

**Service 500 Planning
Saratoga Local Area Plan****ISSUE**

- The 2025-2029 Proposed Financial Plan includes \$50,000 from service 503 and \$50,000 from service 500 to prepare a Saratoga Local Area Plan (LAP).

CHALLENGES

- The Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) identifies Saratoga as a Settlement Node, although Saratoga Beach is primarily a rural residential and coastal tourism area with growth limited by servicing challenges (e.g., limited water supply) and hazards (i.e., coastal and riverine flood risk). Its strategic location between the Comox Valley and Campbell River highlights both advantages and challenges due to transportation links.
- Saratoga's unique natural areas and ecosystems are impacted by climate change and development pressures. Future planning and development will need to be undertaken with an ecosystem lens.
- Recognizing these challenges, the CVRD has initiated the development of an LAP for the Saratoga Settlement Node. A request for proposals was issued in November 2024, with public engagement planned for winter 2025. This initiative aims to provide a structured approach to land use and community development, addressing the issues arising from the current lack of an LAP.

BACKGROUND

Service 503, the Planning Policy department, is responsible for long-range planning and sustainability. It develops land use plans and policies for the electoral areas and collaborates with member municipalities on regional strategies and projects. The department manages the Rural Comox Valley Official Community Plan (OCP), which, alongside the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), guides future growth and change in the three electoral areas, excluding Denman and Hornby Islands. The OCP reflects shared community values and goals, serving as a strategic document that directs land-use decisions throughout the region.

The Comox Valley Regional District respectfully acknowledges the land on which it operates is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

Through these efforts, Service 503 plays a crucial role in ensuring sustainable and coordinated development within the CVRD.

Strategic projects that have budget planning implications include:

Saratoga Local Area Plan (LAP)

- The development of the LAP will include significant community input, and balance planning and technical expertise with local values and community knowledge.
- The LAP will provide guidance for the Board, staff, community (residents, businesses), and prospective developers in assessing development applications, servicing opportunities, and community amenity opportunities.
- The Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Saratoga Settlement Node will guide ecosystem and climate-based land use and development in the settlement node.
- The LAP will provide a collaborative, ecosystem-based, and climate-resilient vision for land use, transportation, and services.

<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the LAP with strong community involvement to reflect local values, co-creating a vision, goals, and land use objectives for the Saratoga Settlement Node. • Provide clear guidance for decision-making on development, servicing, and community amenities. • Establish foundational principles and policies for each area within the LAP. • Use an ecosystem-based approach to assess land use and growth scenarios, prioritizing ecological health, carrying capacity, climate resilience, and natural area protection. • Identify opportunities to rehabilitate, expand, and connect natural spaces, integrating climate-proofing strategies. • Incorporate multi-modal transportation options, including transit and active transportation. • Position the LAP as a foundational document for a future Liquid Waste Management Plan.
<p>Budget</p>	<p>\$50,000 from Function 503 (and \$50,000 from Function 500)</p>
<p>Direction</p>	<p>Provision has been made in the 2025-2029 financial plan to undertake a local area planning process in the Saratoga Settlement Node</p>

Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RFP in December 2024• Targeted end date is early 2026
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OPTIONS

1. Proceed with including the Saratoga Local Area Plan in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan
2. Provide staff with alternative direction