expansion Areas

The *Settlement Expansion Areas* designation also includes lands on the fringe of *Municipal Areas* with little or no existing development. Such areas have been identified as ‘reserve areas’ to help accommodate the long-term growth demands within the Comox Valley. Their close proximity to *Municipal Areas* means that future growth in these areas will help achieve many of the same benefits as growth within *Municipal Areas*. Namely, if developed in a compact form and in an orderly manner that does not detract from compact growth options within *Municipal Areas*, they will promote the efficient use of land, provide greater transportation choices, reduce public servicing costs and reduce sprawl into rural areas.

#### **MG Policy 1E-1 – Boundary Extensions within Settlement Expansion Areas**

It is the intention of Local Governments in the Comox Valley that *Settlement Expansion Areas*, as identified on *Map No. 5*, shall become part of a *Municipal Area* through a boundary extension. Local governments will work cooperatively with regard to such boundary extensions and ensure that the policies of the RGS are maintained.

#### **MG Policy 1E-2 – Identification of Settlement Expansion Areas within OCPs**

*Settlement Expansions Areas*, as identified on *Map No. 5*, shall be identified within the Comox Valley Regional District official community plan and within the official community plan of the *Municipal Area* intending to incorporate it. Such official community plans shall contain policies for *Settlement Expansion Areas* consistent with MG Policies 1E-3 through 1E-6.

#### **MG Policy 1E-3 – Water and Sewer Services within Settlement Expansion Areas**

Publicly owned water and sewer services will, in the long-term, be provided within *Settlement Expansion Areas*, coincident with boundary extensions, or mutually satisfactory servicing agreements, and infrastructure capacity in a financially feasible manner. Nothing shall however compel a local government or service provider to enter into a servicing agreement. Service agreements will take into consideration issues around taxation, service delivery, cost recovery and future initiatives in order to address inequities in the provision of service other than water and sewer.

#### **MG Policy 1E-4 –Public Health and Environmental Issues in Settlement Expansion Areas**

Where a demonstrated public health or environmental issue has been identified due to failing private water or sewer systems within *Settlement Expansion Areas*, local governments will work together to expedite the provision of publicly owned water and sewer services to such areas in a financially feasible manner.

#### **Excerpt**

Schedule ‘A’ Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010 – Settlement Expansion Areas

### **MG Policy 1E-5 – New Development within Settlement Expansion Areas**

New development within *Settlement Expansion Areas* will be phased in an orderly manner in order to ensure that appropriate infrastructure capacity is available, that new development does not detract from compact growth options within *Municipal Areas*, and that the financial stability of *Municipal Areas* is not negatively impacted. As such, a four-hectare minimum lot size shall be established in *Settlement Expansion Areas* until such time as the following criteria are met:

- a. the area has been incorporated into a *Municipal Area*;
- b. publicly owned water and sewer services are provided;
- c. phasing policies as established within the relevant official community plan are satisfied;
- d. a *Local Area Plan* is prepared (a commitment should be made to prepare the Local Area Plan within 12 months of the boundary extension; and
- e. in the case of Royston, where a *Local Area Plan* already exists, a new *Local Area Plan* should be prepared and the Royston community should be actively engaged with the planning process.

### **MG Policy 1E-6 – New Settlement Expansion Areas**

Designation of any new *Settlement Expansion Areas* will require an amendment to the regional growth strategy.

#### **Excerpt**

Schedule 'A' Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010 – Settlement Expansion Areas