

# TECHNICAL MEMO

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<b>To</b> Lesley-Anne Staats, Director of Planning and Development Town of Gibsons	<b>From</b> Colton Kirsop, Planning Division Manager, Vancouver Region McElhanney Ltd.
<b>Re</b> Draft OCP Engagement – Informed Recommendations	<b>Date</b> October 1, 2025

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This memo presents key themes, directions, and recommendations for the Official Community Plan (OCP) update, informed by best practices, legislative requirements, staff input, and public input received during round two of public engagement and summarized in the *Phase 2 What We Heard Report (Summary Report)*. The intent of this memo is to provide high-level direction to update the final draft of the Gibsons OCP.

## 2. ENGAGEMENT-INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Summary Report identifies the following themes as most important to respondents during the public engagement process that was completed from July to August 2025.

**Vision Statement:** Most respondents strongly or somewhat support the draft vision statement, with 72% in favour. Long-form feedback gathered support for the sentiment, inclusivity, and intent of the proposed vision statement. 20.9% of respondents suggested the vision statement should be less high-level.

**Recommendation:** A vision statement is meant to provide a high-level overview of the future state of Gibsons by outlining the Town's future aspirations, which the OCP will help to achieve. No changes are recommended to the proposed Vision Statement as a strong majority of public sentiment towards the proposed vision statement is positive and because the statement has already undergone detailed review by Town staff and Council.

**Land Use Designations:** While feedback on the proposed land use designations only received 40% of respondents indicating strongly or somewhat support, a detailed review of response data and feedback from in-person events and correspondence submitted by residents indicated that concerns were largely concentrated around specific key issues respecting the land use designations, including:

- Civic Institutional – designation of the Charman lands
- High Density Residential – some concerns with limited locations
- Service Commercial – confusion with the intent and some concerns about locations
- Tourist Commercial – redundant to retain given Mixed Use – Commercial meets similar objectives

43% of comments emphasized the importance of preserving the Charman Lands and the Inglis Trail. These lands are owned by the Town of Gibsons and were proposed to be designated *Civic Institutional*, with no changes to the uses or underlying zoning on the Charman Lands. Concerns (18%) were raised over the location of *High-Density Residential* near *Low-Density Residential* neighbourhoods and parks in Upper Gibsons. There was some initial confusion around the renaming of light industrial properties in Upper Gibsons to *Service Commercial*, as the new designation's intent wasn't immediately clear.

**Recommendation:** Responding directly to public concerns, the recommended response is to update the Land Use map. The following updates are proposed:

- The Charman Lands will be updated to reflect the *Parks and Recreation* and *Conservation and Open Space* designations.
- Changes will be made to replace the *High-Density Residential* to *Medium-Density Residential* to minimize potential conflicts related to loss of privacy, overlook, massing, and to provide a more gradual transition in height and density. This change offers a more balanced distribution of density and height while continuing to provide opportunities to focus growth in Upper Gibsons and to address housing needs to meet projected demand.
- To provide better clarity about the intent of the *Service Commercial* land use Designation the name is proposed to be changed to *Industrial Commercial*, and the area of application is proposed to be changed to address landowner concerns.
- The *Tourist Commercial* designation was removed and replaced with *Mixed-Use Commercial* to better enable a mix of commercial and residential uses in Lower Gibsons and Gospel Rock.

Please see the attached updated land use map identifying the changes that are proposed.

**Development Permit Areas:** Feedback on the proposed Development Permit Areas (DPA) was highly supportive (strongly or somewhat support) with 74% in favour of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas DPA, and 66% in favour of the Aquifer Protection DPA. Support was somewhat less strong, but still achieved a majority, with 50% in favour of the Form and Character DPA. Respondents expressed an appreciation for the Town's commitment to preserve local character and environmental interests through the implementation of each DPA.

**Recommendation:** No changes are recommended to the Development Permit Areas given the detailed analysis and data completed by multiple consultants and Gibsons staff to inform the proposed provisions.



**Referrals:** Copies of the draft OCP were referred to key interest holders to gather feedback. Gibsons staff received feedback from the following sources:

- Gibsons Advisory Design Panel (ADP)
- Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)
- BC Transit
- Capilano University
- School District 46 – Sunshine Coast
- Squamish Nation
- Sunshine Coast Community Health Advocacy Table (CHAT)
- Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD)
- Sunshine Coast Tourism
- Vancouver Coastal Health

**Recommendation:** Gibsons staff and McElhanney will complete a review of the specific change requests from each referral response and provide an update when the revised OCP is brought forward for Council consideration in November 2025.

### 3. NEXT STEPS

An update to the draft OCP document will be made using the following to guide the changes:

- Changing some areas designated for *High-Density Residential* (brown) in Upper Gibsons to *Medium-Density Residential* (orange) based on concerns from the public related to potential loss of privacy, overlook, and massing when proposed near low-density residential areas.
- Changing the Charman Lands from *Civic Institutional* (blue) to the *Parks and Recreation* (green) and *Conservation and Open Space* (green cross-hatch) designations based on concerns from the public over the risk of development in forested areas, while keeping the wastewater treatment plant as *Civic Institutional* (blue).
- Complete a detailed review of referral feedback and incorporate further changes to the OCP document, where appropriate.
- Align the draft zoning map with proposed designations on the draft OCP Land Use map.

### CLOSING

This memo outlines how engagement feedback can inform the OCP update, as identified in the *Phase 3 Engagement Summary Report*, and provides a roadmap to guide the process to updating the draft OCP. McElhanney will initiate a final revision of the OCP following 1<sup>st</sup> Reading and Public Hearing, with the goal of sharing the final draft with Council by year-end.



Sincerely,

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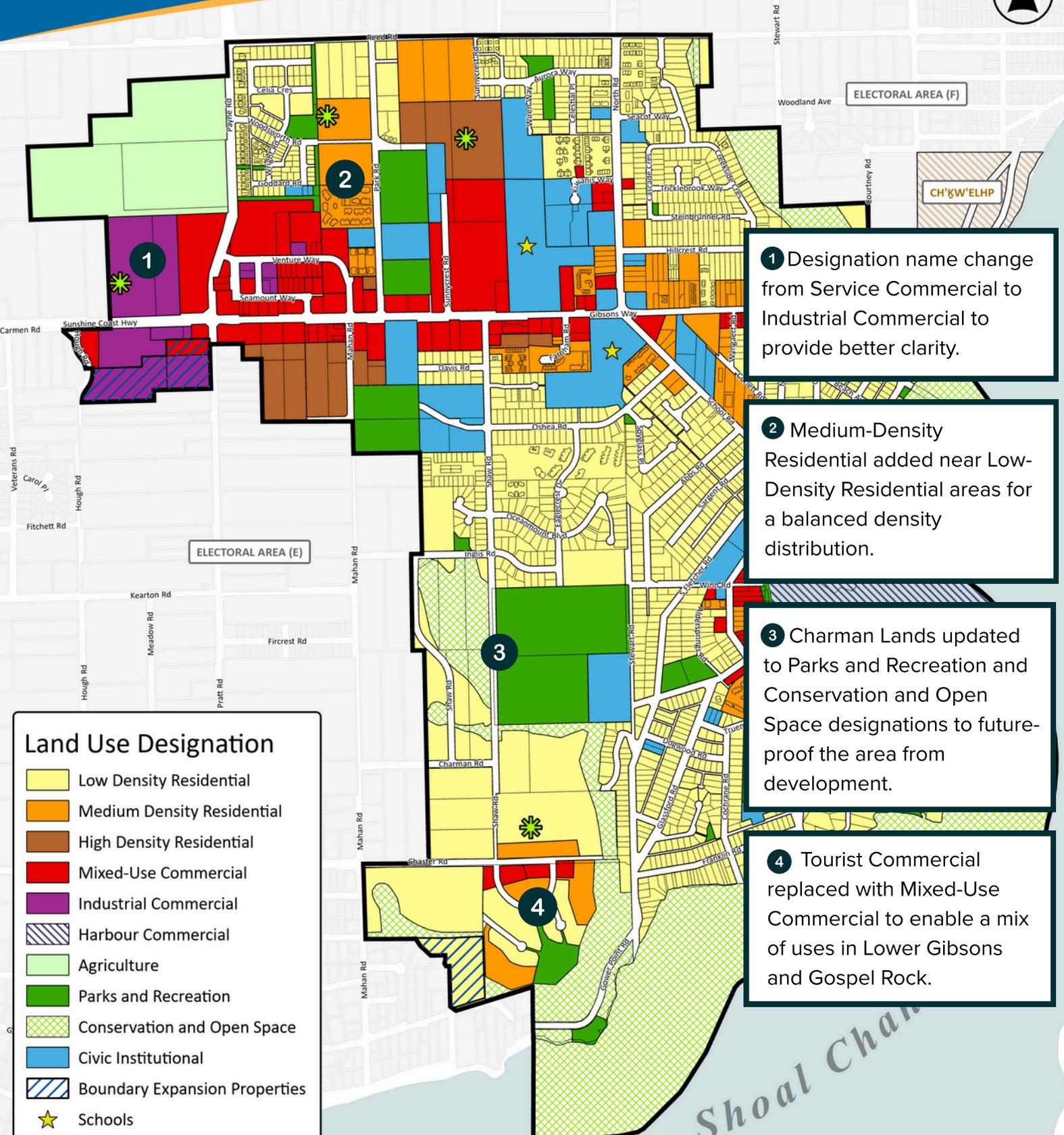
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# Town of Gibsons

## Map A-1 Land Use Designations



### Land Use Designation

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Industrial Commercial
- Harbour Commercial
- Agriculture
- Parks and Recreation
- Conservation and Open Space
- Civic Institutional
- Boundary Expansion Properties
- ★ Schools
- ✱ Conceptual Park

**1** Designation name change from Service Commercial to Industrial Commercial to provide better clarity.

**2** Medium-Density Residential added near Low-Density Residential areas for a balanced density distribution.

**3** Charman Lands updated to Parks and Recreation and Conservation and Open Space designations to future-proof the area from development.

**4** Tourist Commercial replaced with Mixed-Use Commercial to enable a mix of uses in Lower Gibsons and Gospel Rock.

