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5.0 SEYMOUR'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Seymour's residential neighbourhoods are nestled within a setting spanning mountain forests and ocean shores. Seymour River and numerous freshwater streams link these features and nourish both human and natural systems. The forests and watercourses not only serve as a scenic backdrop to the District of North Vancouver's eastern neighbourhoods; but also as recreational assets, important wildlife habitats and vital links in a complex ecological system. Key elements of Seymour's natural environment include:

- Creeks & their corridors
- Habitats & wildlife corridors
- Slopes and unique formations
- Forests and individual heritage, serviced and wildlife tree specimens
- The waterfront, shoreline and related marine habitats

From the outset, the public input process highlighted the degree to which Seymour residents value the natural environment that defines their community. The community vision is of a high quality of life for current residents and future generations, shaped by a commitment to stewardship of the land. This makes protection of the environment a key theme of this Plan, which supports community-based initiatives and promotes District wide environmental provisions already in place.

A range of existing bylaw and policy provisions support the community's stewardship objective. The District OCP seeks to create a healthy community in harmony with nature through good design and protective measures. It designates Development Permit Areas (DPAs), which regulate the use of zoned lands for protection of the natural environment and protection of development from natural hazards (and to regulate the form and character of commercial, industrial and multi-family residential uses). The District Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw (EPPB) regulates stream corridors, protective setbacks, the placement, removal and safe use of soils, development standards for sloping terrain, tree retention on slopes and of particular species and sizes. The Seymour Local Plan reflects these District-wide initiatives and enhances them with local knowledge and community priorities.

Fundamentally, the Plan does this by directing development to sites already developed, environmentally compromised or formerly used for other purposes, and by bypassing sites with environmental significance. (See *Section 3.0* for details.) In addition, the Plan adopts many of the recommendations of the Waterfront Task Force.¹

¹ *Waterfront Task Force Interim Report, Phase 2 Working Group, June 1999*

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Finally, the policies here and in Section 7.0 promote the sustainability of Seymour's environment by seeking to balance use and enjoyment with preservation, enhancement and wise management of access to parks, trails, waterfront and other natural areas.

Goal

Preserve and enhance Seymour as an attractive residential community, defined by and protective of its natural forest and waterfront setting.

Objective 6.1 *To become a more environmentally sustainable community.*

Policy 6.1.1 **Development and redevelopment will be regarded as an opportunity to promote community environmental goals such as obtaining more green space, reclaiming natural areas and encouraging transit use.**

Policy 6.1.2 **New development or redevelopment will employ environmentally friendly design and construction methods.**

Implementation

6.1.2.1 Develop guidelines for environmentally preferable design and construction methods, including attention to energy efficiency, water conservation, recycling of construction materials and safe disposal of construction waste.

6.1.2.2 Ensure adherence to the Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Environments and relevant regulations, including the Streamside Protection Regulations (SPR). In any case, the minimum setback for any new construction will be fifteen meters.

Policy 6.1.3 **Explore opportunities to improve storm water management and promote alternative development standards such as reduced hard surfaces, innovative drainage methods, clustered development and water conserving landscaping, for example.**

Implementation

6.1.3.1 Encourage the development of watershed management plans.

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Policy 6.1.4 Continue to investigate and document Seymour's environmental features, sensitive areas and other environmental issues as a reference for District departments, residents, businesses, developers, visitors and others.

Policy 6.1.5 Create a positive reputation for parks, wilderness and environmental preservation in Seymour.

Implementation

6.1.5.1 Undertake a public education program to promote community awareness of and responsibility for energy and water use, waste reduction and environmental stewardship. E.g. storm sewer markings.

6.1.5.2 District to host environmental awareness and education workshops for residents, developers and others.

6.1.5.3 Work with District departments, volunteers, community groups and others to promote strategies for co-existing with nature. For example, work with North Shore Streamkeepers, The Bear Network and others to reduce stream degradation and human/wildlife conflicts.

Policy 6.1.6 Support volunteer efforts to restore, maintain and enhance the natural community.

Implementation

6.1.6.1 Encourage the activities of the North Shore Streamkeepers, local community groups and others in their mapping, surveying, protection, restoration and enhancement of Seymour's waterfront, creeks, streams, rivers and tributaries.

Objective 6.2 *To be a community that balances environmental protection and community uses.*

Policy 6.2.1 Seek to maximize environmental benefit and reduce negative environmental impact in decision-making.

Policy 6.2.2 Work with waterfront homeowners, businesses and others to identify effective ways of protecting shoreline properties while also protecting and restoring shoreline habitat.

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Policy 6.2.3 Promote environmental objectives by managing recreational access to and use of Seymour's trails, wilderness areas and waterfront.

Implementation

- 6.2.3.1 Ensure environmental studies are conducted prior to designing and establishing new waterfront or other trails.
- 6.2.3.2 Develop strategies to protect shoreline areas that have been identified as being sensitive to foot traffic².
- 6.2.3.3 Encourage the development and use of shared moorage facilities for waterfront properties to reduce both the number of private wharves along the waterfront and the negative marine environmental impact of such structures.

Policy 6.2.4 Identify, maintain and develop sufficient and appropriate wildlife corridors and linkages to connect natural areas throughout the community.

Policy 6.2.5 Develop and maintain different types and scales of greenways and green space to link and define neighbourhoods. For example, community gardens, green space between buildings, rooftop gardens.

Objective 6.3 *To preserve, restore and enhance natural areas, key habitats and other special areas.*

Policy 6.3.1 Prioritize identification and rehabilitation of environmentally damaged and environmentally sensitive areas.

Policy 6.3.2 Preserve and enhance wildlife habitat and corridors.

Implementation

- 6.3.2.1 Provide a protected wildlife corridor from Mountain Forest to the Maplewood mudflats.
- 6.3.2.2 Work with residents, other District communities and agencies to identify and protect other wildlife habitats and corridors, through signage and other means.
- 6.3.2.3 Promote natural landscaping ("naturescaping") among District departments, developers and private owners to restore and

² Westmar Consultants Inc and G.L. Williams & Associates Ltd. *Waterfront Trail Prefeasibility Study*. March 5, 1999.

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create neighbourhood and backyard wildlife habitat throughout the community.

Policy 6.3.3 Protect the forested character of Seymour.

Implementation

- 6.3.3.1 Protect, and allow to remain undisturbed, tracts of wilderness to preserve the overall forested character of Seymour and support present wildlife habitats.
- 6.3.3.2 Initiate a planning study, including a biophysical inventory, of Mountain and Cove forests to determine appropriate use and management. (See also Section 7.3)
- 6.3.3.3 Preserve undeveloped forest areas of Mountain and Cove Forests as natural park.
- 6.3.3.4 Involve and educate the community regarding forest protection practices, including promoting proper management and maintenance of native trees, through publications and display materials
- 6.3.3.5 Developers and tree companies will conform to required standards for tree protection and preservation in accordance with the District Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw (EPPB).
- 6.3.3.6 Continue to ensure effective protection of trees during land development activities in accordance with the District Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw (EPPB).

Policy 6.3.4 Protect wetlands, creeks, streams, rivers and waterfront as natural landscapes and identify restoration opportunities.

- 6.3.4.1 Identify and protect marine habitats.
- 6.3.4.2 Work with Vancouver Port Authority to remove all encroachments onto the beach.
- 6.3.4.3 Intertidal zones should be left in a natural state or restored, where possible, to their natural state.
- 6.3.4.4 Restore and replant damaged or historically lost riparian areas.³
- 6.3.4.5 Continue to remove barriers to fish migration.
- 6.3.4.6 In accordance with District, Provincial and Federal regulations, creek crossings will be achieved with clear spans wherever possible and will be designed, in all cases, to minimize disturbance and maximize protection of the creek environment.
- 6.3.4.7 Investigate opportunities to daylight streams.⁴

³ Riparian: relating to or living or located on the bank of a natural watercourse

⁴ To daylight a stream: is to re-establish an open watercourse by removing whatever form of engineering enclosure (pipe, culvert, etc.) that was previously installed to carry the flow of water.

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Policy 6.3.5 **Extend Development Permit Area designations to all stream corridors in the Seymour Local Plan area.**

Implementation

6.3.5.1 Comprehensive review of Seymour's streams and specific site analysis will be required to determine precise boundaries, conditions and activities.

Objective 6.4 : *To protect development from natural hazards.*

Policy 6.4.1 **Development Permit Area designations will be expanded to account for debris flow/flood hazards from Seymour's creeks.**

Implementation

6.4.1.1 Development Permit Area (DPA) maps will be amended to identify debris flow/flood fans generally and specific site analysis will be required to determine extent and impact of debris flow hazards and to specify conditions and guidelines for activity within hazard areas.

Policy 6.4.2 **Work with other jurisdictions and owners to protect development near areas of steep slopes.**

Implementation

6.4.2.1 Examine the feasibility of a DNV-Provincial Government land exchange agreement to achieve objectives relating to the protection of steep slopes along Riverside Drive.

Objective 6.5 : *To protect and improve the environmental health and safety of the community.*

Policy 6.5.1 **Work towards zero pollution.**

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Implementation

- 6.5.1.1 Promote cleaner air by identifying improvements to local transit, encouraging use of public transit and car-pooling and examining alternative transportation options such as park & ride, shuttle buses and marine links.
- 6.5.1.2 Establish pump out stations for boats at various sites on the District waterfront. Work with stakeholders and consider capital and operating costs, potential revenue, funding, private/public ownership and alternative park or marine sites.
- 6.5.1.3 Work to improve swimming quality of water at Deep Cove.
- Policy 6.5.2 Encourage the protection of the Seymour watershed as a publicly owned and operated system to maintain a safe water supply, and encourage the GVWD to continue to prohibit watershed logging.**
- Policy 6.5.3 Encourage the responsible management of sewage input and treatment in order to reduce sewage volume, increase treatment efficiency and promote community and environmental health.**
- Policy 6.5.4 Identify contaminated sites and develop remediation strategies, with timelines.**

Implementation

- 6.5.4.1 Document identified instances of contamination in Seymour and work with landowners to develop remediation plans.
- 6.5.4.2 Ensure site assessments and remediation plans are conducted in the succession planning for the Northlands site (formerly the Blair Rifle Range).
- Policy 6.5.5 Support and encourage the future transition from industrial use to mixed-use development with a strong public component on the Roche Point Waterfront.**

Implementation

- 6.5.5.1 Ensure that a site assessment and a remediation plan are included in the succession planning for the McKenzie Barge/Noble Towing site. (See also Sections 4.0, 7.0 & 9.0)

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Policy 6.5.6 Promote awareness of and enforce District environmental standards.

Implementation

- 6.5.6.1 Continue to enforce District Environmental Protection & Preservation Bylaw (EPPB) and other standards with regard to waste disposal, pollution, soil and tree removal and noise bylaws, including enforcement of penalties for contravention of the bylaws.
- 6.5.6.2 Continue to employ the District Integrated Pest Management Program and investigate drafting a pesticide bylaw to restrict the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes.