

VISION: CONTAIN AND ENRICH

There are many characteristics that make Gibsons special: the historic village setting of Gibsons Landing and the working harbor, the semi-rural character of its residential neighborhoods and the expansive, dramatic views of the surrounding water and mountains. These unique features create an image of small-town charm that residents and visitors cherish. Gibsons' proximity to metropolitan Vancouver has made it an attractive location for settlement; however, the current pattern of suburban expansion and strip-mall style sprawl threatens the very characteristics that define it. Working from the assumption that Gibsons and the surrounding rural areas will need to accommodate an additional 10,000 people in the future, our plan proposes to contain and enrich the present settlement area by weaving new growth into the existing urban fabric.

Like many small, rapidly growing cities Gibsons' is in danger of becoming a victim of its own success and losing the amenities that make it such an attractive place through unwise and unchecked growth. Gas stations and strip malls threaten to strip Gibsons of its identity. The highway tramples the through the heart of Upper Gibsons and threatens to make Lower Gibsons irrelevant. Transportation, commerce and land economics are the current drivers of design at the expense of a livable, pedestrian-scaled urban form. It is evident to our group that the existing character of Gibsons is something that needs to be preserved, even enhanced by development rather than threatened by it.

Our concept is a creative attempt to retain the special characteristics of Gibsons, while at the same time, allowing for future growth and change. Our approach revolves around two fundamental concepts: to contain Gibsons' urban boundary and enrich its existing urban spaces.

Contain

The first fundamental concept, containment, picks up on the idea of an urban growth boundary, which applies spatial limits to urban development. This is established by drawing a line around all of the existing built-up area in Gibsons and concentrating future development within this new boundary. Although this is not a new approach, we have taken the concept one step further. Our approach "freezes the urban footprint" in its present size, preventing any new development from taking place outside of the built area of Gibsons. Therefore, instead of marching continuously outwards, the urban growth boundary forces development to accumulate within a prescribed area, allowing cities to mature.

This approach is basically the reverse of the traditional way in which cities are formed. Rather than growing the city at the expense of the outlying areas, it is the city that is held in check. It also ensures that existing natural surroundings, which are the lifeblood of Gibsons' tourist industry and an important public amenity are preserved. Freezing the footprint in its current form would also provide residents with a massive public urban park on a similar scale to Stanley Park immediately within Gibsons.

Enrich

Once we decided to limit the buildable area of Gibsons, we then had to focus on ways in which population growth and change could be accommodated without destroying the residential character of the area. Our first priority was to think of innovative ways in which people could be housed without radically changing existing neighborhoods. By infilling and enriching, existing residential communities can be allowed to accommodate many more people than they currently do without sacrificing the residential quality of the area.

Our second assumption was to zone all areas for multiple uses. Commercial, industrial and residential uses can coexist in a manner that not only makes a higher, better use of land area but also creates a more lively and pedestrian friendly urban environment. In addition, low and medium density housing can mix with commercial and recreation areas.

Fundamentally, our approach challenges the assumption that there is not enough room in Gibsons' existing built area to accommodate growth without changing the character of the community. There is plenty of room in Gibsons. While the municipality projects a that the municipality can accommodate 4,000 dwelling units at build-out, our calculations show that the municipality has the ability to accommodate as many as 6,000 through an infill policy. Most of this additional growth would occur by allowing the existing residential neighborhoods to mature. In other words, most of the development we propose would still take the form of single family residential.

Gibsons Residential Infill Capacity - Municipal Projections

Land Use Designation	Dwelling Units
----------------------	----------------

Existing

All	1,365
-----	-------

Potential Additional Dwelling Units

Single Family	850 - 1,350
Low-Medium Density	0
Multi-Family	750 - 1,505
High Density Multi-Family	175 - 250

Total Future Housing Units	3,140 - 4,015
----------------------------	---------------

Potential Additional Population

2.1 Persons per Household (pph)	6,595 - 8,430
---------------------------------	---------------

2.3 Persons per Household (pph)	7,225 - 9,235
---------------------------------	---------------

*Municipal Build-Out Projections Assuming Typical Development Trends***Gibsons Residential Infill Capacity - Group Three Projections**

Land Use Designation	Location	Density (p/ha)	Land Area (Ha)	Dwelling Units
----------------------	----------	----------------	----------------	----------------

Existing

All	n/a	n/a	1,365
-----	-----	-----	-------

Potential Additional Dwelling Units

<u>Mature Single Family</u>				
	Gibsons	24.7	125	3,088
<u>Multi-Family</u>				
	School Road	49.4	12	593
	Live/Work	49.4	9	445
	Waterfront Area	49.4	11	543
	Upper Gibson	61.8	22	1,360
	Miscellaneous	49.4	5	247

Total Dwelling Units	6,275
----------------------	-------

Potential Additional Population

2.1 Persons per Household (pph)	13,177
---------------------------------	--------

2.3 Persons per Household (pph)	14,432
---------------------------------	--------

*Gibsons Build-Out Projections Assuming Policy of Infill Development***Elphinstone Residential Infill Capacity - Group Three Projections**

Land Use Designation	Location	Density (p/ha)	Land Area (Ha)	Dwelling Units
----------------------	----------	----------------	----------------	----------------

Existing

unknown				
---------	--	--	--	--

Potential Additional Dwelling Units

<u>Rural Residential</u>				
	Elphinstone	9.8	100	980
<u>Mature Single Family</u>				
	Elphinstone	24.7	95	2,347
<u>Multi-Family</u>				
	Community Nodes	49.4	2	99

Total Dwelling Units	2,445
----------------------	-------

Potential Additional Population

2.1 Persons per Household (pph)	5,135
---------------------------------	-------

2.3 Persons per Household (pph)	5,624
---------------------------------	-------

Elphinstone Build-Out Projections Assuming Policy of Infill Development

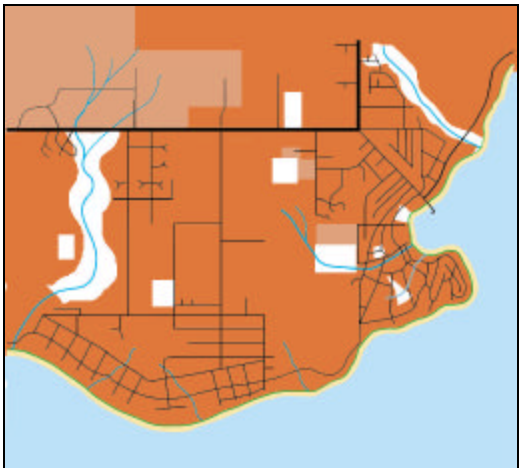
These schematics show what Gibsons would like given different patterns of development. The first schematic shows Gibsons today, the second shows what Gibsons would look like in twenty years if our policy was achieved; the third shows what it would look like in twenty years if a typical pattern of development was followed. The brown tones represent built area. Note the amount of space left in its natural state in the infill proposal as opposed to the typical development scheme. It is obvious from these images that an infill is the policy to pursue if Gibsons' small town character and natural amenities are to be preserved.



Future Pattern of Development – Infill Policy

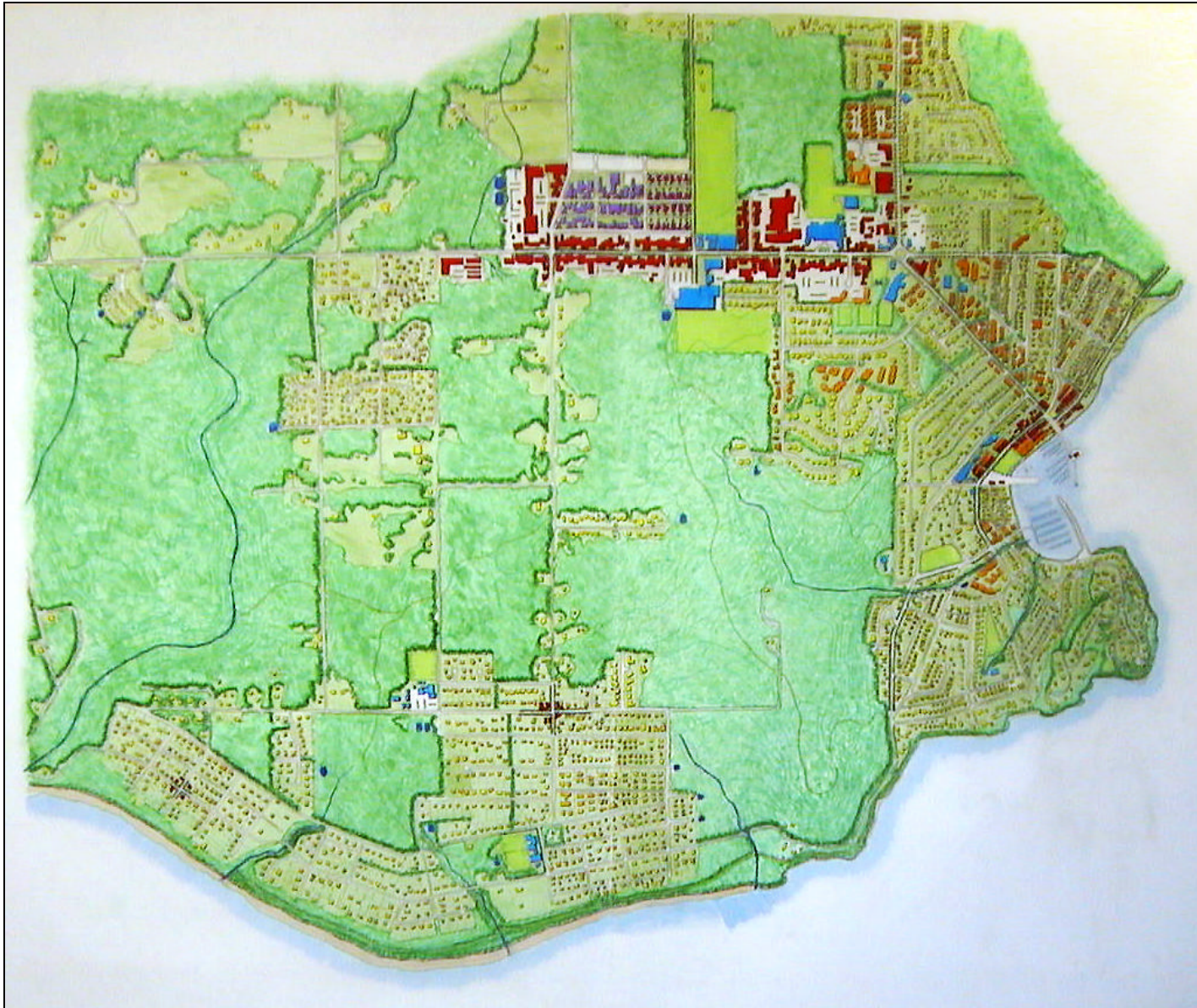


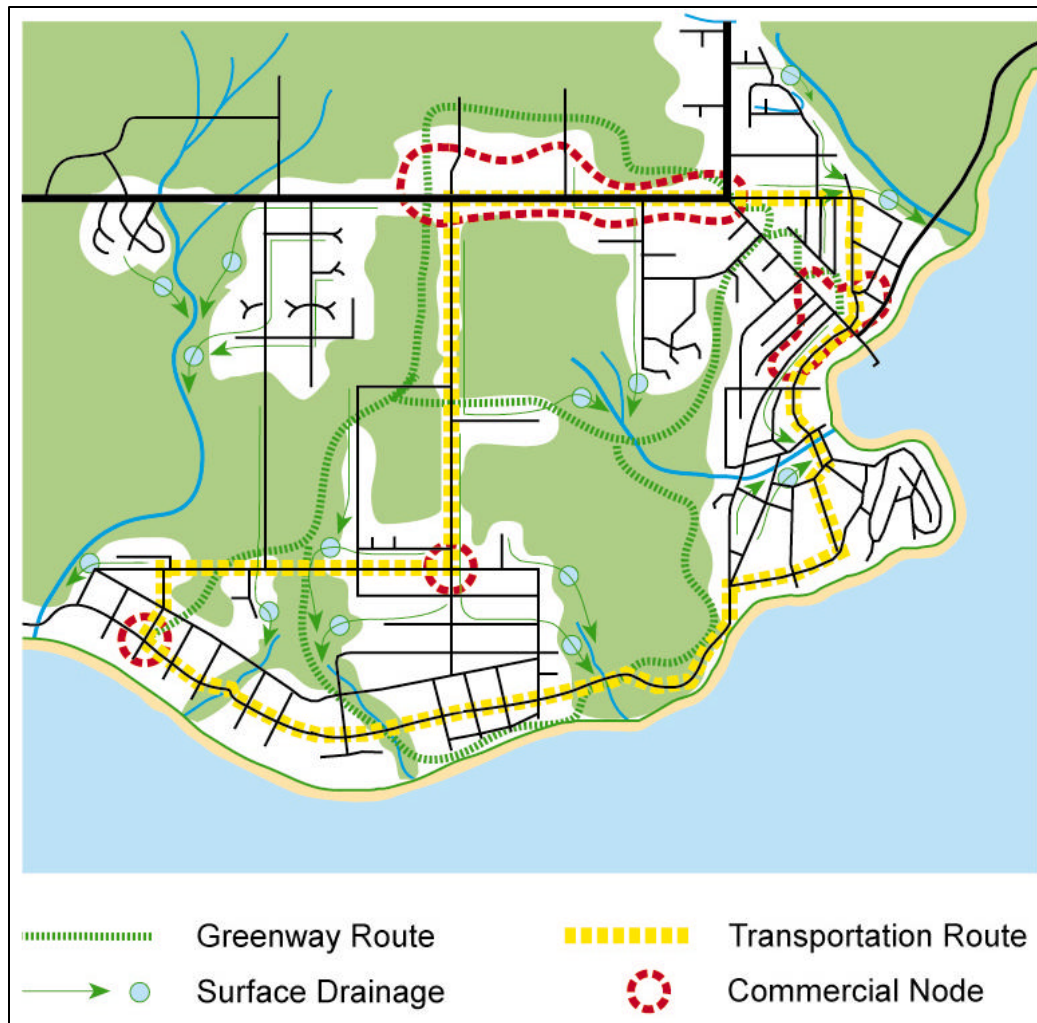
Future Pattern of Development - Typical



Future Pattern of Development – Typical, year 2020

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

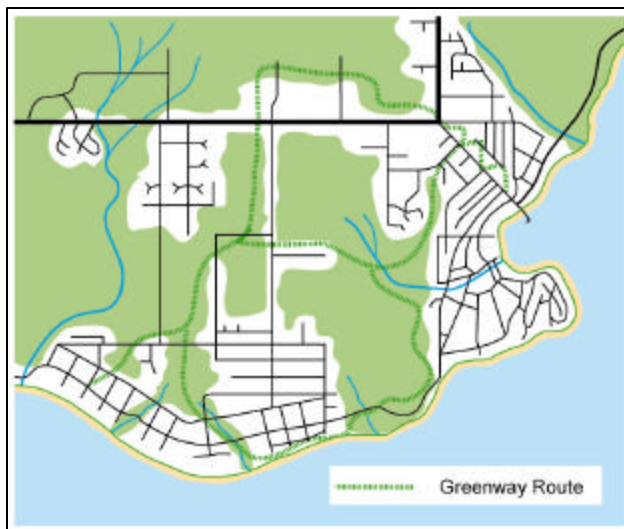
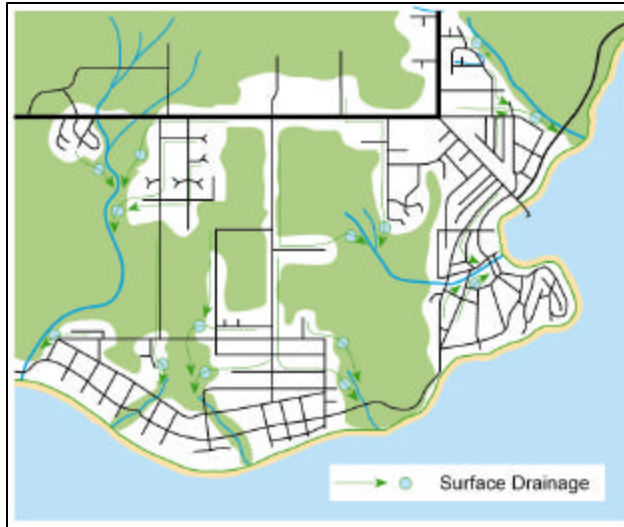




SYSTEMS OVERVIEW

This schematic overlays all of our systems on one map, showing drainage, commercial zones, transportation and greenway infrastructure.

The following diagrams will illustrate these systems in greater detail.



1. SURFACE DRAINAGE

“Freezing the footprint” of development protects existing open spaces, thereby preserving vegetation and maximizing pervious surfaces. This enhances rainwater infiltration that is essential to the functioning of the natural hydrologic cycle.

Adding more people, and more dwellings, to the existing area has the potential to stress these watersheds. The concerted implementation of a green infrastructure, such as incorporating vegetated swales in residential areas, stormwater retention ponds will help handle the increase in surface drainage and sustain the infiltration of water.

Specific stream daylighting initiatives are vital to preserving the water quality in streams such as Charman Creek, which have been heavily impacted by human settlement. Leaving vegetated buffer zones between development and the stream is essential to the health of the stream.

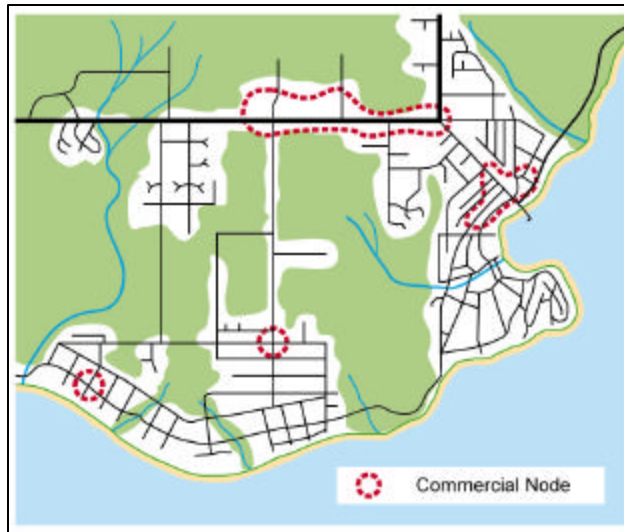
2. GREENWAY ROUTES

Greenways provide vital connections to the green core and alternative transportation routes that don't require automobile use.

Our greenway system seeks to connect isolated residential enclaves to community amenities and recreational opportunities. The proposed system of greenway trails and pathways connects through series of parks, civic spaces and outdoor recreational areas across the region.

Greenways can also provide part of the buffer around streams within the developed areas of Gibsons

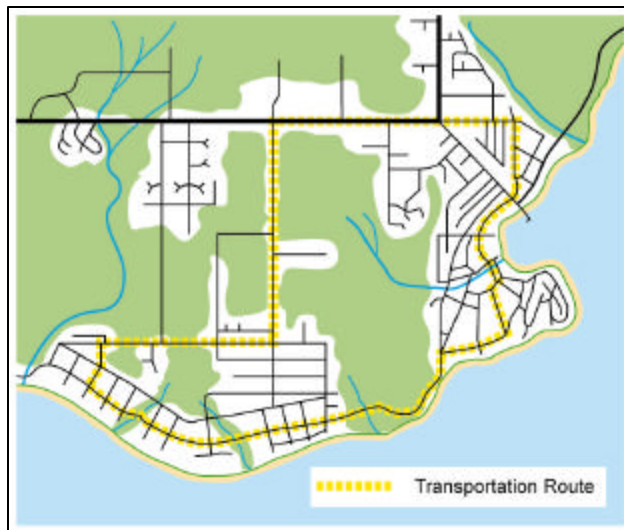
Greenways also act to protect and enhance the buffer around streams within the developed areas of Gibsons.



3. COMMERCIAL NODES

The plan complements the existing commercial centers by condensing and focusing the activities within contained areas. Upper Gibsons becomes the primary commercial center serving the surrounding communities. The mixed-use commercial nodes support medium density housing in conjunction with retail, office and service commercial uses.

In the surrounding rural areas, we have provided the opportunity for the establishment of small, local commercial activities, such as a corner store café or a video rental store.



4. TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

The proposal encourages a reduced dependence on the automobile by creating a transit loop that will connect the main commercial nodes. This route passes near recreational facilities, civic buildings and retail districts of Gibsons, allowing day-to day activities to be performed using alternative means of transportation.



THE GREEN CORE

Fundamental Building Blocks



Limit Growth



People
Pathways



Access to
Water



Protect the
Buffer



Connected
Buffer



Clean
Runoff for
Streams

Objectives

- Preserve the undeveloped green space.
- Support an ecological infrastructure.
- Create public open spaces.
- Encourage active and passive recreation.

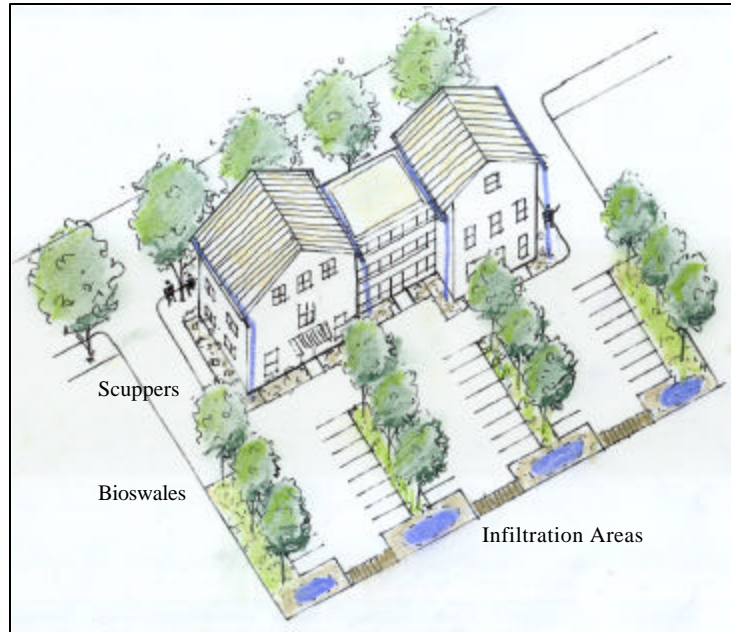
Details

Containing and enriching the future development of Gibsons and its environs serves both ecological and social purposes- it not only protects and enhances the environment and habitat, but also increases recreational opportunities and improves the aesthetic quality of the community.

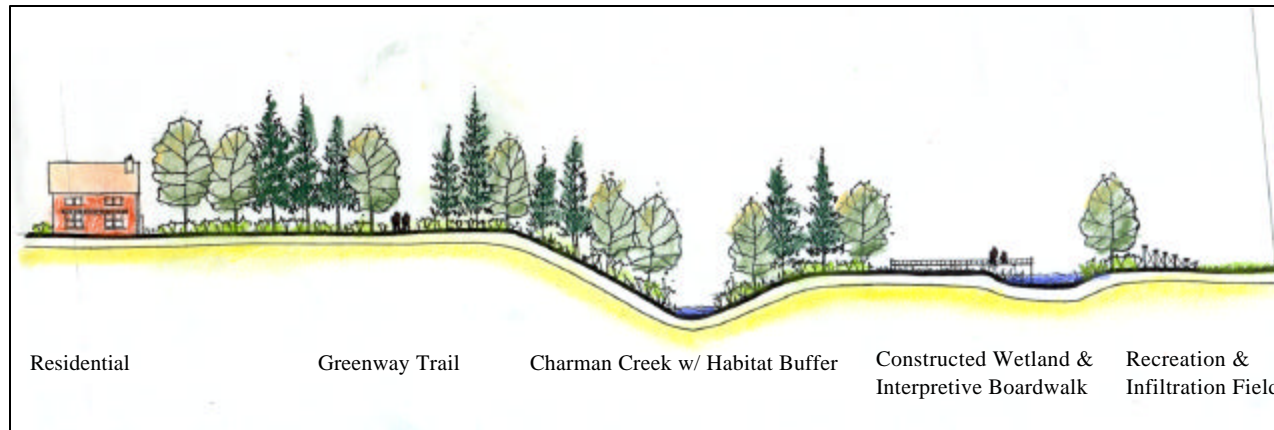
The green core in this plan provides an expansive accessible edge within a five minute walking distance for the majority of the surrounding neighborhoods. The green core would contain multi-use pathways for both passive and active recreation with restricted access in ecologically sensitive areas such as Gospel Rock, White Tower Park, and Charman Creek. The plan proposes to connect neighborhood parks, school sites, and urban streams through dedicated greenways. The ecological infrastructure system is to be designed to hold, clean, oxygenate, infiltrate and convey clean cool water to the streams. Biofiltration parking lots, vegetated swales, rain gardens, detention ponds, wetlands and increased permeable cover are some of the techniques utilized that apply natural processes to filter stormwater.



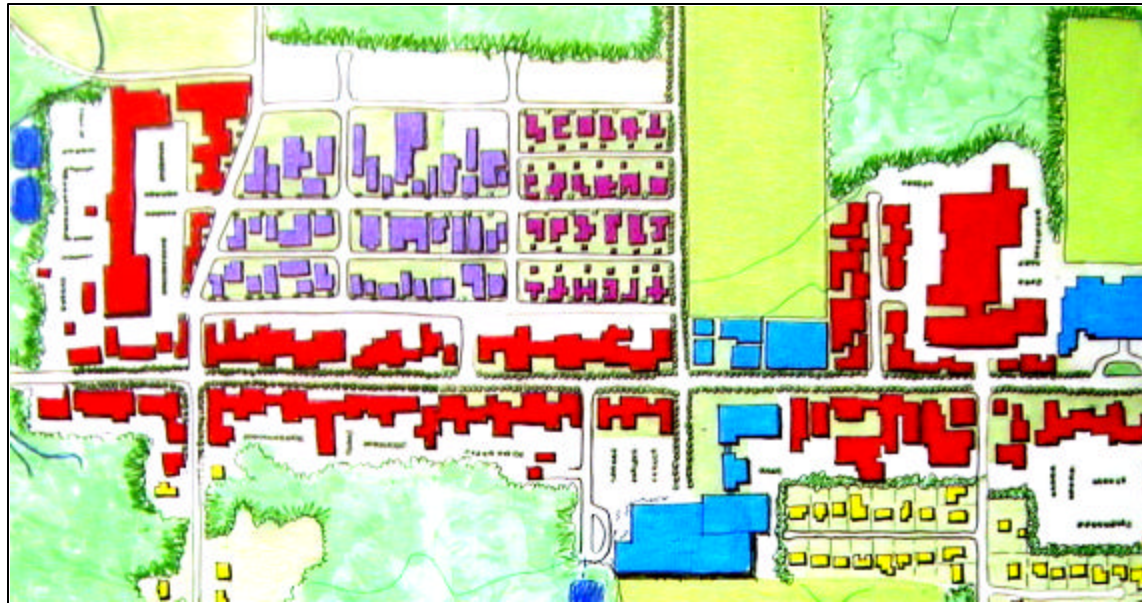
Green Core/Commercial Interface



Green Parking Located to the Back of Buildings



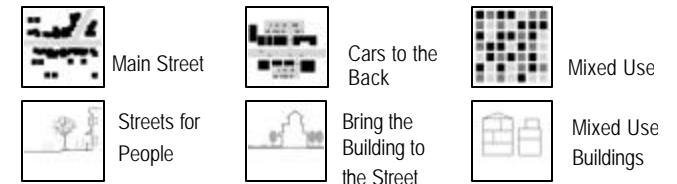
Illustrates greenway connection through the green core, a new park, the community center and civic buildings, and the existing playing field up to Gibsons Heritage Trails.



Detail of Mixed Use Commercial Main Street and Live/Work Neighborhood.

A LIVABLE COMMERCIAL CORE IN UPPER GIBSONS

Fundamental Building Blocks



Objectives

- Transform Highway 101 into a pedestrian-friendly Main Street.
- Concentrate commercial activities into an identifiable core with mixed uses.
- Create a new work/live – live/work neighborhood.

Details

The plan proposes the redevelopment of the highway into a commercial Main Street, which would concentrate a variety of services and amenities within a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Infill commercial and mixed-use buildings are located with minimal setback from the street, creating a lively and active street wall.

The work/live – live/work areas are intended to encourage medium density residential opportunities alongside the main commercial core of Gibsons Way. Utilizing the existing small-lot pattern of the industrial area, new buildings can be developed through a process of infill.

Incremental development of Upper Gibsons under the containment and enrichment strategy would encourage a natural integration of the proposed commercial mixed use, work/live and live/work activities.



Sketch showing neighborhood character of live/work buildings.

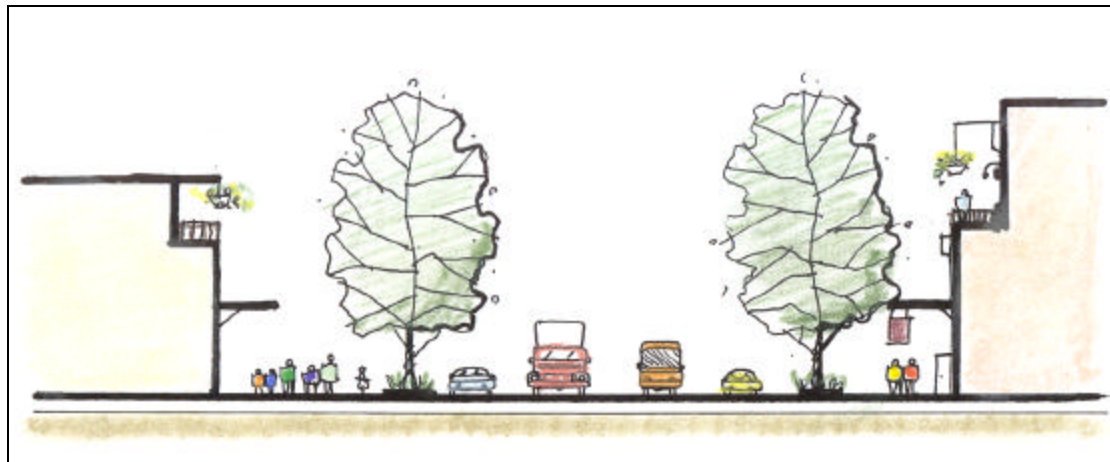


Sketch of new work/live building set within the context of the existing industrial structures.

Both areas designated live/work and work/live have an average density of 20 dwelling units/acre and allow easy access to surrounding green space (playing fields and community agriculture) and the commercial corridor.

The live-work area is characterized as ground oriented townhouses with approximately 30% designated for commercial/home office use (i.e. cafe, artist/craft studios, hair salon, telecommuting, desktop publishing, etc.) at ground level and the remainder for residential use.

The work-live area is characterized by a larger architectural massing with up to 70% of the space devoted to work use (i.e. light manufacturing, processing, small scale wholesale, etc.) and would be complimentary in style and use with the existing industrial park.



Section showing a pedestrian-friendly streetscape along Highway 101.

The existing highway corridor can become a vibrant commercial Main Street. By containing Upper Gibsons' commercial activity within its existing footprint, strip mall style developments that promote automobile dependency will be discouraged. Introducing new mixed-use buildings into the existing framework will result in the establishment of a more attractive and pedestrian-scaled shopping street. Residential units located above street level office and retail space can help create a diverse Upper Gibsons community.



SCHOOL ROAD

Fundamental Building Blocks



Fit the
Topography



People
Pathways



Connectivity



Gathering
Places



Streets for
People



Diversity
of Income
and Age

Objectives

- Increase housing opportunities along the School Road corridor.
- Create an alternative pedestrian connection between Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing, which would weave through the residential neighborhood at a more manageable grade.
- Create places to pause and sit, including small pocket parks, coffee shops, artisans' studios.

Details

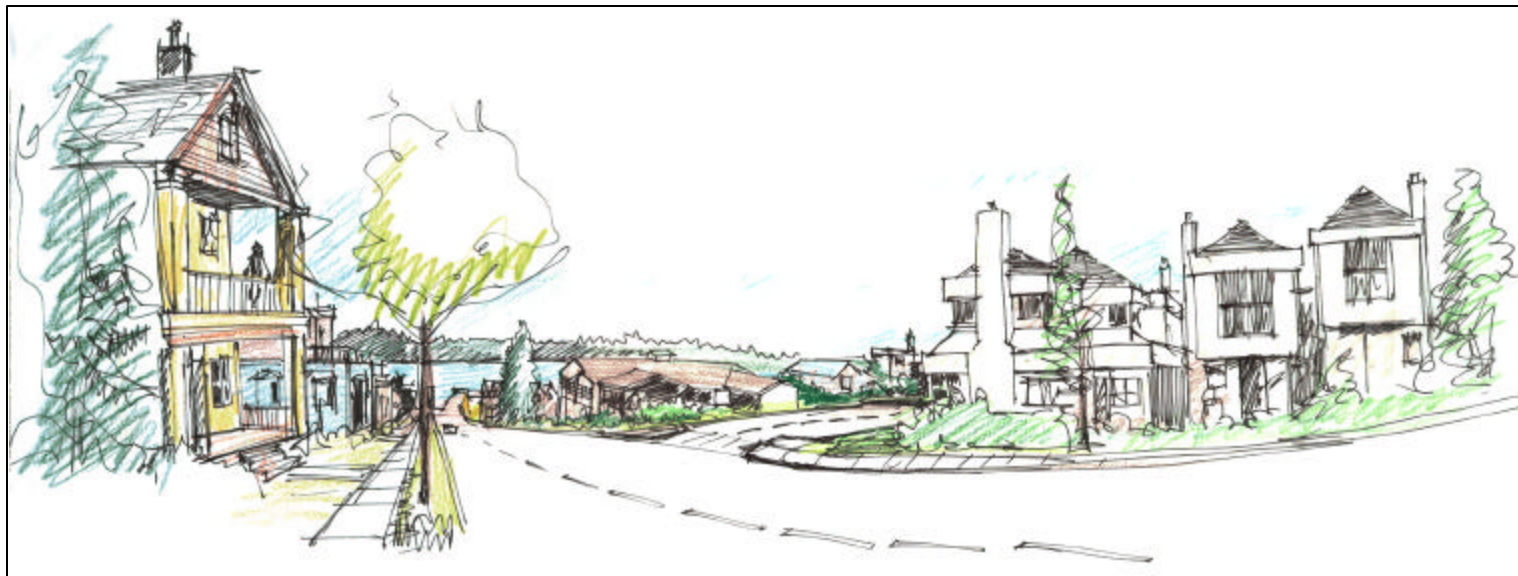
Along the north side of School Road new ground-oriented multi-unit housing is provided. This would create a new district catering to young singles or couples interested in an active community lifestyle. Shopping streets and recreational opportunities are close at hand, reducing the need for excessive short distance trips by automobile.



A pedestrian walk unites the neighborhood through a series of gathering spaces and intimate strolling parks. Weaving up through the buildings in a zigzag fashion, the grade is not as steep as that of School Road. This route is narrow and permits road access for emergency or service vehicles, but does not allow transient traffic. At the crest of the hill, this pathway connects to the greater greenway network, allowing easy access to the amenities of Upper Gibsons.

Left – The School Road neighborhood connector, with a pedestrian-scale roadway, micro-parks and small footprint multi-unit residences exhibiting character style all contributing to the small community feel.

Below – School Road,, with residential infill on both sides, creating a slightly more urban residential corridor.





An infill community in plan



INFILL HOUSING

Fundamental Building Blocks



Objectives

- Maintain the existing streetscape and architectural styles to preserve the character of the residential neighborhoods.
- Give residents the opportunity to “age in place” and provide opportunities for affordable housing for young families and singles.
- Allow residential communities to mature to the point where services, shopping amenities can be economically viable.
- Reduce need for new land development and make better use of existing infrastructure.
- Increase safety by bringing people in to the community who come and go at different times.

The Plan

Residential areas such as the one shown in the plan have the greatest potential to accommodating growth. By infilling existing neighborhoods with a variety of innovative housing forms, it is possible to achieve safer, more affordable neighborhoods that accommodate growth.

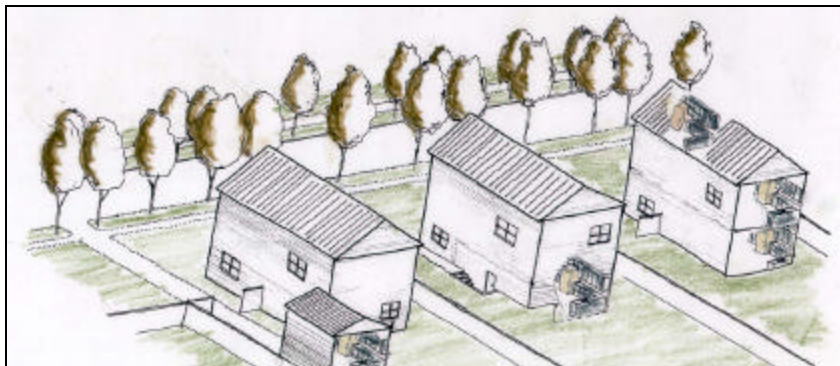
The plan shows how this form of development would take place incrementally. The basement suites and garden cottages would be focused within the residential suites, while the townhomes and duplexes would be concentrated at the ends of the street facing the larger arterial road to minimize their impact on the residential street.



This photo of a residential street in Gibsons shows the unique residential character prized by its residents. A successful infill strategy would preserve the character and environment that exists on this street.



The sketch below shows how duplexes and garden cottages can be added without altering the streetscape. The mass of the buildings and their architectural style do not dominate or intrude on the overall character of the neighborhood, but they provide an opportunity for young families, students and elderly residents of the community to live and age in place.



Many different types of infill housing can be applied to a residential street. This sketch shows what some of them might look like. Garden Cottages, basement suites, duplexes and "loft-style" attic spaces all provide a variety of housing opportunities but have a minimal impact on their surroundings.



HERITAGE CORNER

Fundamental Building Blocks



Gathering
Places



Cars to the
Back



Connectivity



Streets for
People



People
Pathways



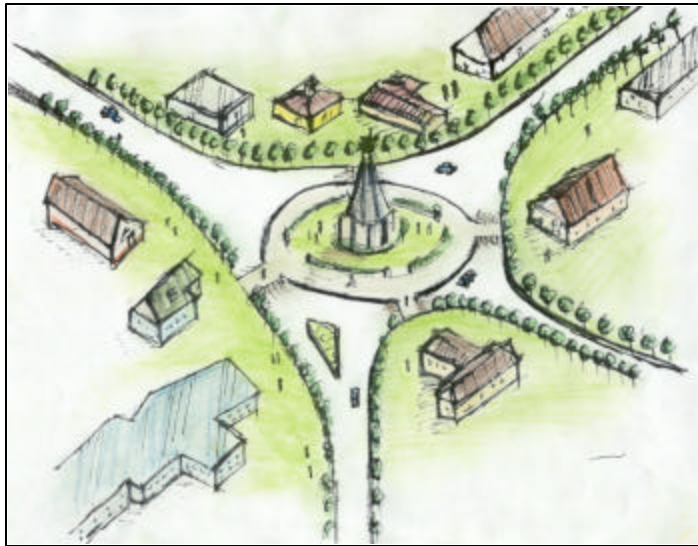
Bring the
Building to
the Street

Objectives

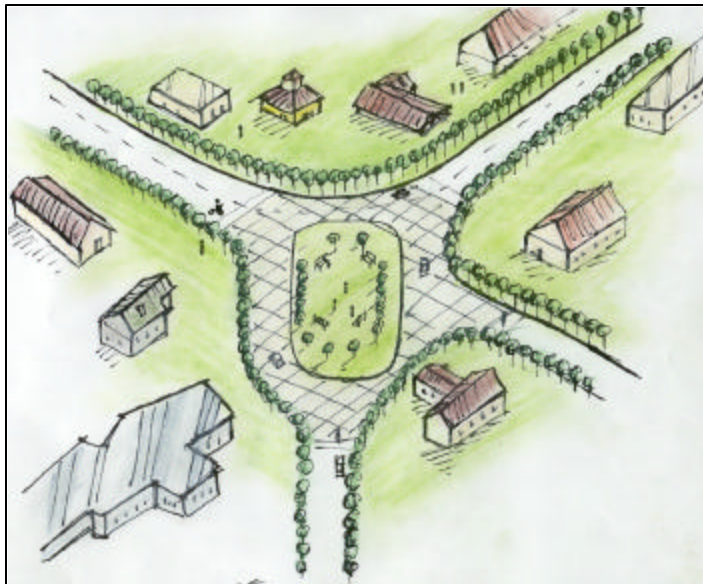
- Create a landmark and a gathering place.
- Create an inviting gateway to Gibsons.
- Bring the heritage buildings closer to the street.
- Link the upper and lower portions of town, both socially and visually.

Details

This intersection is the main entranceway into Gibsons along the highway and it acts as a link between Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing. There is incredible potential to develop this corner as a gateway by celebrating the heritage buildings that are located at this intersection. The Heritage School, Church and Theatre would then become a focal point for the community.

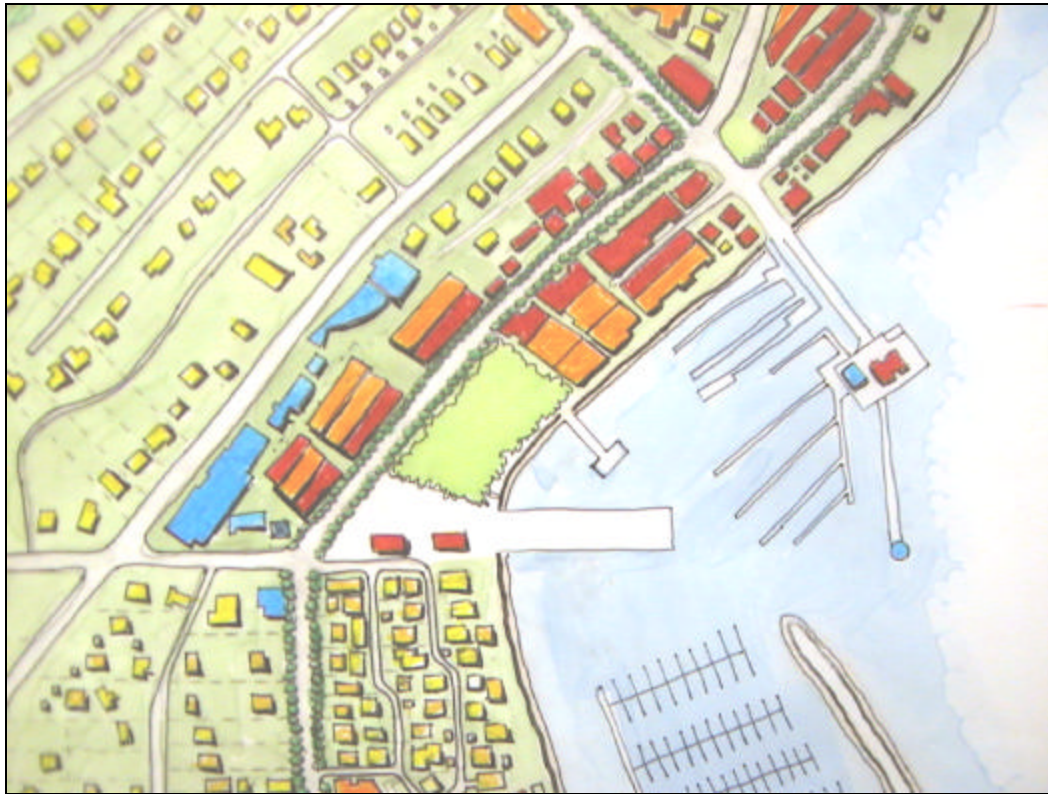


Two alternative schemes for Heritage Corner have been shown. The first sketch illustrates how vehicles can be directed through the intersection along a traffic circle. This pattern brings the streets closer to the heritage buildings, making them more accessible, both physically and visually. A gathering place is created at the central portion of the node, enabling people to enjoy the view down School Road toward the waterfront. A landmark, such as a sculpture, a clock tower, or a "Welcome to Gibsons" sign could be included.



The second scheme shows how traffic can be directed through a controlled intersection that has a landscaped feature at the center.

Both alternatives are successful at slowing vehicular traffic as it enters into Gibsons. The implementation of traffic signs, signals, speed bumps or paved pedestrian walks would help calm passing traffic.



GIBSONS LANDING

Fundamental Building Blocks



Main Street



Access to Water



Mixed Use



Building Character



Gathering Places



Mixed Use Buildings

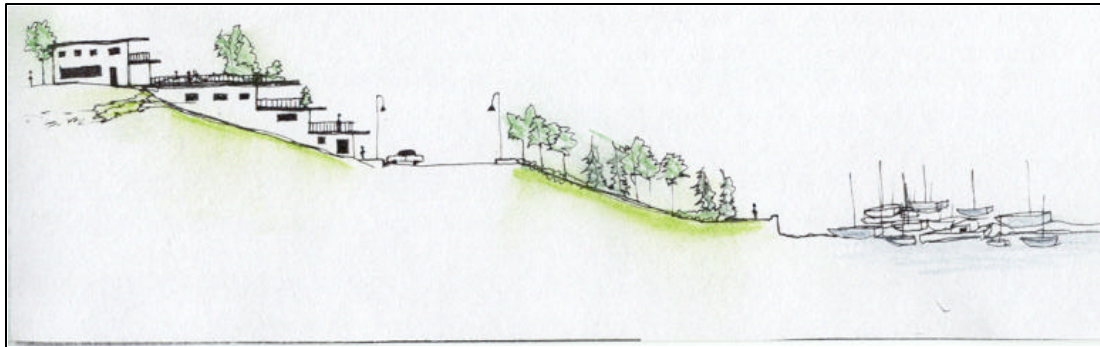
Objectives

- Compliment the existing Lower Gibsons village with new commercial and residential activities.
- Create a vibrant mixed use community within Lower Gibsons.
- Encourage community use of the waterfront.
- Preserve the views of the surrounding landscape

Details

The central area of Gibsons Landing is currently surrounded by undeveloped spaces and parking lots that prevent the pedestrian from experiencing the stores on Molly's Lane, Marine Drive and Gower Point Road as a complete village core. Furthermore, the civic and cultural places, such as the museum, the water pump, the library and the town hall are all located along the periphery of the center.

The plan proposes to connect these civic and shopping areas by filling in the empty spaces and creating a cohesive commercial core in Gibsons Landing that includes street-level activities along both sides of the street. New buildings would be terraced down the slope and would contain a diversity of uses, including retail, office and residential activities.



Gibsons Pier is an important gathering place. Our plan proposes to develop a community marketplace on the pier, which would encourage a more pedestrian-friendly space.

A second pier is proposed to connect to the new waterfront park. Space would be provided for the rental of canoes and kayaks from the new wharf.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

By encouraging community growth, but limiting the geographic extent of built areas, the town of Gibsons has the opportunity to strengthen the existing urban form by preserving a network of natural systems and building upon the current character of its neighborhoods: Gibsons can be contained and enriched.

Our proposal presents a long-term plan for future growth and change. Although implementation of the concepts will occur through an incremental process as the community matures, strong decisions would need to be made in the interim to ensure the vision is achieved. Working with the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the Town of Gibsons could develop a regional growth management strategy that would define the areas where future growth and development would be focused.

The following policy directions could be considered to facilitate the implementation of the strategy of containment and enrichment:

- Develop policy to define and implement an Urban Containment Boundary.
- Relax zoning bylaws to allow for infill in commercial, residential and industrial areas.
- Draft design guidelines for new buildings that will maintain existing architectural forms and streetscape character.
- Create zoning bylaws that intensify the residential character and provide an opportunity for a variety of housing alternatives for all age and income groups, including secondary suites and garden cottages
- Implement a strategy for the transfer of development rights so property owners outside of the urban growth boundary will not suffer from depreciated land values with the loss of development potential.

This plan demonstrates what Gibsons could look like in the future and suggests how communities in the surrounding region could also be shaped by the principles of containing and enriching. In order to achieve these goals, a community planning process needs to be initiated to bring together local residents, public officials and planning professionals. This concept, and the others produced during the “Fresh Eyes on Gibsons” design charrette could act to inspire this community visioning process.