

# LGLA 2023

## Introduction to Planning

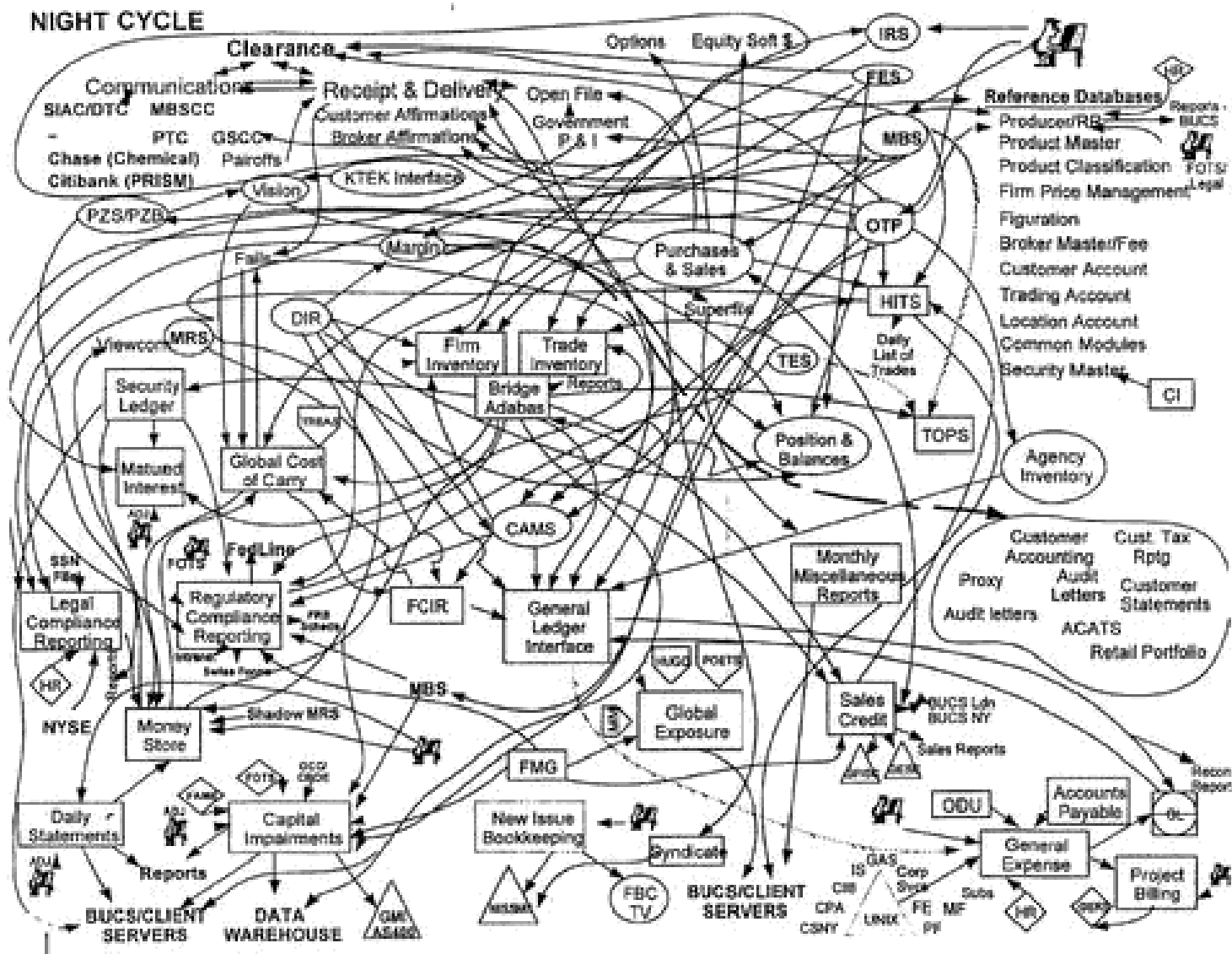
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# What Planners Do



# Today's Outline

- What is planning and why do we do it?
- What is a plan?
- How do we do it?
- What are the roles of staff and elected officials?
- What is a RGS? OCP? Zoning?
- What are all the different permits?
- What tools exist beyond the basics?
- Implementation
- How do you know if you need a planner?

# You already know how to plan

- **An analogy to show you what you may already know...**



# Your Family Inheritance

**20 ha of undeveloped land  
(Waterfront)**



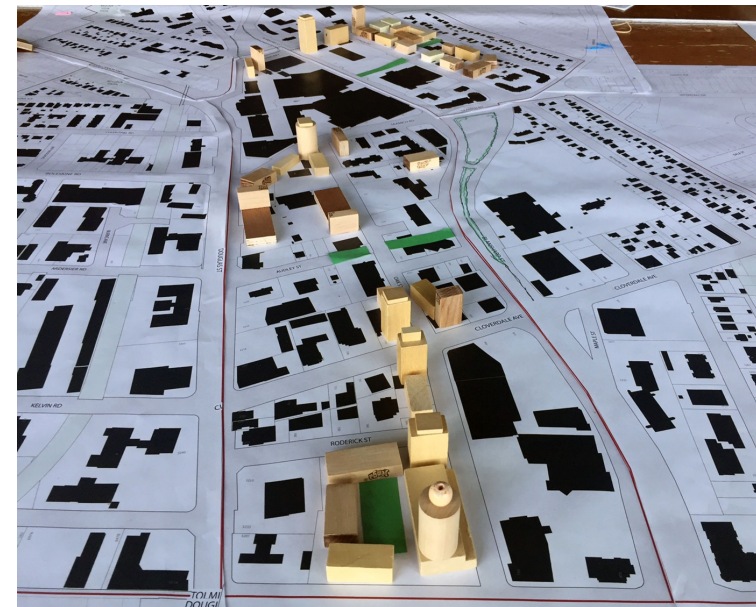
# The “Unplanned” Approach

- First come, first served
- Everyone for themselves
- Any family member has a right to use property how they wish



# The Planning Approach

- Assess the land you've inherited
- Talk to every family member about their goals for the future
- Think about the way the land can help you achieve your family's goals
- Decide together about ways to use the land for the greatest benefit of the majority



# Some examples of family goals

- A place to live
- A place for friends to visit
- Earn an income
- A place to relax
- A place to enjoy nature
- Safety
- Clean environment
- Sustainable use of resources
- Food security
- Maximize aesthetic values
- Maximize property value





How can this land help you reach  
your family's goals?



# The end result...

## A Family Land Plan



# The benefits of planning

- The land will help the family achieve its goals for the future:
  - Housing for current and future family members
  - Accommodation for guests
  - Self sufficiency (water, garden, wood lot) and sustainability
- Unique resources are protected for everyone's use:
  - Pond for water supply
  - Recreation areas-stream, beach, old forest
  - Woodlot for construction lumber and firewood
  - Productive soils are set aside for growing food



# More benefits of planning...

- Safety
- Health
- Cost effective and efficient
- Certainty about future development
- Reduced conflicts between family members
- Land is used for the greatest benefit of the majority
- Enhance and maintain property value for the future

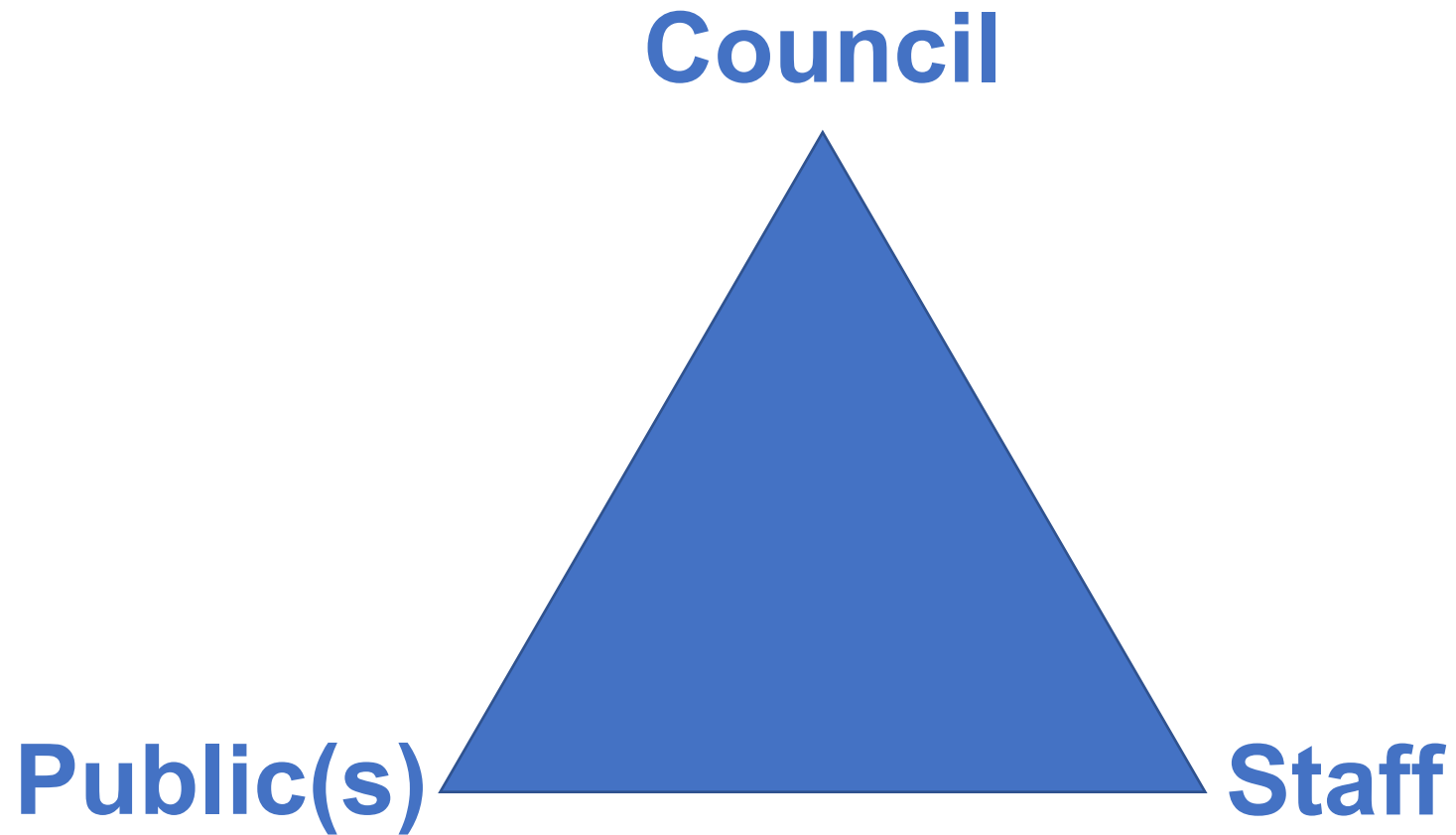


# What is planning?

- The process by which communities attempt to manage change and development in their physical environment.
- Planning is a matter of trying to decide which of many competing interests is more deserving, while also treating everyone in a fair and reasonable manner.



# Who plans?



# Unique roles for Council and Staff

## COUNCIL

- Sets policies and objectives
- Make decisions based on the above policies
- Decisions on implementation priorities and budgets for implementation



# Unique roles for Council and Staff



## STAFF

The Planner's **primary role** is to provide Council with:

- Quality Information
- A sound analysis of problems or opportunity
- Options
- Relevant criteria to make a decision
- A recommendation, Strategy, Plan, Policy, Program



# The regulatory framework

- **The Constitution Act**
- **The Community Charter**
- **The Local Government Act (Part 13 & 14)**
- **The Land Title Act**

Canada 



# Land Use Tools



Official Community Plan

*Vision and Policies (Limits Council)*

Zoning Bylaw  
(ENTITLEMENT)

*Use, Density, Siting, Parking, etc.*

Development Variance Permit

*Can not vary use or density*

Development Permit

*Design Controls*

Building Permit

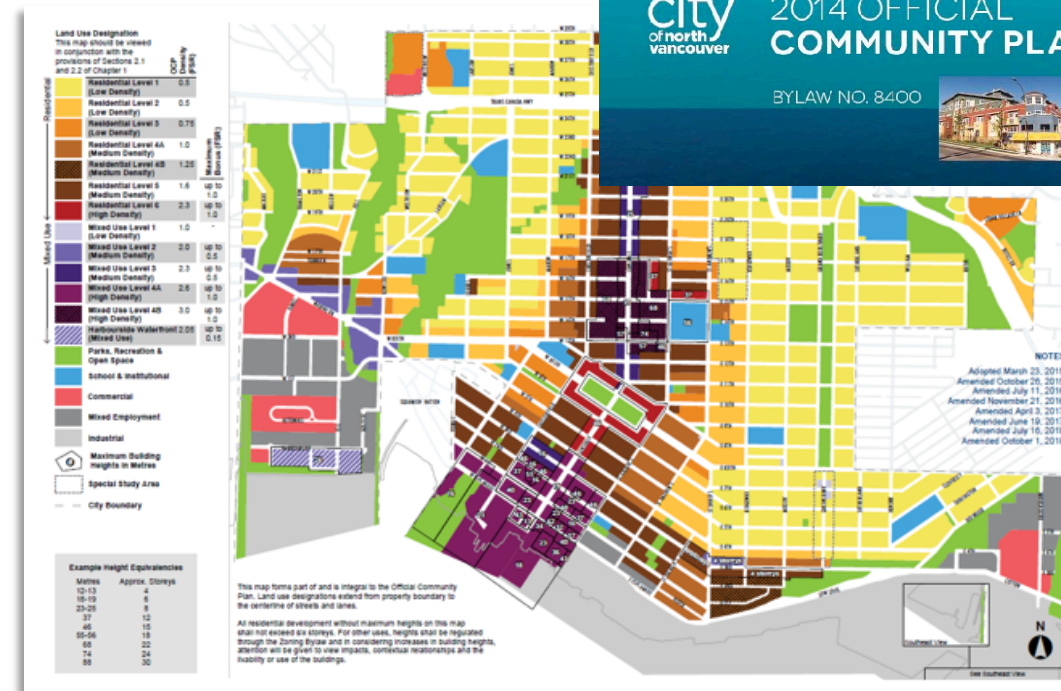
*Building Codes*

Occupancy Permit

*Completion*

# Official Community Plan (OCP)

- Broad statement of growth management goals and objectives
- A set of policies that will be used to manage change over the next 10-15 years
- A high level land use plan



# OCP Required content...

- Five year housing needs (type, location, density)
- Other land uses (commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational and public utilities)
- Location of sand and gravel deposits
- Restrictions on hazardous or environmentally sensitive lands.



# OCP Required content...

- Phasing of major road, sewer and water systems
- Location and type of present and proposed public facilities (schools, parks, waste treatment, etc.)



# OCP Optional content...

- Policies for social needs, social well-being and social development
- A regional context statement
- Policies respecting the maintenance and enhancement of farming
- Policies relating to the preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.



# Sound familiar?

## Family Land Plan

- An area for family homes
- An area for guests
- Family garden
- Woodlot
- Utility Area
- Creek
- Drinking water pond
- Old forest
- Family beach
- Unstable slopes
- Driveway and utilities

## Official Community Plan

- Residential
- Tourist Accommodation
- Agricultural
- Forestry
- Industrial
- Streamside buffers
- Watershed protection
- Environmentally Sensitive
- Parks and recreation
- Natural Hazard Area
- Road and Utility Plan

# An OCP: Like a Family Land Plan, but...

- Planning for a bigger “family”, with a more complex land base
- Need to spend more time understanding the community and the land base
- We elect local government to make the decisions
- Elected representatives are advised by staff or contracted professionals
- The community is consulted before decisions are made
- Need to consider community goals for the future and how they can be achieved (or frustrated) by land use plans
- Decisions based on what provides the greatest benefit to the greatest number (public interest)
- Decisions are enshrined in formal documents (bylaws)



# Similar benefits

- Community health and safety
- Greater certainty and security about the future
- Reduced conflict (between different land uses and community members)
- Maximize use of community resources to the benefit of the majority
- Minimize public expense for infrastructure and responding to natural hazards (flooding, landslip)
- Maintenance of land values and investment
- Sustainability, protection of the environment
- Livability
- Economic stability and attractiveness to investors and new residents



# Regional Growth Strategies

- The RGS legislation recognizes the need to coordinate planning across all the local government jurisdictions within a Regional District



# RGS-Development and Adoption

- Binding on Regional District after adoption
- Regional context statements must be included in OCPs of affected municipalities within two years
- Monitoring programs, annual report and consider reviews every 5 years

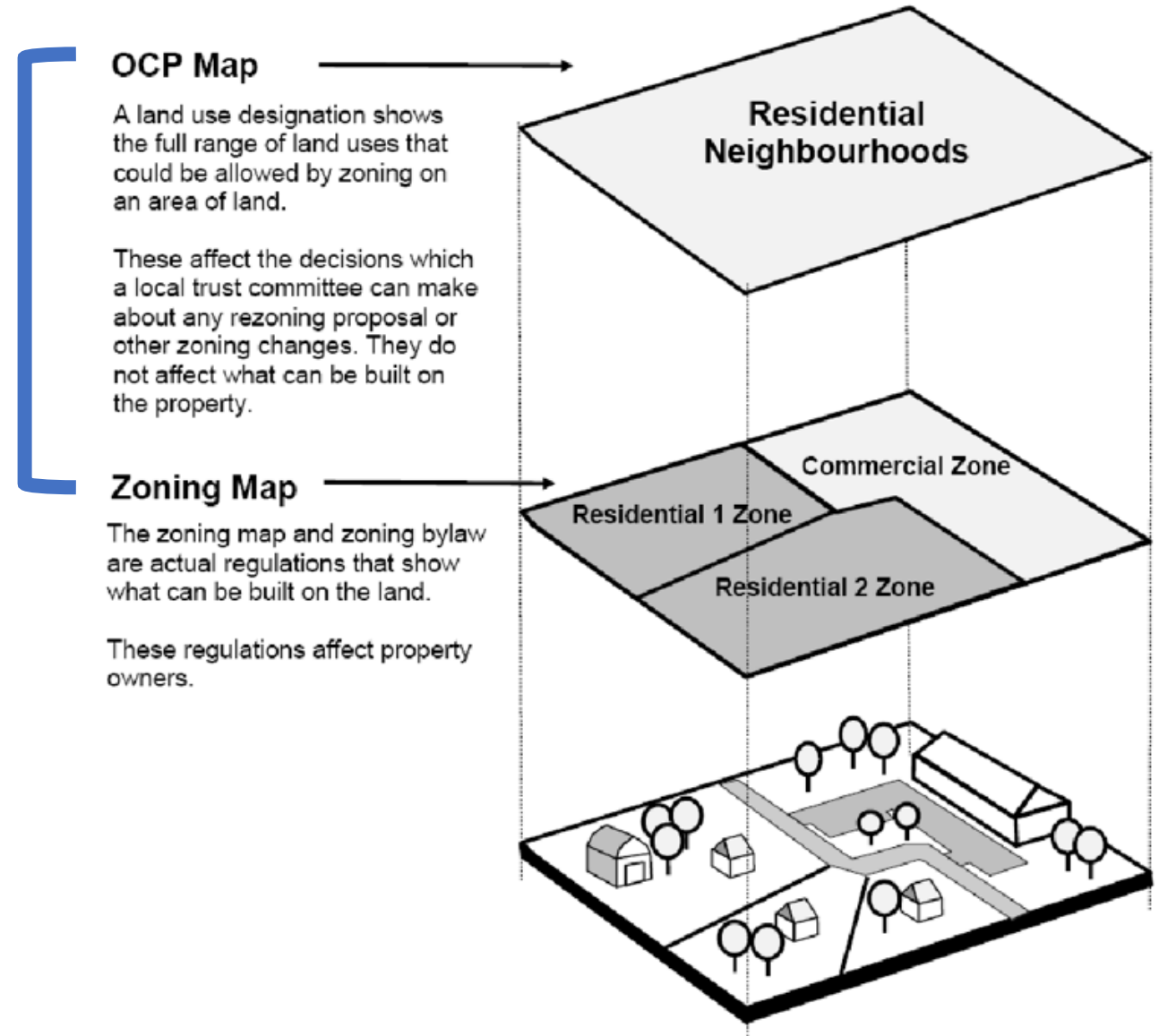


# RGS-Implementation

- Adopted by Regional District Board bylaw
  - Optional, but can be required by province
- Coordination with affected local governments and provincial agencies through establishment of an intergovernmental advisory committee
- Provincial legislation describes:
  - Land use objectives
  - Time frame (20 years)
  - Minimum content
  - Required consultation plan
- Local government acceptance required for binding provisions

Set by Council  
Requirement for consistency

Staff Issued



# Zoning Bylaw

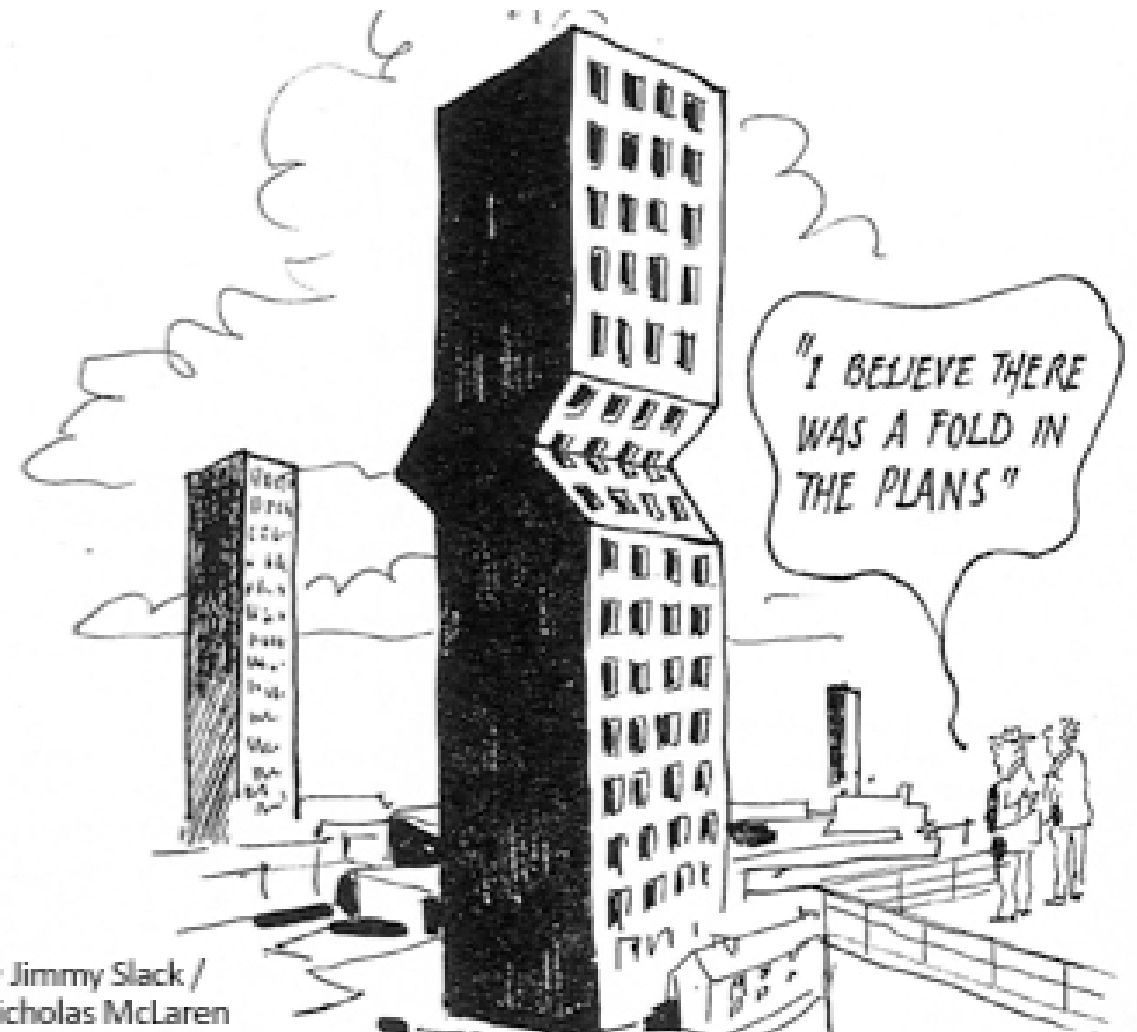
## What is zoning?

- Zoning is a regulatory tool
- The zoning bylaw implements the broad goals, objectives and policies within the OCP at a site-specific level



# What Zoning does...

- Divides the jurisdiction into zones
- Each zone permits a different type of land use by regulating:
  - Permitted **uses** (residential, commercial, agricultural, recreational, institutional)
  - **Density** and sizes of buildings
  - Lot line setbacks, siting of buildings, lot coverage
  - Building heights
  - Minimum size of lots
  - Levels of works and services required



# Zoning continued...

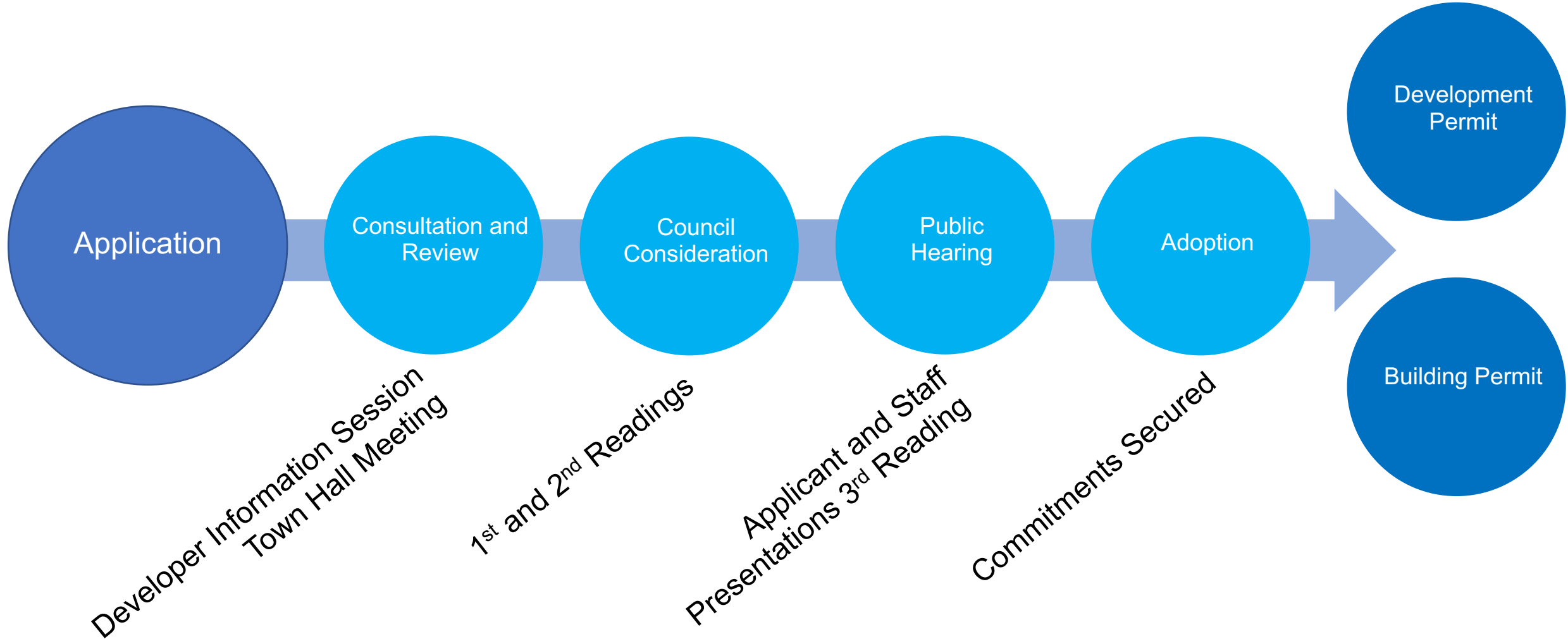
## Zoning bylaws also often include regulations of other aspects of land use such as:

- Off-street parking and loading spaces
- Landscaping and screening to separate uses
- Subdivision standards
  - Water, sewer, roads, drainage
- Signs
- Drainage
- Tree cutting





# Anatomy of a Development Application

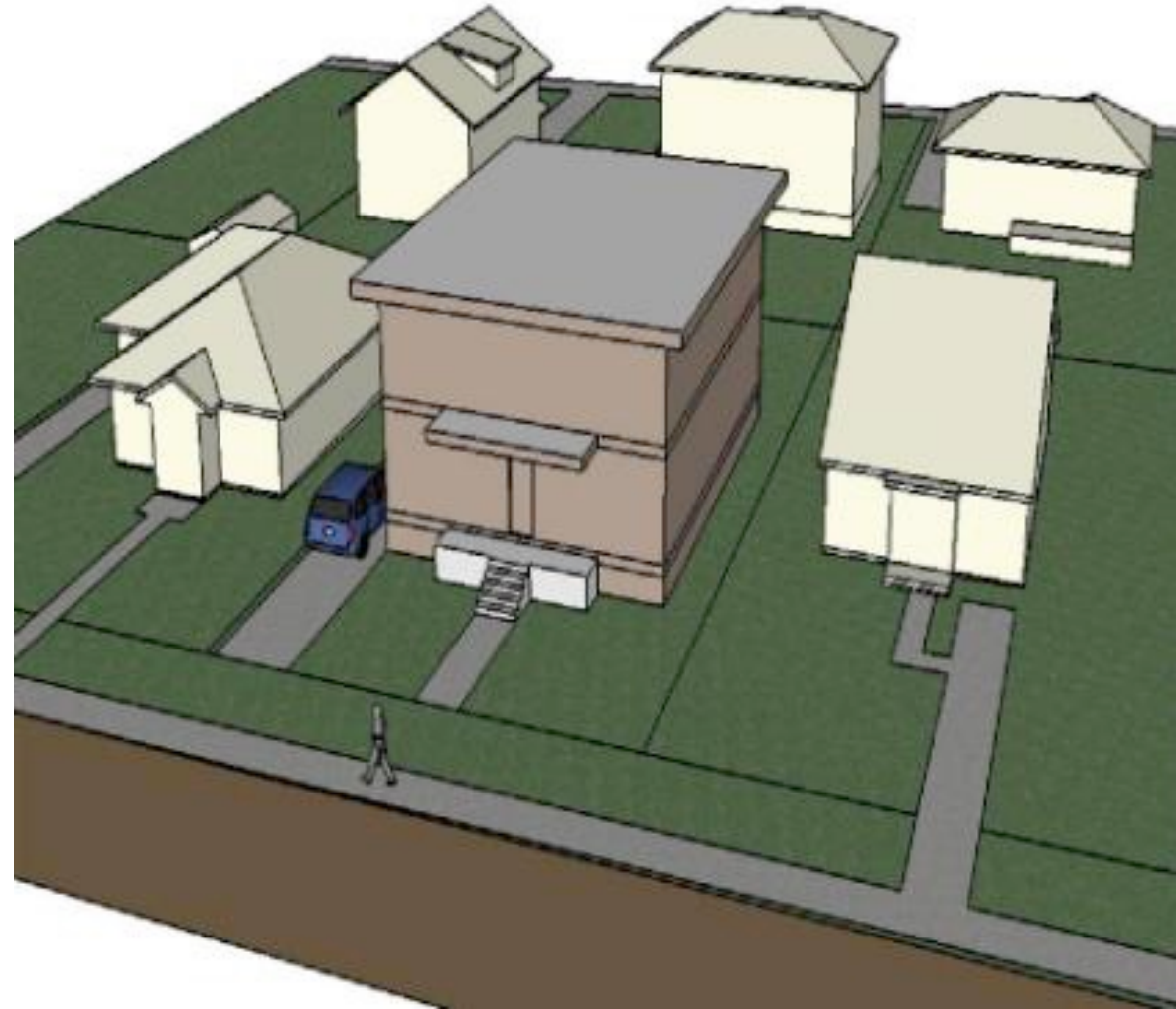


# Development Variance Permits

- Zoning regulations may not anticipate every circumstance affecting parcels of land.
- LGA allows for DVP applications to vary certain provisions of the zoning bylaw, subdivision bylaw and sign bylaw.
- DVPs cannot alter **use**, **density** or specifications related to floodplain requirements.
- Public notice, but not a full public hearing is required, before Council's decision
- Permits lapse if no substantial start to construction within two years

# DVPs continued

- DVP applications may propose changes to siting regulations including:
  - Setbacks
  - Height
  - Parking
  - Landscaping
  - Subdivision standards (some)
- Notice Required



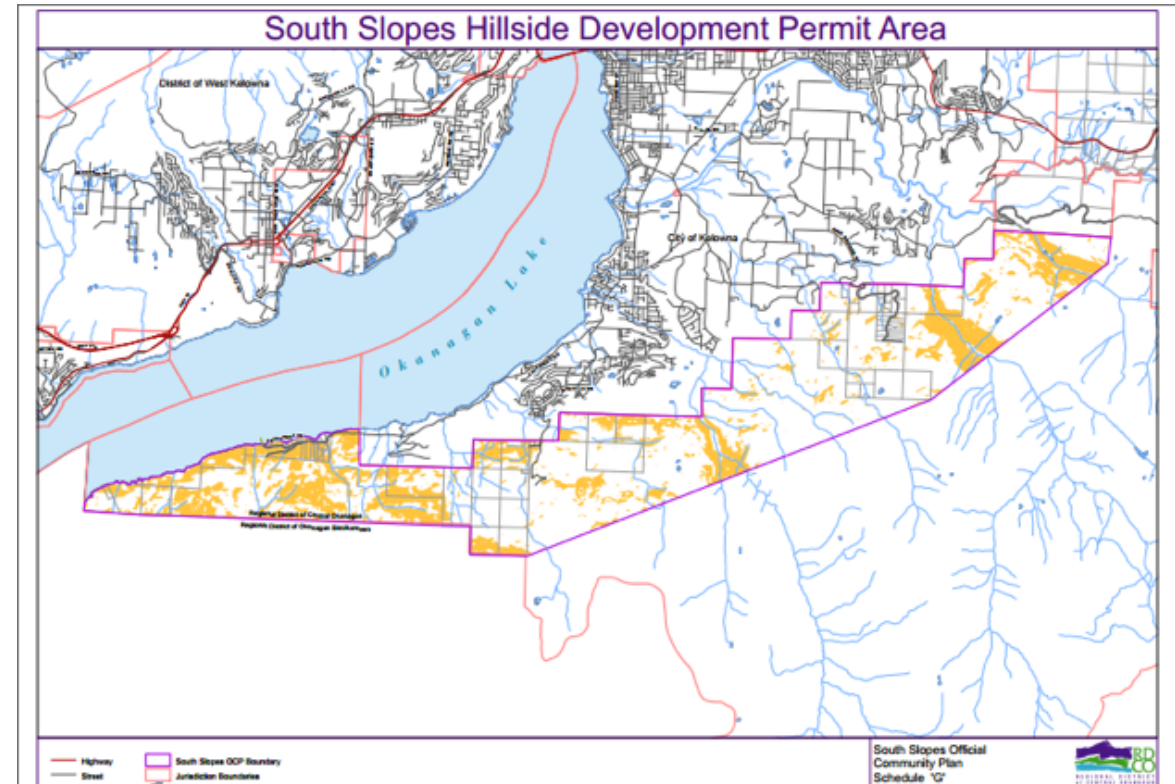
# Temporary Use Permits

- OCPs may designate areas where **temporary** uses may be permitted.
- A form of temporary zoning.
- The permit may include a variety of conditions.
- TUPs may be issued for up to 3 years and a landowner may apply to renew once.
- Notice is required.



# Development Permit Areas

- OCP may designate certain areas as Development Permit Areas (DPAs) for specific purposes
- Allows for an extra level of attention before development occurs
- Justification must be stated
- Must include guidelines for the permits that will be issued.



# Development Permit Areas

- Within those areas, the following must not occur unless the local government issues a DP or there is an exemption:
  - Land may not be subdivided,
  - Construction or alteration of buildings may not be commenced,
  - Land may not be altered.



# Implementation



- **More bylaws**
- **Budgets**
- **Development Applications**
- **Council decisions**

# Putting it all together

## **USING PLANNING TOOLS TO ACHIEVE COMMUNITY GOALS**





# Zoning Bylaw



**Policies**  
Housing  
Economic  
Safety  
Transportation

## **Supportive Regulations:**

### **Permits Range of Housing Types**

- Detached, attached and multi-unit
- Low minimum unit sizes
- Accessory suites, lock-off units and Coach Houses

### **Housing Tenure**

- Can regulate to require rental-only multi-family

### **Parking**

- Reduced parking for rental and seniors housing
- Parking Relaxations for Car Share Vehicles

### **Sustainability and Healthy Communities**

- Energy Efficiency Incentives
- Floor Space Exclusions for amenity spaces, adaptability, design to support physical activity

# Housing: OCP Policies

- **OCP Policies (examples)**
  - Encourage development of affordable housing near services
  - Identify and ‘save’ appropriate land for special needs or affordable housing
  - Allow bonus density if a developer provides affordable housing (or land)
  - Require affordable housing as a condition of significant density increases or other development
  - Require new commercial development to provide staff housing



# What can we do through land use planning and regulation?



- **Proactively change zoning regulations (examples)**
  - Allow more flexibility in the number of dwellings per lot
  - Bonusing
  - Permit boarding houses
  - Eliminate restrictions on modular housing
  - Eliminate restrictions on minimum house size
- **Permit 'infill' that retains neighbourhood character**
  - e.g. 'laneway' housing
  - e.g. secondary cottage


# Rezoning applications

- Indicate preferred locations and other criteria in OCP for evaluating rezoning applications




# Rezoning Applications for Affordable Housing

- Application processing – reduce or eliminate fees
- Streamline or prioritize application process
- Provide special guides or assistance to applicants
- Register housing agreements to protect future affordability

  
city  
of north  
vancouver

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**2018 Density Bonus and Community Benefits Policy**



Amended: July 23, 2018 Enactment: January 1, 2019

Document: 1498374-v3  
PDF Document #1553816

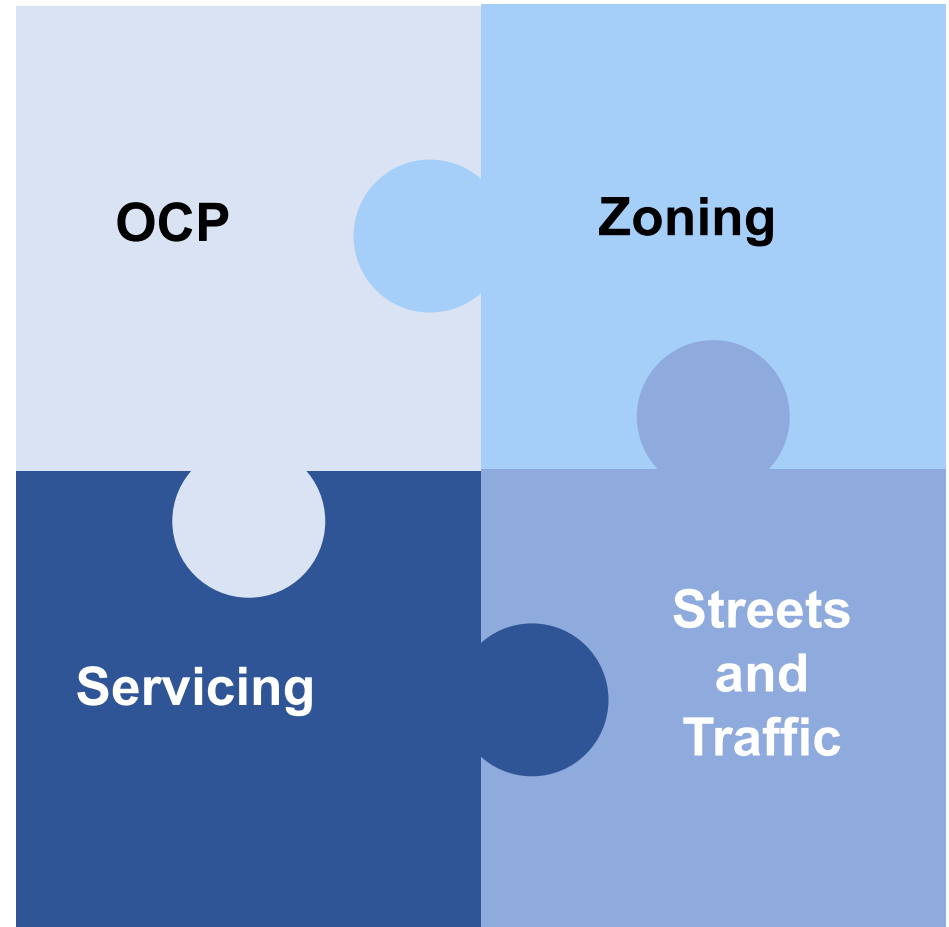
# Other Regulations for Housing



- Strata conversions – consider approvals carefully
  - Would a strata conversion replace affordable rental housing with unaffordable owned housing?
- Flexible density measures
  - Use floor space ratios vs units per hectare
- Temporary Use Permits
- Proactive bylaw enforcement (e.g. short-term vacation rentals)

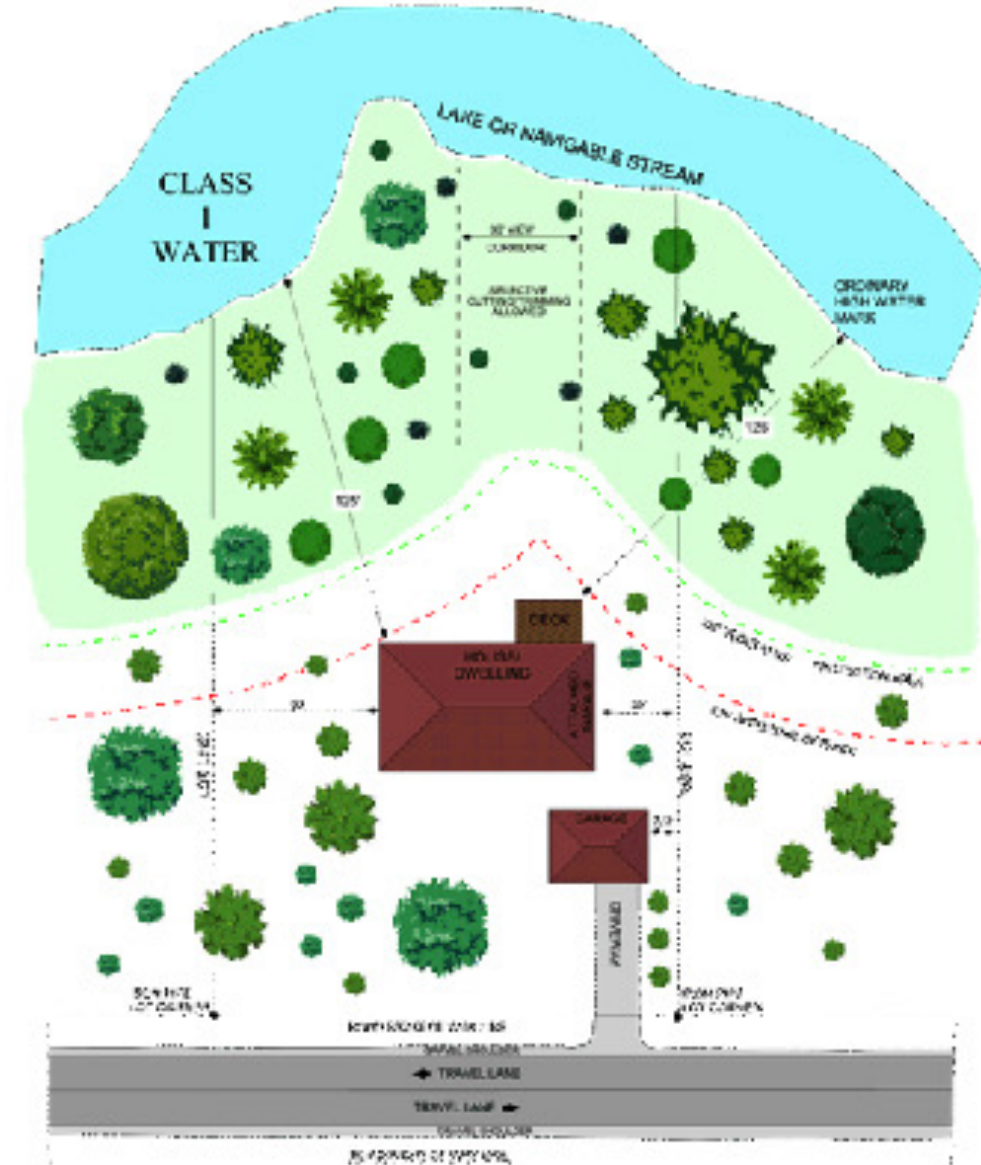
# Beyond the Basics

- Business Licenses
- Streets and Traffic
- Building Bylaw
- Municipal Ticket Information
- Tree Protection
- Heritage Protection
- Soil Deposit and Removal
- Subdivision and Servicing
- Council approved policy



# Achieving health goals – e.g. drinking water

- OCP Goal
  - High quality drinking water
- OCP Policy
  - Maintain low density and vegetation buffers in watershed areas
- Zoning Regulations
  - Subdivision regulations require large minimum lot sizes and community sewers
  - Zoning requires extra setbacks from water bodies
  - Development permit area restricts vegetation removal and paving within a buffer area near the waterbody





# Achieving economic goals

- **OCP Goal**
  - Food security for residents
- **OCP Policy**
  - Protect agricultural areas for growing food
- **Zoning Regulations**
  - Zoning: In Agricultural zones, restrict uses to farming and accessory uses such as food processing and farm-gate sales.
  - Subdivision: Large lot sizes
  - DPAs: Require vegetation buffers and restrict drainage changes arising from neighbouring property



# Achieving environmental goals...

- **OCP Goal**
  - Clean air and reduced GHG emissions
- **OCP Policy**
  - Land use changes are evaluated regarding dependence on automobiles
- **Land Use Regulations examples**
  - Zoning – Mixed Use to permit live/work without commuting
  - Subdivision – Require clustering, trail networks and cycle paths
  - Reduce auto parking requirements in exchange for cycle or pedestrian amenities
  - Exchange bonus densities for cycle or pedestrian amenities
  - Development permits require cycle racks and pedestrian friendly design



# Achieving environmental goals

- **OCP Goal**
  - Preserve biodiversity
- **OCP Policy**
  - Preserve environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs)
- **Land Use Regulations**
  - Zoning: large lot zoning in ESAs
  - Permit bonus density if ESAs are set aside
  - Permit transfer of development potential to more suitable sites
  - Subdivision: Require parkland dedication of ESAs
  - DPAs: Guidelines for minimizing the impacts of development on ESAs and for establishing greenways



# Achieving public safety goals

- **OCP Goal**
  - Protect community from natural hazards and reduce costs of responding
- **OCP Policy**
  - Avoid or carefully manage development in areas with known natural hazards
- **Land Use Regulations**
  - Development permits to control development near steep slopes, flood areas, fire interface areas
  - Hazard areas set aside at the time of subdivision
  - No 'up-zoning' in hazard areas
  - Tree-cutting bylaws
  - Flood setbacks
  - 'Fire smart' requirements
  - Encourage transfer of development potential to more suitable areas



# Achieving recreational goals

- **OCP Goal**
  - Ample opportunities for recreation
- **OCP Policies**
  - Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities should be available in appropriate and accessible locations for all residents
- **Land Use Regulations**
  - Zoning: Ensure a range of recreational facilities are permitted in appropriate and accessible locations
  - Permit bonus zoning in exchange for recreational facilities
  - Subdivision: Require parkland dedication and trail development



# Achieving economic goals

- **OCP Goal**
  - Retain or restore vibrancy in the 'downtown' area
- **OCP Policies**
  - Encourage pedestrian-friendly downtown
  - Concentrate new commercial development in the downtown core
- **Land Use Regulations**
  - Zoning: 'Zero lot line' development in downtown core
  - Zoning: Limit commercial development outside of the downtown core
  - Parking: Located behind buildings
  - Signage: Regulated size to maintain pedestrian scale
  - DPAs: Specify design criteria to enhance appearance and function



# Hiring a Planning Professional

- **When do you need a planner?**
- **What qualifications should you look for?**

