



# Manson's Landing: Growing Beautifully

## A COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARRETTE

Like many small communities in British Columbia, Cortes Island is striving to balance changing, sometimes competing demands for land use. Manson's Landing is a geographic and service centre for Cortes Island. Decisions about the form and character of existing and future development in Manson's are significant to a

variety of local residents and visitors. We are now at a point where it makes sense for the community to come together to collaboratively shape the vision and the concept plan that sets the pattern for future growth of our evolving village centre. We can have development that respects our unique ecological and human landscapes. Our community can create the framework for Manson's Landing to grow beautifully.

To support this exciting process, the Friends of Cortes Island (FOCI), Regional District of Comox-Strathcona, Smart Growth BC and Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation are working together to sponsor and organize a 3 day community planning charrette for Manson's Landing from September 30 to October 2, 2005.

### THE CHARRETTE EVENT

A *charrette* is a multi-day, interactive event that brings together artists, architects, designers, planners, land use professionals, landowners, local businesses, government agencies, utilities and interested citizens, to create a new and workable solution to a design challenge.<sup>1</sup> By combining the talents and perspectives of these people in a short,

focused period, highly creative and integrated solutions are the result. With thorough preparation and follow up, an intensive design charrette for Manson's Landing will result in a detailed neighbourhood concept plan and associated policies that reflect the local community's special skills, interests and priorities.

A charrette event allows for periodic feedback with the broader community as draft plans are developed, critiqued and further refined, after being presented to local residents. The event is also short enough to sustain the attention and interest of the community through the 3 day period, by promoting interaction and the sharing of perspectives as part of reaching a common goal. Among the important benefits of having a design charrette is that it creates trust in the design process through meaningful public involvement and education, and results in a better plan because of the diverse input and involvement.

<sup>1</sup> The term "*charrette*" is derived from a French word meaning "little cart." At the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, the world's top architectural school in the 19th century, proctors circulated with carts at project deadline time to collect final works. Students would jump on the cart with their work, frantically polishing their drawings up to the last minute. – **Source:** National Charrette Institute, [www.charretteinstitute.org](http://www.charretteinstitute.org)



**Event dates:**  
 Gathering the Pieces:  
 Stakeholder consultation.  
**June and July 2005**

Sift and Sort:  
 Community workshop.  
**July 27, 7:30 pm @  
 Mansons' Hall**

Putting It All Together:  
 The community design charrette.  
**September 30 through  
 October 2 @ Manson's Hall**

All stakeholder input will be compiled and brought to an evening session on Wednesday July 27<sup>th</sup>. This is the last community workshop to confirm goals and objectives and guiding principles before the charrette.

If you have any comments, wish to contribute ideas, or are interested in participating as a member of the charrette design team, please contact Friends of Cortes Island at (250) 935-0087 or by email [foci@island.net](mailto:foci@island.net)

If you wish to comment on and/or critique the draft plans as they are developed during the charrette, simply visit the Community Hall at any time during the process. In addition, times will be posted for public presentation of the concept plan during the evening segments of the charrette event. A program agenda for the Manson's Landing Community Design Charrette will be finalized in August.

## THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS

### Hopes:

- Public land
- Place to place, movement of people
- Links, sidewalks, pedestrian and bike ways/trails
- Calming, slowing traffic (hazards, ferry rush)
- Create a village, integrated design, a Townsite
- Plaza / square / gathering space
- Fountains, public washrooms
- Library as a multi-function space, learning centre
- Decentralize, downsize
- Affordable residential areas
- Refocus waterfront loss

### Issues and concerns:

- Loss of amenities / services
- Focus on south end of island
- Current zoning
- Groundwater / sewage concerns
- Parking and traffic
- Growth
- Economics
- Over-population
- Noise
- Concentration
- Sprawl

**DURING JUNE AND JULY, FOCI WILL BUILD UPON THE COMMUNITY'S COMMENTS AND IDEAS LISTED ABOVE. WE WILL BE CONTACTING LANDOWNERS, RESIDENTS, SERVICE OWNERS AND USERS, AND ASKING FOR INPUT ON NEEDS, ISSUES, AND DREAMS FOR THE MANSON'S LANDING AREA.**

On the left is a list of responses from last September's, *Manson's Landing; Growing Beautifully by Choice or by Chance*, workshop. The question asked was, "What are your main hopes, issues and concerns for the future of Manson's Landing?"



This summer, as part of the charrette preparation work, a Design Brief will be created that provides a set of guiding principles and design objectives for the charrette. Creating the Design Brief is an important part of preparing for the charrette and is your opportunity to give information and ideas to the charrette team. The design objectives are the overall problems and desired outcomes that the community would like to resolve and work with. For example, most Manson's Landing area users agree that traffic and parking are an increasing problem, especially during the summer. In the design brief a charrette objective might include increased parking and safer roads for pedestrians.

The guiding principles in the Brief are the values with which the charrette ideas are examined. They serve as a framework to focus the process. The Manson's Landing guiding principles have been developed from Smart Growth principles and tailored to fit the Cortes community. For example, many residents are concerned about increasing traffic in Manson's Landing, so rather than adopting an "anti-car" approach, these principles would ask the charrette team to look at increasing transportation options, walking, biking, public transport, while making roadways safe and usable for all transportation options. The principles would also suggest that solutions would need to be examined from an holistic perspective: how can we encourage folks to park and walk while maintaining working access for businesses; how does this interact with green spaces; do local residents currently have the opportunity to live close to shops, community services and employment so that the need to drive is reduced, etc.



## SUSTAINABILITY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1. Balance economic and social growth with our natural ecosystems.** Environmental, economic, and social values are the corner stones of a sustainable community. Sustaining the biodiversity of the natural environment and the ability of natural systems to provide life-supporting services is recognizing limits and providing a balance so that people can thrive in their work and play.
- 2. Incorporate green infrastructure, green building design, and lifestyles into the community.** Innovative development standards, such as "green" infrastructure and buildings or natural drainage systems, will result in lower impact solutions that cost municipalities, residents, and businesses much less over the long term.
- 3. Ensure diverse housing options that meet the needs of the whole community.** A mix of housing types (both owned and for rent) allows residents to live in a community throughout their life, and recognizes the increase in non-traditional households such as empty nesters, single parent families, and childless couples. A range of housing also allows lower income residents equal access to community amenities and local employment opportunities.
- 4. Create compact, complete, and walkable communities by mixing land uses and using land efficiently.** Compact, complete communities use land and infrastructure more efficiently, while providing more living choices for residents and local employees. Complete communities can reduce per capita expenditures on cars and per capita production of air pollution by over 40%. This means more money in our pockets and less congestion on our streets.
- 5. Foster sustainable economic growth by supporting local business.** Local economic growth allows many residents to find employment close to home and supports local businesses, while making the best use of existing infrastructure.
- 6. Increase transportation options,** through land use decisions that encourage alternative transportation modes. Compact neighbourhoods with an interconnected street network are convenient for walking and cycling, and can provide sufficient residential density and a mix of uses to provide a sustainable ridership base for transit. Transportation choices reduce congestion and pollution and allow residents who cannot drive (such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities) to access daily activities on their own.
- 7. Nurture social and cultural interaction.** Vibrant town centres are focal points for community interaction where informal public life occurs beyond the realm of home and work. This means creating places and spaces, both formal and informal, for community members to socialize, engage, plan, and celebrate.



# Tell Us What You Think

This is a **community-centred** design process in action!  
 Please let us know what you think and take the time to consider the following key questions:

- 1) **What do you like best about Manson's Landing?**
- 2) **How do you envision Manson's Landing twenty years from now?**  
 What kinds of things would you like to see in the downtown area?
- 3) **What are the main issues and concerns to address in the charrette?**  
 Which are the most important?
- 4) **Choose two or three of the sustainability guiding principles that you think are the most significant to use in planning for Manson's Landing. Why did you choose these?**  
 A full description of the seven guiding principles is on page 3.
- 5) **What else would you like to tell us about Manson's Landing?**



**QUESTIONS? INPUT? IDEAS? CONCERNS?**

Please call Kathy Smail  
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Watch for updates on our progress.

For references and further information on smart growth and the charrette process, have a look at  
[www.smartgrowth.bc.ca](http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca)  
[www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca)  
[www.sgog.bc.ca](http://www.sgog.bc.ca)



June 2005  
 Orthophoto & Map by Regional District of Comox-Strathcona  
 Photography, Layout & Design by Ester Stribos