

# STAFF REPORT

REPORT TO: TED SWABEY, GENERAL MANAGER, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

FROM: ANDREW TUCKER, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

RE: URBAN CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY

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## STAFF'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council direct staff to circulate the draft OCP with the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) as shown on the map "Proposed Option #2".

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In January 2008, Council considered a presentation on "island sprawl" and a corresponding report that recommended moving the UCB to coincide with the City boundary. That proposal has now been vetted through a workshop attended by staff of the City, the RDN and member municipalities. While the participants were prepared to support the City's proposal, a healthy discussion on the issue and the potential impact on the other local governments led to a consensus that a UCB that included potential future growth areas but excluded resource lands was more logical. The purpose of this report is to summarize the discussion on the UCB and to recommend that Council endorse a revised UCB identified on the map "Proposed Option #2".

## BACKGROUND:

On 2008-JAN-14, Council received a presentation from the City Manager regarding growth management, the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB), climate change and tax equity. Council also considered a report which recommended that the UCB in the draft OCP coincide with the City boundary.

On 2008-JAN-25, City staff met with staff of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and the other member municipalities (Lantzville, Parksville, and Qualicum Beach) of the RDN in an all day workshop to discuss the City's proposal and its implications for the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS).

While the RDN expressed the opinion that the Regional Board would likely support Nanaimo's change to the UCB recognizing the desire of Nanaimo to manage urban growth independent of the RGS, the member municipalities noted that the proposed change would lead to inconsistencies in the application of the UCB across the region. In particular, Lantzville and Qualicum Beach noted that they have large areas of resource lands inside their municipal boundaries but outside the UCB which the municipality has no intention to convert from rural resource to urban use.

It was also noted that lands inside the UCB which are located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) or have been down-zoned to protect forestry resource values are not likely to change land use as a result of their location inside the UCB. Therefore, it was the opinion of the other member municipalities that there was limited value in bringing these resource lands inside the UCB.

Conversely, it was recognized that Nanaimo is the principal urban node within the RDN and that Council's desire to accommodate and manage the projected growth can be accommodated by

realigning the City's UCB. The creation of an "urban reserve" designation, in a manner consistent with the policies in Plan Nanaimo (the current OCP) pertaining to the Linley Valley, ensures that comprehensive plans will be prepared prior to development of the "urban reserve" areas.

The workshop also discussed the large number of rural lots already existing in the Electoral Areas of the RDN. These lots (estimated to be  $\pm$  2000 lots) can develop under existing zoning without municipal services (water, sewer). Nevertheless, these rural lots place a significant demand on soft services provided by the municipalities. There was a view expressed by some participants that the UCB may have had the unintended consequence of contributing to sprawl in the Electoral Areas.

### DISCUSSION:

Based on the concerns expressed by RDN and municipal staff, we have re-evaluated the proposal to locate the UCB to coincide with the municipal boundary.

If the UCB is located at the City boundary, an additional 5570 acres of land will be brought inside the UCB. This includes:

- 804 acres - Urban Reserve (Jingle Pot, Linley Valley)
- 999 acres - Industrial (913 acres at Duke Point)
- 524 acres - Resort Centre (subject to Council decision on Bylaw 6000.081)
- 3243 acres - Resource Protection divided between
  - 926 acres ALR
  - 757 acres Parks
  - 296 acres Lakes (Brannen, Westwood)
  - 1265 acres other (most located above Westwood Lake)

(see map "Proposed Option #1)

In contrast, if the UCB were revised more selectively, an additional 2277 acres of land would be brought inside the UCB. This includes

- 804 acres - Urban Reserve
- 999 acres - Industrial
- 524 acres - Resort Centre (subject to Council decision on Bylaw 6000.081)
- 114 acres - Resource Protection
- 168 acres - Parks (Cottle Lake, Joan Point)
- Less 168 ac - Resource Protection (Buttertubs, Colliery Dam)

(see map "Proposed Option #2)

Given that over half of the land that is proposed to be brought inside the UCB (3243 acres or 58% of the land) if the UCB coincides with the City boundary, is already committed to non-urban uses by virtue of the ALR, park, lake or environmental (estuary) designation, it is questionable what benefit would be derived by bringing these lands inside the UCB. Based on the concerns expressed by the other member municipalities and the RDN, this approach is not recommended for the draft OCP.

Instead, it is recommended that only those lands that will likely be used for urban uses at some point in the future (upon completion of an Area Plan) be included in the revised UCB. This will include "urban reserve" designation for the Jingle Pot area and the western portion of Linley Valley, the Sandstone Development (South Nanaimo Lands adopted by Council on 2007-OCT-29), the Duke Point Industrial area, and may or may not include the Cable Bay lands pending Council's decision on Bylaw 6000.081. This revised UCB provides a more appropriate separation of urban and rural lands, reflects the spirit of the RGS and addresses the concerns raised by the other RDN member municipalities. It also reduces the amount of land to be brought inside the UCB to those lands that may be reasonably expected to convert to urban uses within the time frame of the plan. Therefore, Council is recommended to endorse Proposed Option #2 as the location of the UCB for the draft OCP.

Respectfully submitted,

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Andrew Tucker, Director  
Planning and Development  
Development Services Department

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Ted Swabey, General Manager  
Development Services

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Council Date: 2008-Feb-18