



FACT SHEET

Planning Tools to Reduce GHGs

Zoning

Zoning regulations determine where specific types of development occur, as well as building size, setback, and height. A local trust committee or island municipality can adjust zoning bylaws to eliminate disincentives and encourage energy efficient building construction and retrofits in a number of ways. For example, a local trust committee or island municipality can:

- Exclude features designed to increase energy efficiency from floor area limits
- Accommodate renewable energy
- Make zoning approval subject to site specific requirements related to GHG emissions

Island municipalities can reduce or eliminate building regulation to encourage construction of thicker walls

Density Bonus

Established through zoning bylaw, a density bonus allows developers to have additional density in exchange for the provision of community amenities. A community amenity is broadly defined as features that a local trust committee or island municipality considers of value to its residents. Amenities related to greenhouse gas mitigation could include: energy efficient and green building design, use of an alternative energy system, public walking and bicycle trails, tree preservation, and ecosystem restoration. Amenities can be provided on-site or off-site.

Development Permit Areas

A development permit area (DPA) is an area identified in an Official Community Plan within which all subdivisions, new construction and building additions, or land alteration require a development permit. In order to receive a permit, developers must conform to a set of development requirements determined by the local trust committee or island municipality. Local governments may establish DPAs specifically intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy and water efficiency. Permit requirements within these DPAs may include stipulations around site landscaping (e.g. natural shading, insulation, and wind-breaks to reduce building energy consumption), siting of buildings, exterior form and design of buildings, equipment and systems external to buildings and other structures, and restrictions on type and placement of trees and vegetation. Requirements such as parking stalls for small electric vehicles and plug-ins can also be required through DPA guidelines. DPAs address land use and exterior building design only, and cannot influence construction standards and interior building design.

Density Transfer

Density transfer is a tool that allows the voluntary transfer of the development potential of one property (the 'sending property') to another property (the 'receiving property'). Density transfer can be used to help a local trust committee or island municipality gradually move towards a sustainable development pattern and low-greenhouse gas build-out plan (e.g. concentrating future development in nodes to increase density, reduce transportation needs, and preserve forested lands). 'Sending' and 'receiving' areas are identified or described in an Official Community Plan, and density transfers are carefully considered on a case-by-case basis.

Parking Requirements

Local trust committees and island municipalities have bylaw authority to determine the amount, size, design, surfacing of off-street parking required by a building. They can also reduce off-street parking requirements for development that is in proximity to alternative transportation services, and can also require developers to provide cash in-lieu of required off-street parking for development of walk ways, bicycle paths, public transit and other alternative transportation infrastructure.

Comprehensive Development Zones

Comprehensive Development Zones (CD zones) are zones in which a local trust committee or island municipality can establish guidelines and requirements for all aspects of development in a coordinated and integrated way on a case-by-case basis. This tool can be used to mitigate GHG emissions in a number of ways – for example, CD zones can be used by local trust committees or island municipalities to:

- establish specific and detailed zoning requirements that support sustainable land use patterns;
- obtain commitments for community amenities such as tree retention, green infrastructure, and energy efficient buildings from a developer; and/or
- cluster development in one area of the development zone to minimize site disturbance and create compact land form.

Development Cost Charges (DCCs)

Local trust committees and regional districts do not have authority for development cost charges (DCCs) (unless the Minister provides that authority by regulation to the regional districts). DCCs are one-time charges levied on new subdivision and buildings to cover the cost of off-site infrastructure required to service the new development. Island municipalities can waive or reduce DCCs for small-lot subdivisions and construction that advances low-GHG development patterns.

Advocacy and Partnerships

Advocacy statements, initiatives, and partnerships can be effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions where authority or jurisdiction falls to another level of government or is exercised by individuals within the community.