
District of Squamish Community Amenity Contribution Policy

Revised Draft

June 2015

1.0 Introduction

The District of Squamish is anticipating a significant amount of new urban development to occur in the community, as Squamish is becoming an increasingly attractive place to live and work. There are several factors that are driving this growing development interest including:

- The area's outstanding natural environment and recreational assets.
- Proximity to Greater Vancouver and Whistler, with more affordable housing than these places.
- Increasing diversity of employment.
- Increasing quality of community, with growth in the array of retail and service businesses, arts/culture, civic facilities, and amenities.

New urban development brings new requirements for urban infrastructure and amenities. While the District of Squamish wants to accommodate new residential, commercial, and industrial development to gain the advantages these bring, it does not want new development to become a financial burden on existing taxpayers. New development should pay a reasonable share of the costs of new infrastructure and amenities that are needed to accommodate growth and to address the impacts of growth on the existing community.

The District of Squamish has two main tools it can use to ensure that new development pays a fair share of the costs of new community infrastructure and amenities:

- The Development Cost Charge (DCC) bylaw imposes a charge on all new developments, to contribute to community-wide needs for expansion and upgrade of the water system, sanitary sewer system, major road network, drainage system, and park land inventory. The District is ensuring that its DCC bylaw is up to date and is helping pay for essential community infrastructure.
- Zoning-based mechanisms to seek Community Amenity Contributions (e.g. amenities, affordable housing, or other community benefits) from proposed urban developments that require a change in allowable land use or density via rezoning.

This policy document sets out the District of Squamish's draft proposed approach to seeking community benefits in association with zoning approvals for changes in land use and/or density. In the past the District has obtained amenities, in various forms, from individual development projects seeking rezoning, but these have been on a case-by-case basis rather than based on an adopted policy and consistent approach. The intent of this policy document is to outline the District's approach to obtaining Community Amenity Contributions so that the public, land owners, and developers understand the purpose and

mechanisms for these contributions. The District wants its approach to Community Amenity Contributions to be clearly understood, predictable, consistently applied, and reasonable.

2.0 Community Amenity Contributions in BC

Based on provincial legislation and common practices in BC, there are two different ways in which municipalities can seek amenity contributions from projects where changes to zoning provide a change in land use and/or a change in density:

- Density bonus in exchange for amenities or affordable housing.
- Negotiated amenity contributions or public benefits at the time of rezoning.

Density bonusing is a straightforward, predictable, and consistent means of obtaining public benefits in exchange for granting additional development potential to projects. Density bonusing is specifically authorized by Section 904 of the Local Government Act and it works like this:

- A site is zoned for a base density that can be achieved without providing any community amenity or affordable housing.
- The zoning also provides for additional density, to a defined maximum, that can be achieved in exchange for providing a defined community amenity or affordable housing contributions.
- Developers do not have to use the bonus density, but they have the option if they see value in using the extra density to achieve a larger project.

As an illustration, a density bonus system could be structured along these lines:

- A mixed use development site could be zoned with a base density of FAR 1.3 allowing say 4 storeys with retail at grade and residential above. No amenity contribution would be required if the developer only wants to build to this base density.
- The density bonus provision of the zone could allow the developer to obtain a bonus of say up to 0.5 additional FAR (bringing the maximum FAR to 1.8). This increased density could still be accommodated in a 4 storey building, but it would have higher site coverage. The bylaw would indicate the nature of amenity contribution that is required to achieve this extra density. The amenity might take the form of on-site public benefits (e.g. public art, day care space, or publicly accessible open space), on-site affordable housing (e.g. some of the additional density must be used to provide rental apartments), or cash-in-lieu (e.g. a fixed contribution at a defined dollar rate per square foot of additional density) to be put in a municipal reserve fund for a significant amenity or affordable housing projects.

As long as the maximum bonus density and the required amenity are defined in the zoning bylaw, there is considerable flexibility regarding the kinds of community benefits that can be achieved. This system works well when civic amenity needs are clearly defined and where developers see a financial incentive to obtain the bonus density.

Another mechanism commonly used by municipalities in BC is to negotiate for community amenities as part of a proposed rezoning. The Local Government Act does not enable municipalities to impose a fee or tax on rezoning, but rezoning is a discretionary act of Council. When exercising this discretion, Council

ought to consider whether a rezoning will impose unacceptable impacts or financial burdens on the community. Therefore, it has become common practice in many municipalities in B.C. for developers to propose, or municipalities to seek, amenities from projects that are applying for changes in use or density in order to help address the needs or impacts of new development. These amenity contributions are often negotiated site-by-site, but sometimes municipalities provide to developers and the community a clear indication of the targets for the amenities, affordable housing, or cash-in-lieu that they hope to achieve in rezonings. These targets are based on an evaluation of the impacts of new projects, the needs of new residents, and the ability of the project to provide amenities while remaining financially attractive for land owners and developers.

3.0 Squamish’s Needs for Infrastructure, Amenities, and Affordable Housing

The District of Squamish has several plans, policies, and bylaws that call for important community amenities. The table below summarizes some of the major anticipated amenities and facilities to meet the needs of a growing community. A more detailed list is contained in Schedule 2 (attached).

Policy, Plan, or Bylaw	Community Needs
Official Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public access to the entire downtown area waterfront Improved parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation facilities Expanded variety of housing including seniors, low and moderate income households, special needs
Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Trail Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovation and expansion of Brennan Park Centre (fitness, ice area, gym, wellness and health services) and expansion of outdoor recreation facilities including ball diamonds, lacrosse box, second synthetic turf field Family and children centre Expansion of parks, playgrounds, bike trails, and outdoor recreation facilities at a variety of locations in the community Improvements to trail network throughout the community Enhancements to existing parks including washroom facilities, signage, garbage facilities
Master Fire Protection Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewal or replacement of Fire Hall #2 Provide for future Fire Hall #3 to the north of Fire Hall #2 Apparatus replacement
Downtown Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable, seniors, and special needs housing Childcare facilities New park land in downtown area Civic, cultural, educational spaces (e.g. community centre, performing arts space, gallery) Transit hub Outdoor civic spaces (plazas, interpretative displays) Innovative green building design
Oceanfront Sub-Area Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterfront park, waterfront walkway, public spaces, facilities for outdoor events and festivals, sailing centre, venues for arts, public art, other civic facilities
Public Art Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public art contributions from new developments

The District does not currently have any significant existing capital reserves that can be applied to these projects, so the funding for these amenities and facilities will have to come from a variety of sources, possibly including:

- Some of the park land and trail acquisition can be achieved using the DCC bylaw, which will generate revenues that can be applied to park acquisition.
- Some of the park and trail network improvements can be obtained via land dedication at the time of subdivision or rezoning of any properties where parks and trails are needed.
- Where possible and reasonable, amenity contributions, affordable housing, or other public benefits can be obtained from new development that involves rezoning, so that new development contributes a fair share to community infrastructure and so that existing taxpayers do not have to shoulder the entire burden of new growth. In some cases, amenities may be provided directly by new development projects and in some cases the amenity may take the form of a cash-in-lieu contribution that can be pooled with other contributions to create amenities too large to be accommodated in a given project.
- In some unusual circumstances, a developer may be willing to front-end the construction of community amenities that are of high importance to the whole community but that have a higher cost than is reasonable to expect that project to bear on its own. In such cases, the District of Squamish may consider creating a mechanism to reimburse the developer for some of the amenity costs using future Community Amenity Contributions (in the form of cash-in-lieu) from other developments.
- Some of the cost of facilities and amenities will be funded by the municipality using some combination of general municipal revenues (mainly property taxes), grants, and other funding sources.

4.0 Priorities for Community Amenities

Schedule 2 contains a list of future amenities anticipated to meet the needs of the growing community, which combined have a large capital cost¹. It will not be possible to implement all of the projects in the short term because there will not be enough available revenue, so the priorities for new community amenities to be funded in part by CACs for 2015 to 2031 are:

- Amenities at the SODC site, as these are regarded as important community wide amenities that will improve public access to the waterfront and provide a significant improvement to the overall quality of the urban environment in the community.
- Emergency facilities, such as new fire halls, when needed by new population growth in areas that are not adequately served by existing facilities.
- Park and trail lands and improvements that cannot be obtained using DCCs or via dedications at time of subdivision or rezoning.

¹ Detailed capital budgets have not yet been prepared, but the listed objectives could easily exceed \$50 million assuming a meaningful component of affordable housing and including the large capital projects such as ice arena, oceanfront amenities, and an arts facility. If total future residential development is on the order of 300 units per year (see projections in draft DCC bylaw), total residential growth would be on the order of 6,000 units over the next 20 years. It appears likely that at most one third of these new units will need rezoning, and therefore be candidates for making Community Amenity Contributions. Spreading \$50 million over 2,000 units works out to \$25,000 per residential unit, which is not sustainable based on current market conditions.

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- Affordable housing options in Downtown.
 - Public art in new residential and commercial developments in Downtown.

5.0 Principles for Community Amenity Contributions in Squamish

The District of Squamish intends to obtain contributions of civic infrastructure and amenities from new developments that involve rezoning or density bonusing. In doing so, the District of Squamish will apply the following principles:

1. New development should make a fair contribution to new community amenities, affordable housing, and other community needs, in order to meet the needs of a growing community and to address some of the impacts of growth.
2. The District will set its targets for Community Amenity Contributions such that the cost implications for new development will be reasonable. The level of Community Amenity Contributions will be such that there is little risk that there will be any impact on the pace of new development in Squamish (i.e. the expectations for Community Amenity Contributions are not likely to affect the financial viability of new development projects; the costs will be such that developers and land owners will still see incentives to seek new zoning for residential and commercial developments).
3. The District will set targets for the amount of Community Amenity Contributions it hopes to obtain from different kinds of projects in different locations. These targets will be revised from time to time, based on changing community needs, changing priorities, and changing market conditions.
4. Where possible, the District will use density bonus zoning as the mechanism to obtain Community Amenity Contributions. Density bonus zoning is the preferred mechanism because it is explicitly defined under provincial legislation and it provides a predictable and transparent method for obtaining contributions. In density bonus zones, the District will set the amenity contribution at a level that ensures there is a meaningful contribution to the amenities while also ensuring that there is sufficient incentive to developers to use the available bonus density. Generally speaking, the District will use bonus density zoning under the following circumstances:
 - a. Sites already zoned for single detached lots being rezoned to allow smaller (and therefore more) single detached lots.
 - b. Sites already zoned to allow multifamily development being rezoned to allow an increase in multifamily floor area above the existing allowable density.
5. Where density bonusing is not appropriate, the District will negotiate Community Amenity Contributions on a site-by-site basis during the rezoning process. In these negotiations, the District will seek to obtain a target contribution that makes a meaningful contribution to community amenities while ensuring that land owners still have sufficient incentive to make land available in the redevelopment market and developers have sufficient incentive to seek changes in use or density. Generally speaking, the District will seek to negotiate appropriate amenity contributions on a site-by-site basis under the following circumstances:
 - a. Sites being rezoned from single detached lots, industrial use, or commercial use to multifamily or mixed use that includes multifamily residential.

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- b. Sites being rezoned from very low density rural or resource uses to residential uses.
6. In cases where the District obtains cash-in-lieu Community Amenity Contributions, such funds will be deposited in specific reserve accounts for defined amenity purposes or affordable housing.

6.0 Targets for Community Amenity Contributions

Schedule 1 sets out the District's targets for Community Amenity Contributions and sets out the proposed amenities to be achieved in different kinds of rezonings.

SCHEDULE 1

TARGETS FOR COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Type of Rezoning	Mechanism	Target Amenity Contribution	Allocation of the Amenity Contribution
From low density rural or resource to residential, outside the Downtown area	Site specific negotiation	\$8,000 per single detached lot \$6 per square foot of multifamily residential space	On-site amenities or cash-in-lieu for neighbourhood amenities, with priority given to (as appropriate) fire hall, park improvements and recreation facilities that cannot be funded by DCCs or obtained via dedications at subdivision
From single detached lots, commercial, or industrial to multifamily residential or mixed multifamily and commercial	Site specific negotiation	\$3 per square foot of multifamily residential	On-site amenities including on-site open space improvements, public art, community space, cash-in-lieu, or affordable housing, either on-site or as a contribution to municipal affordable housing fund
From single detached lots to a higher density form of single detached lots	Density bonus zoning bylaw	\$8,000 per each single detached lot above the existing zoning	On-site amenities or cash-in-lieu for neighbourhood amenities, with priority given to (as appropriate) fire hall, park improvements and recreation facilities that cannot be funded by DCC or obtained via dedications at subdivision
From multifamily residential or mixed use to a higher density of multifamily residential or mixed use	Density bonus zoning bylaw	Base density of FAR 1.0: no amenity contribution FAR above 1.0, to maximum in OCP: \$3 per square foot of additional space above the base density.	On-site amenities including on-site open space improvements, public art, community space, cash-in-lieu, or affordable housing, either on-site or as a contribution to affordable housing fund
SODC lands rezoning	Site specific negotiation	A package of amenities and public benefits negotiated as part of the overall business terms for the sale of the land to the developer	Oceanfront park, waterfront walkway, and other on-site amenities

SCHEDULE 2

COMMUNITY AMENITY OBJECTIVES

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Develop a Renovation / Expansion Plan, which could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness centre; • Replace the ice arena; • Regulation size gymnasium; • Dedicated space for gymnastics program and cross-training fitness opportunities; • Integrated spaces for preventative health programs, physiotherapy services, or other appropriate businesses. 	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Brenan Park Rec. Centre
Create a Family and Children's Centre, expand the outdoor play space	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Ministry of Forest Site
Build the array of youth programming and park facilities to serve the increase in Squamish youth population over the next 5-10 years.	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Youth Centre
Add to the neighbourhood park supply in the short term, with the goal of reaching the District provision standard and maintaining it as the population grows; and seek new active community parkland over the medium to long term. Add: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Yards (add a new park) • Garibaldi Estates (add a new park) • Valleycliffe (add a new park) • Garibaldi Highlands (develop existing parkland in the vicinity of Quest Univ.) 	P+R MP 2012	8.1 + 11.2	Community- wide
Replace playground, install signage and entrance feature.	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Braemar Park
Add neighbourhood park amenities (i.e. 2-12 year old playground, seating) at the north end to serve Dentville; Expand the recreational activities adjacent to the skate park to include mountain bike skills, BMX, basketball, and a sport court, while respecting sensitive ecosystems; consider nature interpretation on Britannia Slough.	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Carson Place Park / Skate Park
The park could accommodate one of the following features: a playground, a "mini" bike skills area, or a fenced off- leash dog area.	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Glacier View Park
Add a mini mountain bike skills area and the Valleycliffe Trail and Crumpet Creek Trail passthrough.	P+R MP 2012	11.2	McNaughton Park
Clarify the entrance to the park and provide kiosks for trail maps;	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Merrill Park

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
<p>Add washrooms and a picnic / gathering shelter.</p> <p>Continue thematic enhancement of Rose Park as a garden park with possible addition of an arboretum.</p> <p>Pursue a pedestrian/bike crossing of the Mamquam Blind Channel from Rose Park to the Smoke Bluffs or the adjacent neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Create infrastructure to enable canoe/kayak launching, and non-motorized access to the water.</p>	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Rose Park
Develop a new neighbourhood park and entrance with bouldering and other play features for kids, a park kiosk, and a small gathering area (Smoke Bluffs Road)	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Smoke Bluffs Park
Continue playground improvement of 2 projects per year @ \$50,000-\$100,000	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Community-wide

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Apparatus replacement: That Rescue 2 be replaced with a unit of greater capacity for fire fighting or have its functions combined with a Rescue Engine.	Master Fire Plan 2012	Rec 15	Community-wide
Renewal or replacement of Hall 2: That Hall 2 either be replaced by a new fire hall at a site near the current location, or that it be extensively renovated to ensure seismic safety and more optimal use of space.	Master Fire Plan 2012	Rec 34	Community-wide
Planning for a future Hall 3: That the District should plan for a third fire hall to cover future development north of Hall 2 with a goal to obtain property within 3–5 years and with implementation of the fire hall within 7–10 years (subject to build out and development in this area).	Master Fire Plan 2012	Rec 35	Community-wide – spec: Brackendale, North Squamish & Airport areas

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Encourage the University to provide linkages, both physical and otherwise, with the immediate neighbourhood and the larger community.	Univ Sub-Area Plan 2004	4.4	Campus Lands

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Trails that are on private lands can be established under the following mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute the trail as part of an amenity contribution such as park dedication, 	Trail MP 2011	2.0	Community-wide
Connect neighbourhoods and community destinations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue development of the Corridor Trail; Develop additional trails and recreational greenways in Squamish's developed areas; Make each neighbourhood a node of the trail system with destinations such as Brennan Park, Smoke Bluffs Municipal Park and provincial parks; Encourage trails that connect neighbourhoods to schools as part of any new development; Improve on-street bike routes and bike route signage, and Develop Blueways where and when possible. 	Trail MP 2011	3.0 #6	Community-wide
Construct new trails as funding becomes available, and base new trails development on criteria and planning considerations established by the Trails Master Plan in providing unique trail experiences, creating links between trail resources and looping trails.	Trail MP 2011	4.0	Community-wide

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Develop key trailheads with signage, parking, washrooms, and garbage/recycling. Employ community consultation processes to prioritize trailhead enhancements;	P+R MP 2012	Sec 10 P. 53	Community-wide
Consider a "Blueway" route for canoes and kayaks around the Downtown peninsula, through the estuary and Mamquam Blind Channel,	P+R MP 2012	Sec 10 P. 53	Community-wide
Create a long-term Vision and Master Plan for Brennan Park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the "outdoor rec" zone at Brennan Park. Create a mountain bike skills park. Develop a lacrosse box. Create a central axis with an "Arts + Heritage" theme. Complete 4 ball diamond "clover leaf" at Hendrickson Fields. Add a 2nd synthetic turf field. 	P+R MP 2012	11.2	Brennan Park

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
A Civic Use area will be a valuable amenity and asset for the Oceanfront and all the residents of Squamish. Here we can find a flexible use community amenity facility, a performing arts facility.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.2 Civic Uses	Oceanfront Peninsula
At rezoning, the District may consider the use of amenity based zoning to create incentives for green development or other public amenities.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.3.10 .2.5	Oceanfront Peninsula
Provide public parks, plazas, greenways and other open space as generally shown on Schedule H (Parks, Public Spaces & Community Facilities Plan), including space for community and cultural facilities to ensure the highest possible quality of life.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.2.1	Oceanfront Peninsula
An accessible oceanfront walkway will be accommodated in a combination of permeable and non-permeable surfaces for bikers and walkers;	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.3.2.2	Oceanfront Peninsula
Desirable features [in the Oceanfront Park and Beach] include: launch facilities for wind sports; areas to accommodate large festivals and events; an interactive kids' play park; and elements that celebrate and are animated by ocean and wind.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.3.2.6	Oceanfront Peninsula
The [Oceanfront] park should incorporate a sailing centre on the east side of the park.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.3.2.7	Oceanfront Peninsula
The [Oceanfront] park will also feature the "Lands' End Monument" as a distinctive vertical architectural or public art element.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.3.2.10	Oceanfront Peninsula
A contiguous public access to the water and trail along the entire Oceanfront Walkway shall be provided and shall be located generally as shown on Schedule H, the Parks Public Spaces and Community Facilities Plan.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.7.2.1	Oceanfront Peninsula
The Sailing Centre, Performing Arts Centre and Arts Workshop, and Community Amenity Centre and separate Civic Facility shall be located generally as shown on Schedule G, the Land Use Plan.	Ocean-front SAP	Sec 5.4.10 .2.1	Oceanfront Peninsula

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Encourage the University to create a central open space on the campus which will serve as a community meeting place or assembly area. It shall provide sunny and shaded places to sit, a venue for impromptu events, and a visual amenity for the surrounding neighbourhood.	Univ Sub-Area Plan 2004	4.4	Campus Lands

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Continuous safe and unrestricted pedestrian access for the public along the water's edge is essential. This public walkway is required to facilitate and enhance public access to and views along the Mamquam Blind Channel for recreational, aesthetic and economic purposes.	OCP 2009	DPA 4 P. 148	Mamquam Blind Channel

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Consider development incentives to support construction of affordable, special needs and seniors housing, childcare facilities, and other amenities that support community health and wellbeing that are suitable Downtown.	DNP 2014	1-D.4	Downtown
Acquire new parkland through redevelopment opportunities, or engage in joint development ventures to create new recreation resources, parks, and public open space and amenities to keep pace with increasing population and activity Downtown.	DNP 2014	1-D.13	Downtown
Consider developing a community-wide amenity strategy and bylaw or policy that specifies for Downtown the maximum amount of increased density to be permitted in exchange for amenities, and states the calculation and calibration of potential increased density related to extraordinary amenities provided. The amenities could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of civic, cultural, or educational space (available for purchase or rent) such as a community centre, theatre and performance space, social service spaces, gallery, or other shared space (such as public meeting space) as determined in cooperation with the District and local community organizations; designation and conveyance of green corridors; provision of land or buildings for a transit hub; provision of public amenities (e.g., expanded plaza, an estuary interpretative centre, public facility) over and above normal requirements; innovative green building design. 	DNP 2014	5-B.2	Downtown

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Where endorsed by Council, a development proposal may include a voluntary Community Amenity Contribution of Public Art.	Public Art Policy	Sec 5.1	Community - wide

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
Civic Centre / Performing Arts Centre: Identify the preferred location and designate appropriate lands.	GMS 2005	5.2.4	Oceanfront Development Area

Amenity	Doc	Sec	Area
A key feature of the concept [Downtown First] is to open up the oceanfront to public access and to provide public amenities in the downtown and oceanfront area.	OCP 2009	Part 3	Downtown and Oceanfront
Parks, open space, trails and recreation amenities are highly valued by residents.	OCP 2009	Part 4, P. 53	Community-Wide
The District shall monitor land use patterns to determine the need for fire halls in order to ensure that an adequate level of service is provided.	OCP 2009	Part 4, 14-43	Community-Wide
The District supports the implementation of the Smoke Bluffs Park Master Plan (2006) through improvement of facilities and amenities to establish and reinforce it as an integral component of the District's park system.	OCP 2009	Part 4, 15-7	Community-Wide
The District will acquire land for different scales and types of park space Downtown to maintain a supply compatible with the neighbourhood park provision standard to meet the needs of the present and future downtown population.	OCP 2009	Part 4, 15-13	Community-Wide
When reviewing rezoning proposals for multi-unit residential development, the District shall consider the following criteria in determining the appropriateness of the development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> potential of the proposed development to provide a range of housing types and tenures that are suitable for seniors, households with low and moderate incomes, and persons with special needs. 	OCP 2009	Part 4, 17-4	Community-Wide
Special needs housing and non-market housing is considered an integral component in new residential areas and is encouraged throughout the community in close proximity to amenities.	OCP 2009	Part 4, 17-15	Community-Wide
To enable citizens to "age in place", the District shall support the provision of a range of seniors' housing and innovative care options. Proximity and accessibility to services and amenities is encouraged.	OCP 2009	Part 4, 17-16	Community-Wide