



ISLAND HOME photo: M. Levy

## **B.2 RESIDENTIAL LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **B.2.1 Housing quantity**

*Background Note: There are approximately 5800 residential lots on Salt Spring Island (2007). While approximately 1300 of these are vacant, local zoning allows for the construction of a single family dwelling on each of them. Of the existing residential parcels, many are large enough that they can be further subdivided under the existing local subdivision bylaw. A few are zoned for multi-family use. All told, the number of dwelling units (not including seasonal cottages and suites) that could be built on Salt Spring Island under current residential zoning is estimated to be about 8150. The eventual population of Salt Spring Island that might result from the zoning now in place is estimated to be a little over 17,000.*

#### **B.2.1.1 OBJECTIVES**

- B.2.1.1.1 To support a mix of housing types in appropriate locations without compromising protection of the natural environment.
- B.2.1.1.2 To develop zoning that allows many different types of housing and accommodates a diverse population.
- B.2.1.1.3 To acknowledge that a framework that limits growth may restrict housing choices as supply is limited; to respond to the challenge of fostering socioeconomic diversity within such a framework.

#### **B.2.1.2 POLICIES**

- B.2.1.2.1 Zoning changes should be avoided if they would likely result in a larger island population than is expected under the development potential zoned in 2008. Exceptions to this policy are to be few and minor and only to achieve *affordable housing* and other objectives of this Plan.

## **B.2.2 Affordable, rental and special needs housing**

*Note: Where land is located within the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, any rezoning proposals that are expected to result in a net increase in water demand must also take into account the severe restraints on the District's available water supply. Policies in Section C.3.2.2 must also be considered.*

### **B.2.2.1 OBJECTIVES**

- B.2.2.1.1 To provide opportunities for the creation of affordable, rental and *special needs housing*.
- B.2.2.1.2 To integrate affordable, rental and *special needs housing* into appropriate residential areas where community services are most accessible.
- B.2.2.1.3 To provide, through zoning, the opportunity for island seniors to remain in the community, especially in their own or their families' homes.
- B.2.2.1.4 To recognize the value of maintaining existing *manufactured home parks* as an important source of housing within the community.
- B.2.2.1.5 To cooperate with senior governments, the Capital Regional District, housing *industry*, funding sources and community organisations to provide affordable, rental and *special needs housing* on Salt Spring Island.

### **B.2.2.2 POLICIES**

#### **General**

- B.2.2.2.1 The Local Trust Committee will initiate a Housing Needs Assessment, to be updated regularly and on the basis of which the Local Trust Committee may establish priorities for consideration of *affordable housing* applications.
- B.2.2.2.2 The Local Trust Committee, in cooperation with the Capital Regional District and the community, should work to establish a target level for the percentage of rented and owned *affordable housing* units in the total housing stock, based on projected community housing needs.
- B.2.2.2.3 All rezoning applications for *affordable housing* projects should include evidence of:
  - a. need for the housing.
  - b. an adequate water supply for potability and for fire protection.
  - c. means of sewage disposal.
  - d. energy and water efficient *building* design.
  - e. not degrading a sensitive ecosystem.
  - f. not being sited in an area subject to hazardous conditions.
- B.2.2.2.4 The Local Trust Committee may consider amending the Land Use Bylaw to create a new zone for *manufactured home parks*.

#### **Amenity Zoning**

- B.2.2.2.5 Land for *affordable housing* is an eligible community amenity, which could be exchanged for a higher density of development as outlined in Appendix 3.

## **Inclusionary Zoning**

- B.2.2.2.6 When the Local Trust Committee is considering a rezoning application involving a significant increase in residential density the Local Trust Committee should require that the application include provision of *affordable housing*.
- B.2.2.2.7 The Local Trust Committee may consider amending zoning to require that on-site staff accommodation be provided for larger new commercial developments.
- B.2.2.2.8 Zoning could be changed to allow small, affordable homes to be located above commercial *buildings* in villages. Existing zoning (that only allows two storeys) could be relaxed to allow such homes to occupy a third storey, provided that impacts on view corridors are taken into account.
- B.2.2.2.9 Where a lot has subdivision potential, the Local Trust Committee should consider rezoning applications that would allow the property owner to build (without subdividing) the same number of single family dwellings on the lot as could be built after subdivision. Such shared residential rezoning applications should be consistent with the guidelines in H.2.1 of Appendix 2.

## **Flexible Housing Units**

- B.2.2.2.10 In zones where single family dwellings are presently allowed, the Local Trust Committee should consider changing local zoning to also allow (as an alternative to a single family dwelling), a flexible unit dwelling that:
- has a maximum of two storeys, and
  - has a maximum floor area, and
  - could contain between one and three dwelling units, depending on the needs and wishes of the property owner.

Flexible unit dwellings should only be allowed on lots larger than 1.2 ha or on smaller lots in village areas. If zoning is changed to allow flexible unit dwellings, design guidelines and zoning regulations should be developed to ensure the dwellings fit into single-family neighbourhoods.

- B.2.2.2.11 If flexible unit dwellings are allowed, they should be allowed in only a few zones on a trial basis to find out if they do supply needed housing without having a negative effect on neighbouring properties. Flexible unit dwellings should not be allowed in zones within the Watershed-Islet Residential Designation unless they are shown not to increase population or sewage generation over that expected in single family dwellings.

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- B.2.2.2.12 Flexible unit dwellings could also be allowed in zones in the General Employment and Commercial Services Land Use Designation, where a property is primarily used for *general employment* and commercial services purposes.

- B.2.2.2.13 If flexible unit dwellings are allowed, they should not be converted into separate strata-titled dwelling units.

## **Boarding Houses**

- B.2.2.2.14 Boarding houses, single family dwellings where rooms are available for on-going residential occupancy, should be allowed to operate as home based businesses in all zones where single family dwellings are allowed.

## **Secondary Suites**

- B.2.2.2.15 The Local Trust Committee may give consideration to amending the Land Use Bylaw to allow secondary suites in dwellings as *affordable housing* under certain circumstances. Any initiative to allow suites should address the following criteria:
- a. A maximum of one suite is allowed per dwelling.
  - b. The owner occupies either the principal dwelling or the suite.
  - c. Suites should only be allowed in areas with an adequate supply of potable water.
  - d. Suites should not be allowed in areas that are community water system supply watersheds or in community well capture zones.
  - e. New construction of dwellings with suites in areas containing sensitive ecosystems or areas that are hazardous for development should be managed by development permit.
  - f. The use of suites will not be for short-term rental, in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw.
  - g. Regulations should limit suites to 40% of the floor area of the principal dwelling and no more than 90 m<sup>2</sup> of floor area.
  - h. *Building* safety and waste disposal issues are addressed through compliance with the B.C. Building Code and applicable health standards.
  - i. The Local Trust Committee will consider the use of housing agreements and other measures to ensure that suites are affordable and to address occupancy.
  - j. The Local Trust Committee will work with the Capital Regional Housing Corporation on the administration of housing agreements in order to implement this policy.
  - k. The Local Trust Committee should coordinate implementation of zoning changes with Capital Regional District Building Inspection and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.
  - l. The Local Trust Committee may also consider limits on the numbers and location of secondary suites to minimize dependency on private automobiles.
  - m. The Local Trust Committee will make zoning changes incrementally and monitor changes in order to have the effect of limiting the overall number of suites on the island.
  - n. The Local Trust Committee will consider an annual registration system in order to remain informed about the number and location of occupied suites.

## **Seasonal Cottages**

- B.2.2.2.16 Seasonal cottages should continue to be allowed wherever they are allowed by current zoning. The Local Trust Committee may also consider amending the Land Use Bylaw to allow the use of seasonal cottages as full time affordable rental housing units in certain areas. In order to encourage housing for families, the Land Use Bylaw may be amended to permit cottages with a maximum floor area of 90 m<sup>2</sup> on lots 2 hectares or larger in area, while retaining the existing floor area limits on cottages on lots between 1.2 hectares and 2 hectares in area.

Any amendment to zoning to allow cottages to be used as full time residences should address the following criteria:

- a. Full time residence of cottages should only be allowed in areas with an adequate supply of potable water.
- b. Full time residence of cottages should not be allowed in areas that are community water system supply watersheds or in community well capture zones.
- c. New construction of cottages for full time residence should be not allowed in areas containing sensitive ecosystems or areas that are hazardous for development.
- d. The use of cottages will not be for short-term rental in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw.
- e. *Building* safety and waste disposal issues are addressed through compliance with the B.C. Building Code and applicable health standards.
- f. The Local Trust Committee will consider the use of housing agreements and other measures to ensure that cottages are affordable and to address occupancy.
- g. The Local Trust Committee will work with the Capital Regional Housing Corporation on the administration of housing agreements in order to implement this policy.
- h. The Local Trust Committee should coordinate implementation of zoning changes with Capital Regional District Building Inspection and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

- i. The Local Trust Committee may also consider limits on the location of cottages to minimize dependency on private automobiles.
- j. The Local Trust Committee will make zoning changes incrementally and monitor changes in order to have the effect of limiting the overall number of full-time units on the island.
- k. The Local Trust Committee will consider an annual registration system in order to remain informed about the number and location of occupied cottages.

### **Multi-Family Dwellings**

- B.2.2.2.17 Applications for strata conversion (strata titling) of existing multi-family dwellings that contain more than three units should be considered by the Local Trust Committee, especially if such a conversion is expected to increase the community's supply of affordable owned housing. The Local Trust Committee should not approve strata conversions that would replace affordable rental housing with non-affordable owned housing.
- B.2.2.2.18 Preference should be given to rezoning applications for multiple-unit *affordable housing* projects that:
- a. are based on the housing needs of existing residents and are not meant to be mainly marketed to off-island residents.
  - b. would provide owned or rental housing, possibly through non-traditional means such as co-housing, cooperative ownership, sweat equity projects or land trusts.
  - c. would create durable, and water and energy efficient housing.
  - d. provide walking, transit or cycling links to village services.
  - e. provide safe walking, transit, or cycling links to a school, if the project is designed for families.
  - f. include appropriate site and *building* designs, such as those outlined in Development Permit Area 1.
  - g. that are in or near island villages, except where the *affordable housing* would be linked to and support farming.
- B.2.2.2.19 The Local Trust Committee should consider changing the local zoning that applies to multi-family zones so that density is guided by *floor space ratios* as well as units per hectare. Such changes should be considered to provide more flexibility in the type of dwelling units that can be built.

*Background Note: Currently, multi-family zones may not provide enough flexibility to allow single storey units to be constructed for seniors or for those needing barrier-free units.*

### **Care Facilities**

- B.2.2.2.20 Community care facilities will be allowed in zones that permit residential use, as outlined in the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*.
- Background Note: The Community Care and Assisted Living Act ensures that local zoning bylaws do not prevent Community Care facilities from locating in residential areas.*
- B.2.2.2.21 The Local Trust Committee should consider changing local zoning to allow small care cottages to be temporarily placed alongside single family dwellings to accommodate those who are disabled or require family care. Temporary suites could also be allowed to serve the same purpose. Should the Committee amend zoning in this way, it should first have a system in place that will ensure the suites or cottages will be used as intended. Care cottages should not be permitted on properties where seasonal cottages or flexible unit dwellings are permitted.

B.2.2.2.22 The Local Trust Committee could consider other innovative strategies that would increase the community's supply of *affordable housing*, including, but not limited to, consideration of rezoning applications that would permit additional dwellings where the floor area of the dwellings is limited, energy and water efficient design is implemented, and sensitive ecosystems are protected.

**Others are encouraged to support the objectives of this Section in the following ways:**

B.2.2.2.23 The Local Trust Committee encourages and supports other levels of government and non-profit groups to work towards the establishment of a Housing Agency on Salt Spring Island.

B.2.2.2.24 Local service clubs, non-profit organizations and others that provide affordable, rental and *special needs housing* are encouraged to develop projects in keeping with the policies in this Section. Such groups are particularly encouraged to explore the potential for supplying a community pool of care cottages.

B.2.2.2.25 The Local Trust Committee will support the establishment and work of non-profit community land trusts and other organisations for the acquisition of land for, and construction and management of, *affordable housing* units.

## **B.2.3 Settlement Patterns**

### **B.2.3.1 OBJECTIVES**

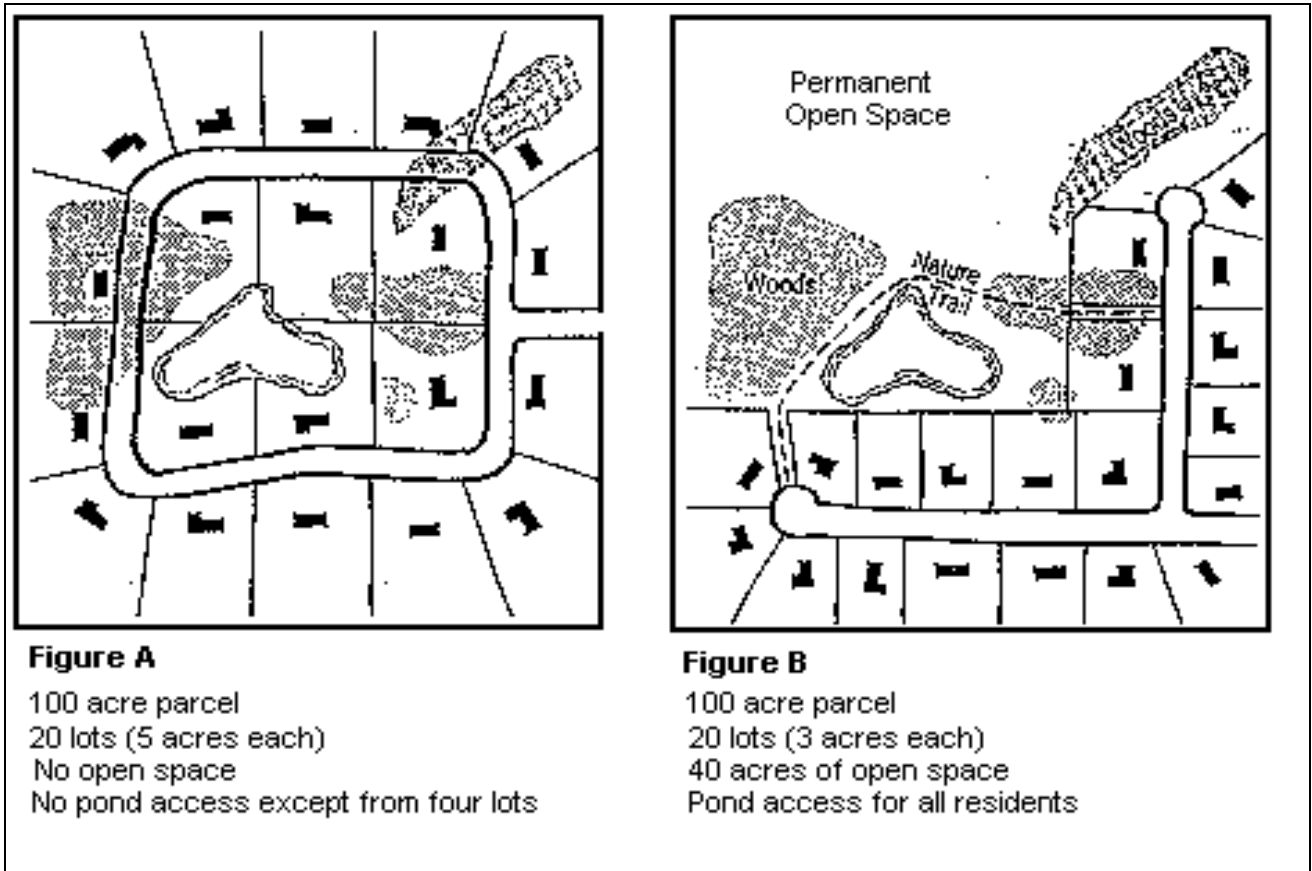
- B.2.3.1.1 To encourage future development to locate away from *environmentally sensitive areas*, agricultural and forestry lands, community water supply watersheds, lands with the potential for surface erosion or slope instability, public lands, tidal waterfront, areas with outstanding natural beauty and views, or archaeological and historic sites. To ensure buffers are retained on settlement lands where they adjoin *agricultural lands*.
- B.2.3.1.2 To redirect the island's future pattern of settlement from one of "modest overall density" to one that includes clusters of development interspersed with large areas of open space, protected areas, and resource lands. To guide future development into clusters and towards existing or new villages and hamlets where *non-automotive* transportation alternatives and appropriate services are available and most efficiently and affordably provided.
- B.2.3.1.3 To create future settlement patterns that reduce dependency on private automobiles and encourage other forms of transportation such as walking, cycling and public transit.
- B.2.3.1.4 To create future settlement patterns that allow for the efficient and affordable delivery of public services such as road maintenance, utilities, school transportation and emergency response.
- B.2.3.1.5 To create future settlement patterns that minimize energy and resource use.
- B.2.3.1.6 To promote efficient land use with zoning that accommodates mixed or shared uses where appropriate and by encouraging joint use of major community developments.
- B.2.3.1.7 To identify a variety of ways in which settlement pattern changes may be encouraged and enabled (for example through the transfer of development potential), instead of the regulatory removal of the development potential that exists at the time of this Plan's adoption. To ensure that any higher density areas that are created through the transfer of development potential do not have a negative impact on the rural character or natural environment of the island.

### **B.2.3.2 POLICIES**

- B.2.3.2.1 The Local Trust Committee should consider rezoning applications from property owners who wish to effectively transfer their existing development potential from one property to another in a way that would achieve one or more of the above objectives. Rezoning applications that would transfer development potential should be consistent with the guidelines in Appendix 4. Land Use Designations that are designated in this Plan as Development Potential Donor Areas and Development Potential Receiving Areas are shown on Map 26.
- B.2.3.2.2 The Local Trust Committee could consider rezoning applications that would effectively transfer existing development potential from Development Potential Donor Areas into new hamlets or villages in the Rural Neighbourhoods Designation. Proposals for new hamlet or village sites should follow the guidelines in Appendix 4.
- B.2.3.2.3 Village containment boundaries for Ganges, Fulford and Channel Ridge Village are identified by the Village Designations on Map 1. The intent of village containment boundaries is to keep village development compact, and prevent 'leap frog' development, reduce the need for additional infrastructure and services, minimize the loss of rural lands, and minimize impacts on sensitive ecosystems and other *environmentally sensitive areas*. The Local Trust Committee should not approve rezoning applications that would allow large new commercial, institutional or multifamily development outside Village Designations. Exceptions should be made for new village or hamlet applications, for applications to provide *affordable housing*, for neighbourhood convenience stores and for home based businesses as outlined in Section B.3.2. Expansion or extension of containment boundaries should only be considered where there are no available sites within the containment boundaries. Any such expansion or extension should incorporate land next to an

existing boundary, lands which do not contain sensitive ecosystems, lands which do not exhibit geo-technical or other hazards, lands that are along existing transportation routes, and lands which can provide efficient access to potable water and other services.

B.2.3.2.4 Subdivision applicants will be encouraged to cluster new lots onto that part of their land that has the best capacity for residential development, and the least value for agriculture, forestry or environmental protection, or protection of archaeological sites or other First Nations cultural sites. The Local Trust Committee will develop informational materials for subdivision applicants that illustrate how they could maintain their development potential while preserving open space (See example below).



Source: Arendt, 1994

B.2.3.2.5 The Local Trust Committee should support the transfer of development potential from prospective "water access only" subdivisions.

B.2.3.2.6 The Local Trust Committee may consider changes to zoning regulations, such as lot coverage, in order to achieve overall settlement pattern objectives and other objectives of this Plan.



## **B.2.4 Residential Neighbourhoods Designation**

### **B.2.4.1 OBJECTIVES**

- B.2.4.1.1 To continue to provide for a range of *medium density residential uses* consistent with the community's rural character.
- B.2.4.1.2 To continue to accommodate non-residential uses that are compatible with *medium density residential use*.

### **B.2.4.2 POLICIES**

*Note: Where land is located within the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, any rezoning proposals that are expected to result in a net increase in water demand must also take into account the severe restraints on the District's available water supply. Policies in Section C.3.2.2 must also be considered.*

- B.2.4.2.1 The areas designated for Residential Neighbourhoods are shown on Map 1.
- BL488 (07/20) B.2.4.2.2 Zones within the Residential Neighbourhoods Designation will continue to accommodate the *medium density residential uses* and the other compatible land uses allowed in the existing bylaw. Existing commercial, *general employment* and multi-family zones will also remain, but zoning changes should not be made to locate more of these zones on additional lands in this Designation, with the exception of multiple-family *affordable housing* projects.
- B.2.4.2.3 The minimum size of lots that can be created by subdivision will remain the same as indicated in the existing Land Use Bylaw. However, the Local Trust Committee could consider rezoning applications that allow a slightly higher density (smaller minimum average lot sizes) as part of a proposal that provided a community amenity (see Appendix 3) or as part of a proposal to transfer development potential (see Policy B.2.3.2.1 and Appendix 4).
- BL488 (07/20) B.2.4.2.4 Rezoning applications could be considered to rezone commercial and *general employment* property to residential use at a density similar to that allowed on neighbouring properties.

## **B.2.5 Rural Neighbourhoods Designation**

### **B.2.5.1 OBJECTIVES**

- B.2.5.1.1 To continue to provide adequate land zoned for *medium density residential use* and other traditional and compatible rural land uses.

### **B.2.5.2 POLICIES**

*Note: Where land is located within the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, any rezoning proposals that are expected to result in a net increase in water demand must also take into account the severe restraints on the District's available water supply. Policies in Section C.3.2.2 must also be considered.*

- B.2.5.2.1 The areas designated for Rural Neighbourhoods are shown on Map 1.

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B.2.5.2.2 Zones within the Rural Neighbourhoods Designation will continue to allow medium density residential development and the other rural uses allowed by existing zoning. Existing commercial and *general employment* zones will remain, but exceptionally large new commercial or *general employment* developments should not be allowed in this Designation. Existing zones that allow higher densities, smaller lots and *multifamily use* will also remain.

B.2.5.2.3 The minimum average size of lots that can be created by subdivision will remain the same as indicated in the existing Land Use Bylaw that applies to land in the Rural Neighbourhoods Designation. New zones created in this Designation will not generally have a density that exceeds 1 lot per 2 ha. However, the Local Trust Committee could make an exception by allowing a density of 1 lot per 1.2 ha as part of a proposal that provided an eligible community amenity (see Appendix 3) or as part of a proposal to transfer development potential (see Policy B.2.3.2.1 and Appendix 4). Portions of the Rural Neighbourhoods Designation are a Development Potential Receiving Area.

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B.2.5.2.4 Rezoning applications could be considered to rezone commercial and *general employment* property to residential use at a density similar to that allowed on neighbouring properties.

B.2.5.2.5 Despite the minimum lot sizes indicated in Policy B.2.5.2.3, the Local Trust Committee could consider a rezoning application from a property owner to develop a new hamlet or village site in this Designation, as outlined in Policy B.2.3.2.2 or to allow an affordable family-oriented housing development as outlined in Policy B.2.2.2.18.

## **B.2.6 Channel Ridge Residential Designation**

### **B.2.6.1 OBJECTIVES**

B.2.6.1.1 To continue to provide for clusters of medium density residential settlement compatible with the natural environment of the designation.

### **B.2.6.2 POLICIES**

B.2.6.2.1 The area designated as the Channel Ridge Residential Designation is shown on Map 1.

B.2.6.2.2 Zones within the Channel Ridge Residential Designation will continue to allow clusters of medium density residential developments and the other compatible uses allowed by existing zoning.

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B.2.6.2.3 Zoning amendments should not be made to locate large new commercial, *general employment*, institutional or multifamily developments in the Channel Ridge Residential Designation.

B.2.6.2.4 Blocks of land that may be used for residential settlement should remain generally as indicated in the Local Trust Committee's current Land Use Bylaw. The number of new lots that can be created by subdivision in the Designation should not be increased.

B.2.6.2.5 The Local Trust Committee should consider rezoning applications that would allow owners of undeveloped property within the Channel Ridge Residential Designation to transfer their development potential to more suitable locations within the Designation or to the Channel Ridge Village Designation. Such applications should follow the guidelines in Appendix 4. The Channel Ridge Residential Designation is a Development Potential Donor Area. Proposals to transfer development potential from areas north of the Channel Ridge Village Designation could be considered if a thorough analysis of the benefits and impacts of any road network changes is provided.