

Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan District of Lantzville

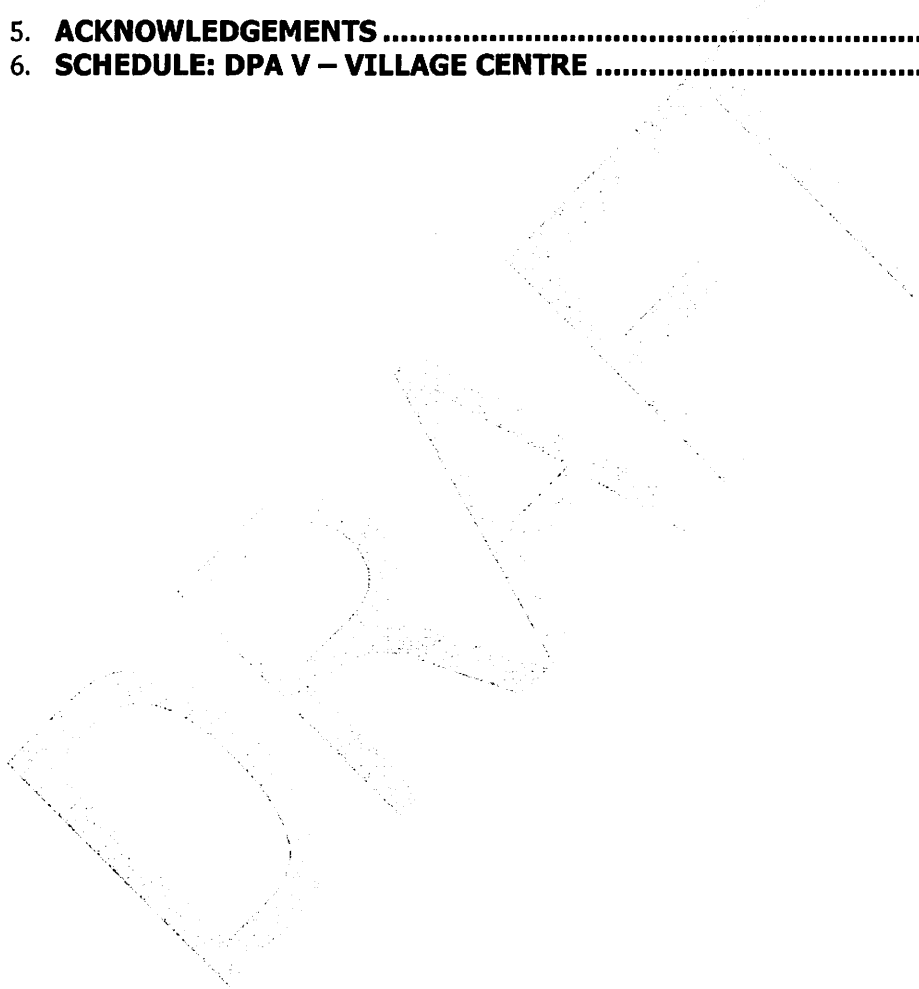


DRAFT
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Plan Overview

Purpose

The Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan is intended to assist Council and staff in guiding development on the commercial stretch of Lantzville Road over time. The commercial stretch of Lantzville Road – from Ware Road to Huddleston Park – represents Lantzville’s ‘main street’. This improvement plan is intended to build on the existing assets and create a vision and roadmap for enhancing the main street now and into the future.

Elements of the plan include a design concept providing long range land use, preferred form and character, streetscape and circulation improvement concepts, storm water management approaches, and public realm concepts. The design concepts are then translated into policy recommendations, and short and long term improvement project priorities.

A next step will be to create a detailed streetscape concept, to ensure that incremental improvements result in a unified improved streetscape.

The plan will be implemented by incorporating it as part of the Official Community Plan, and implementing the recommendations into other bylaws and policies. These policy levers will shape new development. The plan also includes suggested improvement projects. These are intended to be the pieces that can be municipally-led, or implemented in collaboration with partners and community groups. The momentum- and community-building power of involving residents in improvement projects is recognized.

Through creating the policy framework within which development will occur, and leading with improvement projects in the meantime, the concepts and recommendations in the plan will shape continue to change within the village commercial core.

Vision

The Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan (VCCIP) Select Committee of community members, appointed by Council to guide the plan development, created a ‘working vision’ statement, inspired by what is included in the District’s Official Community Plan (OCP), along with other considerations:

The current village centre, generally recognized as along Lantzville Road from St Philips church to Huddleston Park, is the heart of the community. The village centre has a unique character, a range of businesses, residences, and active volunteer groups and community assets. We envision further enhancing the village centre with:

- *More housing options – for seniors, young families, and others;*
- *An improved street with enhanced accessibility, safety, and room for all modes of transportation;*
- *Examples of green and low impact development standards in the streetscape, infrastructure, and urban form; and*
- *An enhanced range of businesses, public gathering places, and space and events for showcasing community assets.*

Principles

Several principles emerged through the planning process and inform the vision:

Place Making & Planning for People

Place making is both a process and a philosophy that puts public spaces at the heart of every community. Lantzville's village centre currently has charm and character on which to build. Enhancing and creating new gathering places could nurture the creation of a village centre that builds community cohesion and fosters interaction. Inspired by Lantzville's volunteerism and community pride, place making is participatory and puts people and community at the centre of planning and development.

Further to putting people at the centre, this plan attempts to respond to current community needs. Through public consultation, we heard, for example, that youth need spaces to gather, seniors and young families need more diverse housing options, and businesses have parking concerns. As the community changes, so will community needs.

Complete Streets

The street represents the bulk of the public space in the village centre. Recognizing the street as more than the leftover space between buildings is critical to creating a vibrant and successful main street. Streets should be designed for a variety of users – vehicle traffic, as well as cyclists and pedestrians. Carving out safe and dedicated space for pedestrians and other modes of transportation furthers multiple objectives: enabling healthy lifestyles, creating an attractive walking village where residents and visitors want to linger, and thereby supporting commercial activity in the core. Of particular importance is creating safe routes for children walking or cycling to the elementary school directly behind the commercial core.

Sustainable Design

The Official Community Plan establishes climate change as a factor in land use decision-making, and includes a goal of adapting to climate change impacts as well as targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 85% by 2050). A sustainable approach should be integrated into infrastructure improvements, urban and building form, and streetscape design. Sustainable approaches to infrastructure – such as storm water management systems - can be ecologically friendly and support water infiltration. Similarly, site development and building design can further sustainability through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and water and energy conservation. Furthermore, focusing growth in the village centre is intended to create a compact walkable community, locating jobs and housing in close proximity, and enabling people to shift to active transportation, helping to further both health and sustainability objectives.

Situating the Plan

Implementing and Building on the Official Community Plan

The Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan (VCCIP) is called for in the Official Community Plan (OCP), which provides the overarching vision for development within Lantzville. The VCCIP adds to the OCP by elaborating on and reaffirming the vision for the village core. The VCCIP also provides concrete design ideas for improvements to the village, and suggests translating these into development policies (through policies in the plan, as well as other bylaws). It is intended that a detailed streetscape plan will follow and become part of the VCCIP. Together, these initiatives will ensure that the community is ready for potential (re)development, and that improvements are also made in the shorter term.

Connections to Other Long Range Plans

In addition to the OCP, other existing plans touch on issues related to the village core:

- The Transportation Review from the spring of 2013 included analysis on traffic volumes and roads, including the village core. Two 'village concept' plans were included, suggesting realigning parking to either angled or parallel in the core and creating sidewalks, to improve safety. The VCCIP is informed by the Transportation Review. The intent is to build off of the information provided, creating more detailed recommendations for streetscape upgrades based on community input.
- The Parks, Trails and Recreation Plan (2008) as well as the Trails and Journeyways Strategy (2010) address journeyways through the core, and suggest a pedestrian connection between the Village and Upper Lantzville. The latter plan suggests a long-term design for Lantzville Road within the Village Centre area – 1-meter wide hard surface path separated by boulevard from vehicle lane on one or both sides of the road, recognizing that existing trees, power poles and other services may limit the feasibility of the design.
- The Lantzville Tourism Development and Marketing Plan (2008) lists some tourism assets that are rooted in the success of the village centre, and suggests improvements such as a bicycle circuit that includes the Village Centre, beaches and scenic routes. It also suggests revitalization of the village core, and more 'browsing' retail, a bakery and coffee house, and more.

Plan Development Process

Council initiated the planning process in June of 2013. Staff compiled background research through the summer, and surveyed business owners on opportunities and constraints in the village core, and desired improvements. Parking counts were completed in the summer and winter, to inform the exploration of parking opportunities.

A Select Committee of seven community members and two Council members was appointed by Council in September, and the planning process began. This group was the steering committee for the plan development – providing crucial input and acting as the champions for the plan. Fifteen meetings were held throughout the year, exploring opportunities for improvements to the commercial core along Lantzville Road, and discussing some of the key issues – from parking to the sequencing of improvements.

The Committee visited Qualicum Beach for a question and answer period with the town planner and participated in a walkabout of the community. The Committee also learned from the planning process for improvements to Cedar's main street. A Committee member led a visit to an elementary school class at Seaview Elementary, gathering ideas and perspectives from youth.

The Committee created a 'working vision', brought it to the broader community for feedback and forwarded it to Council for acceptance.

The Committee also hosted a participatory meeting in January, with group discussions and a visual preference survey. This provided critical information and perspectives in the lead up to the design workshop.

The design workshop, held on Saturday, February 22nd, was the main working session for plan-development, and focused mostly on circulation. Committee members participated, and members of the public were welcomed as observers. External design consultants facilitated the process of building off of the ideas the Committee had compiled through the winter and putting it onto paper as concept plans. While the focus of the day was circulation, other improvement projects were also discussed.

Before the plan was forwarded to Council for its consideration, a pop-up plaza and walkabout event was held in June. Residents provided valuable input on the emerging directions presented.





Context

The following sections describe the area that is considered the commercial core, the built environment and character of the area, the commercial mix, and considerations regarding community context.

Commercial Core Area & Connections Beyond

The Village Commercial Core area is defined on Map 5: "Village" in the Official Community Plan as stretching from Ware Road in the east to Huddleston Park in the west (though not always on both sides of the road). This stretch includes all but one of the commercially-zoned properties in the District, and is the heart of the community. The 'working vision' that the Select Committee developed identifies a lengthened village core, stretching along Lantzville Road from St Phillip's church to Huddleston Park. The intent of this lengthened village core is not necessarily to bring commercial uses all the way east to St Philip's, but to recognize major uses such as the church and the farmers' market that takes place there during the growing season.



Mapping the transportation corridors and journeyways through the commercial core

- As shown in the Official Community Plan (OCP) on Map 5: "Village", the village commercial core area, where services, retail and offices are concentrated, is a subcomponent of the broader village centre area. The Village Comprehensive Development Area to the south is a large undeveloped parcel of land, where residential and some mixed use development is anticipated for the future. Land in the Village West is designated Village Residential in the OCP, and allows for some higher density housing. Seaview Elementary and some parkland are also included in the Village West area. Overall, the village centre is envisioned as the location where growth will be focused, and mixed uses will be appropriate.
- Growth in the Ware Road area, designated in the OCP as the Village Comprehensive Development Plan Area, could significantly boost the vibrancy of the commercial core area. The OCP currently allows for an overall gross density of 10 units per hectare, with the potential density bonus of 3.5 units per hectare. Over a 19 hectare (47 acre) site, this could yield approximately 640 new residents (assuming 2.5 people per household).

- The village area is shaped by the curving nature of Lantzville Road and Ware Road, with no defined street grid to the south. The future connections to and through any future residential or mixed use development south of the commercial core will need to be carefully considered such that they support and enhance the existing main street.
- There are a range of parks and trails near the commercial core. There are two segments of trail within the broader village centre, and several proposed trails. Huddlestone Park constitutes the western edge of the centre, and the tennis courts near the elementary school is the other sizeable park-like feature in the area.
- Lantzville Road through the commercial core is relatively flat, with gentle downward slopes east and west from the intersection of Lantzville and Dickinson Roads. The residential area to the north slopes down towards the ocean. This gentle slope, with the crown in the middle of the commercial core, could create opportunities for ecological approaches to storm water management, since rainwater does not tend to pool in the commercial core area.
- The ocean is visible from the commercial core, and the shoreline access and viewpoints at the ends of Tweedhope, Lavender Road, and Jack's Roads are within walking distance. The ocean view points are important assets of the commercial core.

Form & Character

Lantzville's main street has a timeless feel – not having been overly influenced by plaza and commercial strip development styles of decades past. Buildings are set back from the road allowance to varying degrees, and few buildings have a strong relationship to the street. Buildings are two and a half stories at the most.

Lantzville arguably does not have a vernacular architecture – being more of a collection of different styles, having developed organically over time. The following buildings are examples of the building form and architectural style in Lantzville's commercial core:

The Lantzville Pub, depicted adjacent, is one of the anchor businesses of the village. This building has been historically been the landmark of the village centre, and some other buildings have picked up on elements of the design (e.g. the pastel coloring, the residential feel).



The dental, law and jeweler plaza is consistent with a 'village feel', and compatible with the form of the pub.

The renovated District Hall, which was previously the fire hall, has become another prominent landmark. The elevator tower is similar to the tower on the dental, law and jeweler plaza. The building has more of an institutional and office look than the two above.



Roots of the Village - Stories from a Walkabout with a member of the Lantzville Historical Society:



(photo authorization – L. Reeve, LHS)

The neighbourhood pub was initially built as the Lantzville Hotel, in 1923. The mine closed a year after the hotel opened. The initial school in Lantzville was near where the dentist's office is today. It then moved to the midsection of today's Costin Hall. Other early buildings in the Village centre included two churches, one of which remains today, and the other of which was relocated to Nanaimo.

The present day village centre is located where commercial settlement was focused during the early 1900's, when the coal mine was in operation. When the mine was in operation, lands to the north of Lantzville Road (then the highway) were the property of the mine. The first store in Lantzville was in a mine house to the northwest of the intersection of Lantzville and Dickinson Roads. Most other businesses sprouted up across the street, off of mine property.

Streetscape

According to the Province's 2007 Community Energy and Emissions Inventory, 82% of greenhouse gas emissions in Lantzville were from on-road transportation. Encouraging alternative modes of transportation – transit, cycling and walking – is therefore a significant opportunity to work towards the District's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets included in the OCP.

The road right of way itself is very wide – perhaps a legacy of having been the island highway in the past. As it stands, the street is currently predominantly vehicle-oriented. With a width of 24 metres in most places, the existing road right of way is adequate width to accommodate vehicle travel lanes, on-street parking lanes as well as pedestrian and potentially cycling features.

Currently, there are limited designated pedestrian areas on the main street, though some storefronts include pedestrian treatments of different types and widths, and a pedestrian lane was recently painted on the north side of Lantzville Road.

Although sidewalks are limited, the commercial core area is largely paved. There are many paved areas for parking between and in front of buildings.

The area designated as the commercial core stretches approximately 585 metres from end to end – about a seven minute walk. The area zoned for commercial use is approximately 400 metres.¹ An urban design rule of thumb suggests that successful walkable main streets generally do not exceed 400 meters in length.²

*'Walkscore'
(www.walkscore.com)
gives Lantzville Road
a score of 53 out of
100 for walkability,
described as
'somewhat walkable',
so some errands can
be accomplished on
foot.³*

Cyclists have a presence in the village core – both commuters going from Lantzville to and from Nanaimo, and recreational cyclist journeying up the island. Children may also bike to the elementary school behind the village commercial core.

Although the commercial core area has higher traffic volumes than elsewhere in the District (the Transportation Review found 1001-3000 vehicles per day on average), speeds are slower (posted limit is 30 km/h, and the 2012 Transportation Review found 51-55 km/h to be the 85th percentile speed). While traffic volumes will likely increase over time if significant development occurs, increased traffic calming could also decrease traffic speeds. Cyclist comfort can therefore be achieved either through the provision of cycling infrastructure such as dedicated lanes, or through traffic calming.

Commercial Mix & Capacity

There are a range of businesses operating in Lantzville's commercial core. The commercial mix is dominated by service commercial and office rather than retail, and the turnover of businesses is relatively low.⁴ Although there are occasional vacancies, and some vacancies of upper floors of buildings, extensive vacancies are not apparent at the street level. Though the village does not usually feel busy unless there is a special function, there is relatively steady business activity in the area. Most of the service operations characterize themselves as 'destination' businesses – with customers and clients that travel to them, rather than catering primarily to locals who might walk by.

¹ This measurement is an approximation made using the interactive webmap, and was not surveyed.

² Baird, Porta, Romice, Maxwell, & Russell (2014), "Alterations in scale: Patterns of change in main street networks across time and space", Urban Studies.

³ "Walk Score measures the walkability of any address using a patent-pending system. For each address, Walk Score analyzes hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities in each category. Amenities within a 5 minute walk (.25 miles) are given maximum points. A decay function is used to give points to more distant amenities, with no points given after a 30 minute walk. Walk Score also measures pedestrian friendliness by analyzing population density and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. Data sources include Google, Education.com, Open Street Map, the U.S. Census, Localeze, and places added by the Walk Score user community." www.walkscore.com

⁴ 19 business owners and managers were surveyed in the summer of 2013. 63% have been in operation in Lantzville for more than 5 years, and 47% have been in operation for 10 or more years.

Commercial Space and Capacity

Under current zoning, commercially zoned properties in Lantzville are permitted to have a mix of office, retail, personal service, and residential uses, depending on the specific zone. There is a total of 5.27 ha (13.02 ac) of land zoned commercial (CM1, CM2, CM3, and CM5) within the commercial core. Using the Floor Area Ratio limits in the zoning bylaw, this converts to a potential for 28,580 m² (307,627 ft²) of floor space. In contrast, there is currently approximately 7,241 m² (77,946 ft²) of commercially-zoned floor space built in the area, plus the District office and one residential home.⁵

While there are likely site-specific limitations preventing floor area ratios from being maximized on some sites, it would appear that the amount of land zoned commercial is not limiting the amount of commercial floor space in place.

As a small community on the edge of a larger regional centre, Lantzville is within the wider Nanaimo retail trade area.⁶ There is extensive retail development in the north Nanaimo area, located on the Island Highway and connecting roads. These spaces are very accessible by car and bus from Lantzville, arguably meeting many of the retail needs of Lantzvillagers.

The accessibility of region-serving retail in north Nanaimo could somewhat limit the viability of retail within Lantzville, making it harder to establish a commercial node. Existing commercial ventures in Lantzville have survived and thrived, however, by not attempting to compete with north Nanaimo. The limited but successful array of retail operations in the village serves local residents and offer convenient and local alternatives to the big box options in north Nanaimo and elsewhere. Professional services have also achieved stability in the village centre – these offer services that clients are willing to drive to or are able to access from a distance.

Development Pressure

The rate of change in the village centre has been quite slow. Since 2009, excluding a number of mechanical building permits associated with sewer upgrades in 2010, there have been eight building permits issued in the commercial core. Five of these were mechanical, one was a demolition, and only two were renovations / improvements.

No additional water connections are currently available, so any redevelopment has to make use of existing water connections, or be supported by wells that meet quality and quantity standards. It is anticipated that if additional water capacity is identified, there could be a significant increase in development pressure. Lantzville remains a highly desirable location for families and retirees due to the livability of the community – it is a safe, relatively affluent community, with great parks and trails, waterfront, and small-scale charm. The proximity to services and amenities in Nanaimo is also an asset. The table below explores some attractants and deterrents for businesses locating in Lantzville.

⁵ Based on information from BC Assessment Authority and an estimate from business owners and operators in one case.

⁶ Nanaimo Economic Development considers that Nanaimo's primary trade area includes the entire regional district as well as Ladysmith (<http://www.investnanaimo.com/cms.asp?wpID=50>).

Attractants	Deterrents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing stable mix of businesses • Many of the existing businesses are destination businesses, pulling customers from outside the District (who may spend at other businesses while in town) • Charm • Recent municipal infrastructure upgrades (sewer) • New Business Improvement Association (BIA) • Situated between Nanaimo and Parksville and Qualicum Beach • Lantzville is identified as an urban centre in the Regional Growth Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited water capacity • Limited pedestrian and cycling activity (not very many walk-in's) • Surrounded by low density neighbourhood • Limited other neighbourhood-oriented retail (no cluster) • Extensive retail competition on the edge of Nanaimo • Many Lantzvillagers work in Nanaimo, and have the opportunity to shop on the way home from work • Highway separates village from upper Lantzville • Location unclear from the highway

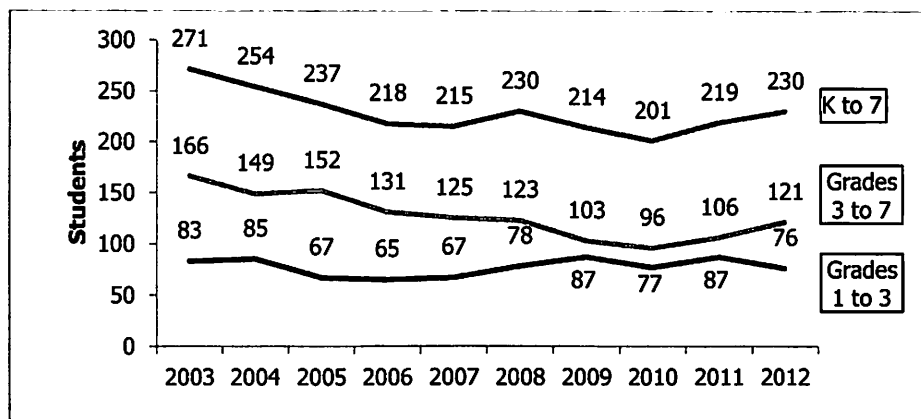
Several business owners noted in a survey in the summer of 2013 that part of the reason they located in Lantzville was that the rental rates were lower than in Nanaimo. Many businesses have been in operation here for several years, so it could be that rates used to be lower than neighbouring municipalities. According to a realtor with a large commercial and industrial realty firm in Nanaimo, a recent office space vacancy in the commercial core was quickly filled, and the rental rate was comparable to spaces within Nanaimo. The realtor suggested rental rates in Lantzville could be \$1 per square foot lower than in Nanaimo, but likely not more, since there is relative scarcity of floor space available here.

Looking to the future, residential growth within or adjacent to the commercial core could provide a significant boost to the viability of commercial operations in the area. The OCP identifies the Ware Road area as a Comprehensive Development Plan area, and anticipates that new development would include some commercial space, currently designated for between Caillet and Ware Roads on the south side of Lantzville Road. More importantly, the population boost, within walking distance of the core, could add vibrancy to the commercial core.

Community Context & Demographics

The village commercial core functions as the heart of the village. Some of the demographic groups to pay particular attention to when planning for improvements to the core include students attending Seaview Elementary, seniors, and residents and visitors with mobility challenges:

- Located just behind the main street, Seaview Elementary is an important institution to consider when planning for the commercial core. Lantzvillagers value having a thriving elementary school, and the school is a significant employer in the District. The school has a capacity of 335 students. Enrollment is significantly less than that, though it has been stable over the past ten years (enrolment has declined overall but seems to be rebounding):



Having **housing for young families** that might look to locate in Lantzville would further support the health of the school. Providing **safe routes to school** is critical for encouraging kids and parents to walk to school.

- In 2011, 27.9 percent of the population in Lantzville was 60 years or older, as compared to 22.3 percent of the provincial population. The median age in Lantzville in 2011 was 49.9 years, 8 years older than the provincial median age of 41.9 years (2011 Census). **Age-friendly communities** have the physical and social supports that enable all residents to live engaged, active and healthy lives. These supports include the services and amenities that seniors might be interested in. Lantzville's village core does have many amenities that are important to seniors – a pharmacy, a clinic, a convenience store, a Legion, and a community hall with various programs. Many of the community groups active in the commercial core have very active seniors as engaged members. Missing pieces include a wider range of housing options to enable seniors to downsize and stay within the community, and a safer more comfortable pedestrian realm.
- Age-friendly communities are also **accessible communities**, where the public realm is accessible to families with strollers, and those with mobility and other challenges. Factors to consider include wheelchair parking, wheelchair-friendly sidewalk surfacing (smooth, uninterrupted by steps and ledges), and sufficiently wide pedestrian areas.

Ideally, the village centre could become a place that builds community cohesion, by providing great public spaces that promote social interaction across demographic and community groups.

Design Concept

The following sections present the long-term design concept for the village commercial core, to be achieved as land use changes over time. Having a concept in place will ensure that as development occurs, the preferred character and functionality will be achieved. Subsequent sections translate this concept into policy and project proposals.

Land Use – A Compact Main Street

The commercial core is recognized as an area where a mix of uses is appropriate. Commercial uses, supported by residential uses as well, can ensure that the area becomes an employment hub as well as a street with some retail uses. Civic, cultural and institutional uses are also recognized as adding vitality to the commercial core.

There is capacity for additional commercial growth within the existing commercial core area – as infill or redevelopment in areas already zoned commercial, and as new development in the additional areas designated within the commercial core at the corner of Lantzville Road and Ware Road.

Commercial development, mixed with residential above, is not envisioned to expand beyond the length of area that is currently designated commercial (from the eastern edge of Huddleston Park to Ware Road) in the near future. Instead, encouraging new commercial development as infill or redevelopment will help keep a compact and walkable village centre that becomes more vibrant over time. The concept map included as an appendix shows some potential areas where infill development could occur.

Development of the Ware Road properties could bring significant change. Development in that area should connect to and support the existing stretch of commercial development, with additional commercial development potentially focused at the corner of Ware Road and Lantzville Road.

Properties partially surrounded by the commercial core, and bordering the southeast edge of commercial core area on the north side of Lantzville Road, could potentially be designated commercial over time, as the existing commercial core area is built out. Guiding considerations for such an expansion of the commercial core designation include demonstrated demand for additional commercial, institutional and residential use, walkability, existing vacancy rates, and servicing. Alternatively, these properties could be designated Village Residential in the future, and support live-work studios, townhouses or another intensive but appropriately scaled form of residential development.

Recognizing that the built environment – through building design and site planning – can strongly influence greenhouse gas emissions and water conservation, policies encouraging environmentally friendly development should be added to the Development Permit Area guidelines.

Preferred Form & Character – Village Scale & Charm

Perched by the ocean, Lantzville’s village core has a historical feel, and a relaxed charm. Building on that, desired characteristics include more greenery, and more life on the streets – through providing a better pedestrian environment and additional gathering places. Over time, through infill and redevelopment, more a defined street edge and main street feel can be created. The following directions emerged out of visual preferencing exercises and committee discussions, and can be incorporated into form and character Development Permit Area guidelines:

Building form & height

- There is broad support for keeping the village commercial core at a ‘village scale’. This is interpreted by many community members as a maximum of three stories in most cases, and walkable in length.
- Building heights should step down towards the ocean (potentially higher on the south side of the street, lower on the north), capitalizing on the seaside location.
- Having buildings step back at each storey would also help avoid shading the street.
- Residential use above commercial units is encouraged.

Relationship between buildings and the street

- Storefronts should be undulating. While buildings may locate near the front of lots (not farther back than 8 metres, to be determined at the time of Development Permit), forming more of a street edge and creating more of a main street feel, a strong street wall is not preferred. Instead, pedestrian and gathering areas in front of buildings should create variation and a high quality public realm. Setbacks for plazas, walk-throughs, and pedestrian elements are encouraged.
- Facades should include elements of interest and buildings should interact well with the street – for example, through the provision of doors and frontages on the street, large transparent windows with window displays, and avoiding large blank walls facing the street.
- Patio life should be encouraged, with activity spilling out from storefronts (but not obstructing walkways).
- Overhangs or awnings could provide color, interest, and shelter from the rain.
- Narrower building frontages, with shorter distances between doors, could create a more walkable rhythm.



The photo above (from Falmouth, MA) was highly ranked by community members, for the scale and appropriate massing of the buildings, the strong interaction between the buildings and the street (due to large clear windows, and wares spilling into the pedestrian realm), and the ambiance and ‘quaint’ character.

Other precedent images:



Storefront differentiation, complex roof



Patio life

Building character

- A variety of architectural expressions are supported. Buildings should fit the Lantzville context, responding to the landscape, site, climate, and history of the site.
- The use of local building materials such as wood is encouraged.
- Simplistic box-shaped buildings are not supported. Interesting rooflines are supported, paired with heritage features.
- A relaxed feel is supported, rather than architectural styles that look too expensive or resort-like.

Connection to the Ocean

- Views of the ocean should be preserved.
- Subtle design elements – such as porthole windows, widow watches, or the use of local coastal materials - could enhance the connection between the village and the seashore.

Precedent images continued:



Local materials, accent colours



Mixed use with residential above

Examples of seaside elements in buildings:



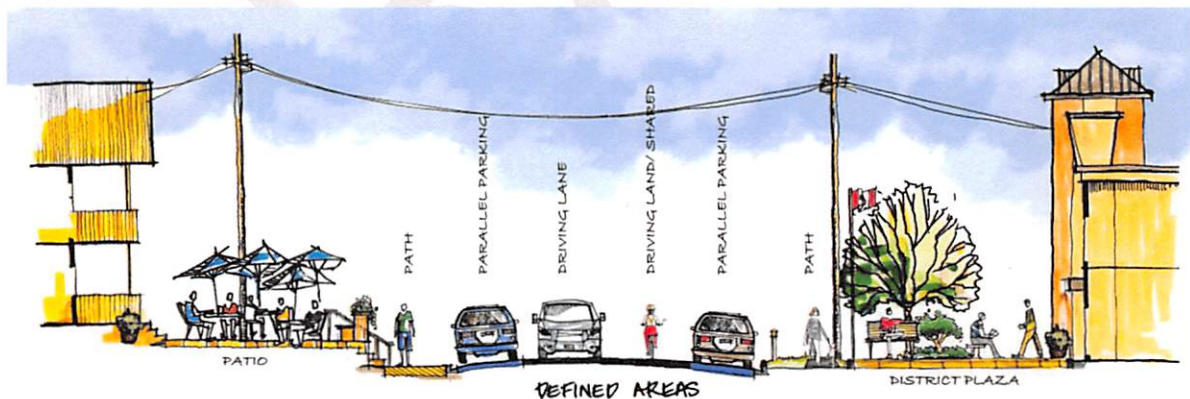
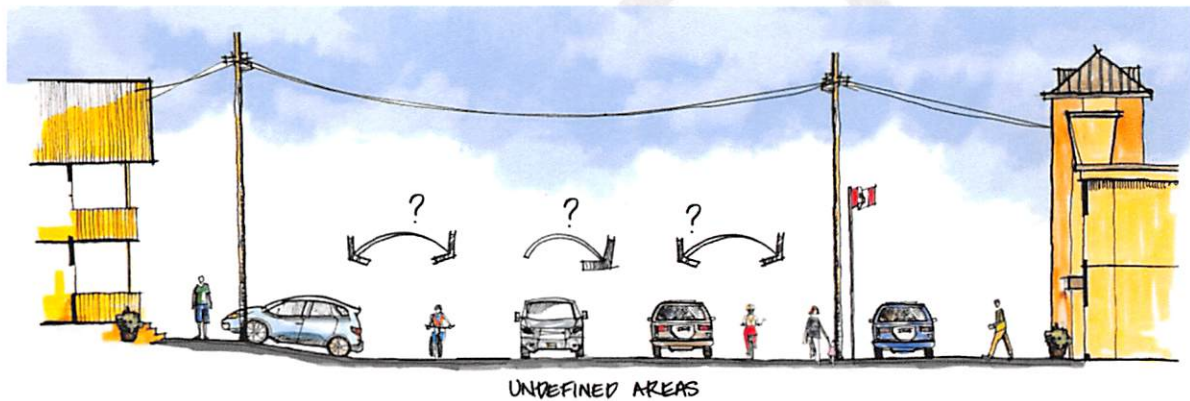
Circulation & Streetscape – A Street for All Modes

The following sub-sections explore the elements that would make up a complete street. This is intended as a long range design concept. Infill development over time will need to fit into the existing streetscape. Adjustments could be possible, but only if redevelopment occurred would there be an opportunity to significantly redesign the streetscape and completely achieve the vision outlined below. The Committee recognizes this tension – between what might be possible in the shorter term and the longer term vision. Having the longer-term vision in place will help guide future development.

Creating Defined Pedestrian Areas

The wide right of way that exists within the village centre provides a great opportunity for a range of public uses. Over the longer term, pedestrian areas should be moved to a defined area behind on-street parking, allowing for on-street parking to act as a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic. With the elementary school directly behind the commercial core, providing safe routes to school is a high priority. With significant potential growth within walking distance of the commercial core, creating safe spaces for pedestrians is an important part of planning for the future.

The vision is to carve out dedicated space for walkers and wheelers. As part of that shift, off-street parking in front of buildings should be phased out or reorganized, such that there is room for a defined pedestrian area. On-street parking could replace the off-street parking in front of buildings. This concept would allow a transition from the present situation, where lanes and areas are undefined, and there is little space where pedestrians can feel safe:



(drawings above not to scale)

The second scenario depicted above offers a number of benefits:

- Adequate space is given to pedestrians, and on-street parking is provided. The potential for a walking-oriented village is established.
- A sense of enclosure is created, creating more defined pedestrian areas and public gathering spaces, and organizing consistent on-street parking. This sense of enclosure indicates to foot traffic that they belong, and also signals to vehicle

traffic that they are entering more of a developed area, where pedestrians may be around. Creating a sense of enclosure can therefore act as traffic calming.

- On-street parking could act as a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians, and pedestrians would not be passing behind parked cars.
- Pedestrians are moved closer to the entrances of buildings. Over time, if retail uses become more viable, having pedestrian areas near storefronts will be valuable for merchants.

Supporting Cycling

Cycling infrastructure should also be incorporated into the streetscape over time, to support cycling as a form of active transportation and recreation.

Towards the outsides of the vehicle lanes, 'sharrows' with bike symbols could be painted, to signal to drivers that cyclists will be sharing the lane.

As development occurs, cycling infrastructure should be built in. New buildings will need to provide bicycle facilities, such as bike racks. Cycling-friendly offices could also incorporate bike shelters, lockers and shower facilities into their buildings and sites.

Bicycle lanes – or an extended shoulder – could be particularly beneficial on the stretches of road on either side of the commercial core, especially going uphill southeast out of the village core.



Defining On-Street Parking

Parking on Lantzville's main street is currently not uniform or consistently organized. As a result, there is a lack of dedicated space for pedestrians, and pedestrians often cross behind parked cars.⁷ Many parking spaces are perpendicular to the road, partially within the public right of way, or located in such a way as to prevent on-street parking. Finding a parking space can be a challenge at certain points in the day, in particular places, but overall, the occupancy of spaces is low. Counts suggest that there are enough parking spaces, however, they could be better organized.

Many main streets have clear on-street parking, shared by businesses, and supplemented by off-street parking for particular businesses or clusters of businesses. On-street parking is public parking, and therefore shared. The benefit of a higher public-to-private ratio is that spaces are more efficiently used. Instead of each business having to provide parking for their peak times, parking can be shared and as occupancy increases and decreases for businesses with different busy times, spots are more optimally used.

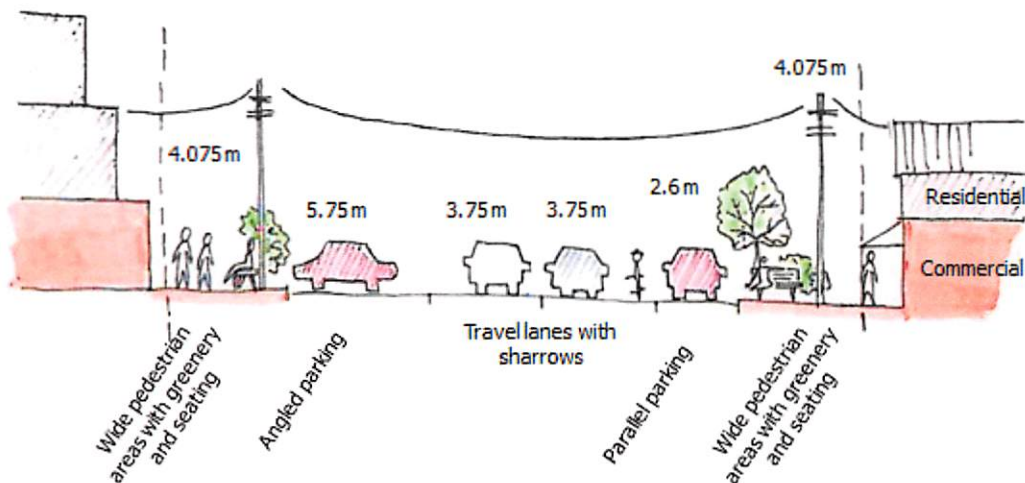
⁷ The 2013 Transportation Review noted that the 90 degree parking along Lantzville Road was too close to the travelled roadway for vehicles to reverse from the stalls without entering the travelled roadway. The combination of that alignment and the lack of pedestrian areas led the consultants to express that "the current parking configuration along Lantzville Road is creating a significant safety issue" (page 23).

Building on the Concepts in the Transportation Review:

The 2013 Transportation Review included two concepts for the village core area. From the drawings included in the review, it appears that in the parallel parking concept, five spaces would be lost on the north side, and 14 lost on the south side. In the angled parking concept, five spots seem to be lost on the north, and seven spots on the south. The Committee recognized the benefits of re-orienting parking to on-street parking, but aimed to not lose parking spaces in the shift. The concepts in the Transportation Review notably did not make use of the full extent of the road right of way. On the north side of the road, the concepts reorganized some of the off-street parking provided in front lot setbacks, but did not create on-street parking (inwards from the proposed sidewalk).

Recognizing that availability of parking is critical for businesses, and that more spaces can be fit in if parking is angled, the Committee identified shifting towards a mix of angled and parallel on-street parking as the preferred concept. If pedestrian areas can be moved and created on the outside of the right of way (adjacent to the buildings, buffered by on-street parking), then the safety concern identified in the Transportation Review would be partly resolved (though visibility is still poorer when reversing from an angled parking stall than entering the roadway from a parallel stall).

An example of a potential cross-section is shown below:



The following points should be considered during the creation of the detailed design:

- The Committee also recommended maintaining or increasing the current supply of parking, not losing spaces in the shift to angled and parallel on-street parking.
- Currently, accesses to off-street parking are very wide in places. Creating narrowed and shared accesses would allow for additional on-street spaces, as well as more of an uninterrupted pedestrian corridor.
- In cases where angled on-street parking is the preferred concept, where the alignment of the road and utilities require it, additional right of way may need to be dedicated such that a pedestrian area can still be provided.
- Consideration should be given to moving the alignment of the travel lanes, if such realignment would create more opportunity for pedestrian areas and on-street parking.

Achieving the long term design concept of parallel and angled parking would require the collaboration of businesses, and could occur through redevelopment and redesign. In the shorter term, some businesses may proactively agree to reorganizing parking, while others may not. In some locations, such as the Lantzville Market, where there is no off-street parking, the current business is dependent on convenient parking. Perpendicular parking is expected to persist in that location with the current use. However, over the longer term, if the property redevelops, angled or parallel parking should be required, with additional off-street parking provided if needed.

Parking solutions for infill development will likely need to be unique, based on the particular space available. Having a detailed design concept available will help ensure that infill and interim measures will be in line with the long term vision.

Improving Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking can be private – on private property at the rear or side of buildings, or public – in shared lots. Locating off-street parking at the rear or side of lots can ensure that the buildings front onto pedestrian areas, and buildings have a strong relationship to the street. The following suggestions could also improve off-street parking:

- Installing better parking signage could help make better use of public parking.
- The District-owned parking lot on the tennis court property is approximately 220 meters from the Lantzville Road and Dickinson Road intersection – less than a five minute walk. There is currently a use agreement with the school and community organizations for this lot. Over the longer term, enhancing that parking lot and promoting it as a place to park for main street visits could shift some of the parking burden.
- Additional off-street parking in proximity to busy areas at the other end of the commercial core could replace any spaces lost if there were a shift to parallel on-street parking. Such parking could be asked for in (re)development that might occur across the street.
- If redevelopment occurs on the south side of Lantzville Road, or as part of the development of the Ware Road properties, the lane that currently terminates at the edge of the school property could be extended, creating an access for parking at the rear.



The photo above directs drivers to off-street parking at the rear of a building in Ladysmith.

- The parking area adjacent to the District Office is used by staff as well as some members of the public. Redesigning the area with defined parking spaces could accommodate additional public parking. This enhanced parking area could compliment the plaza concept referenced in later sections of this plan.
- To finance improvements to public off-street parking areas, a parking reserve fund could be created, and a policy allowing cash contributions in-lieu-of the provision of off-street parking spaces could be incorporated into the regulatory framework.

Traffic Calming

Further traffic calming should take place along Lantzville Road through the commercial core. The 2013 Transportation Review noted that “The lack of change in definition of the roadway in the village core is encouraging vehicles to continue at similar speeds along the entire section of Lantzville Road” (page 21). Speed limit signs of 30km/h and raised (elevated) crosswalks at each end of the village were noted as initiatives that have reduced speeds somewhat. Many of the concepts described above relate to further traffic calming:

- By defining and using more of the wide road right of way, drivers would no longer have the sense of driving through a straight-away.
- The addition of a crosswalk could allow safer crossing of Lantzville Road at Dickinson Road.
- Pedestrian bump-out’s at corners, allowing for shortened crosswalks, can help traffic calming.
- The speed bumps that currently mark the beginning and end of the commercial core have been successfully supporting traffic calming. An additional speed bump by Huddlestone Park, although technically beyond the commercial core, could support traffic calming.
- Gateway features – such as a ‘welcome’ sign or feature, or significant landscaping – could also signal to drivers that they are entering an area with more pedestrian activity.
- Street trees could also add to the sense of enclosure, prompting a reduction in speed.

A pedestrian bump-out and crosswalk in North Vancouver acts as a traffic calming feature.



Traffic calming could provide greater safety for pedestrians, and ensure that cyclists are comfortable on the road with vehicles or in an on-street bike lane.

Storm Water Management – Showcasing Ecological Approaches

In creating defined pedestrian areas that could potentially be raised, consideration needs to be given to how this will affect the flow of rain and storm water. As it stands, the village core area is heavily paved, though there is a ditch on the north side towards Huddleston Park and some drainage infrastructure by Lantzville Road and Caillet Road.

The District’s development standards currently include low impact standards for storm water management. A detailed concept design for the village core should incorporate that low impact approach, using biotreatment tools such as bioswales in boulevards and rain gardens, directing excess runoff to constructed wetlands. In addition to the ecological benefits this could provide, this new infrastructure could be integrated as attractive landscaping features.



The image above of new street improvements in Tofino was ranked highly in the visual preference survey. Comments included that it provided good separation of cars and people, and that it was pleasing to the eye. It is actually a constructed storm water management feature, allowing for rain water infiltration.

Adjacent is a stormwater management feature in Vancouver.



Public Realm – Spaces for Interaction

There are a number of 'public realm' or 'open space' elements to be addressed, which could improve the feel and function of the main street. These are briefly described below, and more detail is included in the relevant sections within the 'Implementation and Action Plan' chapter.

Gathering Places

Lantzville's village centre could be enhanced through the development of clear public gathering places – a plaza, square or focal point of some sort, as well as more comfortable and inviting pedestrian areas – sidewalks and pocket plazas – throughout the commercial core. These spaces are critical for supporting community interaction, engagement, and enjoyment of the village core.

- Huddlestone park is recognized as the major park and most significant gathering place in the area. Although it is at the boundary of the commercial core, it is an important amenity for the enjoyment of the community, and particularly important for hosting events. Similarly, the District-owned property with the tennis court has the potential to hold events.
- The District of Lantzville is well positioned to take the lead on developing a gathering place on the main street, using the area in front of the District Hall, building on the civic function of that building. A sample concept for creating a public gathering place in front of the District Hall is included in the later section on recommended improvement projects.
- The landscaped area next to the District Hall is an important public space, providing a quiet place to rest and look out at the ocean. Rotarians have created this calm landscaped mini-park with benches and historical signage. The space could also be enhanced, by potentially being increased in size. An expanded mini-park could join to a new gathering place in front of the District Hall.
- Additional locations could be identified, as properties redevelop over time. The District could secure gathering places as part of redevelopment processes. New development should also seek to enhance and animate the public realm, through orienting new buildings to relate to the street, and providing well designed usable open spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

The adjacent picture shows what a private business can do to enhance the public realm, given support from the municipality.

Although the buildings may be larger scale than Lantzville, in the visual preference survey, residents suggested the streetscape looks texturally pleasing, attractive, and sets up a 'people place'.



Street Furniture, Fixtures and Public Art

Street furniture, fixtures and public art could help to beautify the commercial core. Street furniture can be added in select locations within the public right of way in the shorter term, and at regular intervals as street upgrades creating new pedestrian areas take place. Street lighting can be added as new development or significant redevelopment occurs. These public realm elements can subtly build on the connection to the seashore.

Benches: Benches can make public space functional, providing resting spots for residents and visitors. When the streetscape is upgraded, street furniture should be incorporated into pedestrian areas, within the utility corridor and in larger gathering spaces. Benches should not obstruct the pedestrian corridor – they should be tucked to one side or the other, leaving enough room for a stroller or wheel chair (at least 1.5 m). Individual businesses could also take the initiative to place street furniture in front of their businesses (some already have).

The standard bench should reflect Lantzville’s village scale – modest and not using too much steel, using local or recycled materials where possible.

Benches do not all need to match. A standard could be adopted, but more eccentric or rustic pieces integrated as features in particular places. Community participation in the design of these benches could result in unique additions to the streetscape.

Examples of unique street furniture that could be designed and built by community members, functioning also as public art:



Examples of simple bench concepts:



In plazas, benches should have backs:



Waste Receptacles: Waste receptacles, including recycling options, could also be placed throughout the village commercial core. Private businesses could be encouraged to install and maintain garbage bins in front of their businesses (without obstructing pedestrian corridors), and these could be added within the public right of way over time as improvements take place.

Utilities & Lighting: Over the longer term, moving utilities underground would be preferable. This option, however, is extremely expensive and difficult to have funded solely by the municipality. Some communities have opted to go forward with street improvements and keep utility poles, considering that these can be markers of a more rural community. There are also potential interim measures:

- Select utility poles could be re-wired, potentially under-grounding or providing dip service from some power poles in the strategic view corridor at Dickinson and Lantzville Roads.
- If, through development of the property behind Lantzville Road, a lane is developed, utility poles could potentially be re-located to the lane.
- As redevelopment occurs, utilities could be undergrounded through frontage improvements if the redevelopment is significant. Broader undergrounding could occur through a latecomers agreement.
- If there is enough support, undergrounding could be funded through a Local Area Service.

Streetlights are currently affixed to utility poles. A transition towards lampposts will occur as redevelopment occurs, and new buildings underground their utilities and provide street front improvements such as lighting. The OCP calls for 'dark sky' lighting.

Street light fixtures could also support the connection between the village and the ocean. Adjacent are some examples of marine street fixtures.

Street light fixtures in Deep Cove and Gibsons



Landscaping

One of the most attractive aspects of Lantzville is the greenery – the presence of large stands of trees. In the village centre itself, however, there is room for improvement to landscaping.

- Adding street trees in select locations could support beautification. Street trees can enhance the sense of enclosure, provide an element of movement on the streetscape, as well as provide ecological services. Even if utility poles are kept through the shorter term, there are options for low street trees beneath the utility poles. Small trees could alternatively be kept in planters, so that they could be moved and replanted if needed.

Beyond street trees, other landscaping could be added as well:

- Greenery in the form of window boxes, planters and hanging baskets maintained by businesses could be encouraged. Some businesses already add these features.
- Planter boxes in the public right of way could support beautification and delineate pedestrian areas in the shorter term. Edible landscaping could be incorporated where feasible.
- As described previously, the detailed streetscape design should plan for ecological storm water management infrastructure such as rain gardens and bioswales to act as landscape features.
- In addition to the ecological storm water management infrastructure, additional plantings could be incorporated into the public right of way as pedestrian areas are delineated and treatment upgraded.
- Periodic landscaped areas could also provide breaks, screening on-street parking:



Adding landscaping and greenery within the public right of way comes with maintenance implications. Drought-resistant plants could be used, to minimize maintenance and water use, but the maintenance of additional landscaped areas would require resources.

Landscaping could incorporate elements of the seashore. Some examples are depicted below:

A planted paddleboat



Log features could be incorporated into planters



Inspiration from sea grasses



Signage & Wayfinding

Although signs should not dominate the streetscape, there are various layers of signage that could improve wayfinding and add character to the village:

- A custom sign on the highway could alert passersby to the presence of the village centre.
- A gateway sign or monument to mark the entrance to the commercial core could demarcate an entry point. Such a sign could be located either within the public right of way or near an intersection, potentially at the southwest corner of Lantzville and Ware Roads, or the northwest corner of Lantzville and Caillet Roads.
- Creative and attractive wayfinding signage for businesses could add some whimsy to the commercial core.
- Individual signs for businesses should fit the desired character of the village core, with preference given to wooden signs. Back lit signs are not supported. Sandwich board signs should be located on private land, not obstructing sidewalks. Any freestanding signs within the commercial core should be high quality and not obtrusive. These signs should complement the character of the village. Examples of high quality freestanding and wayfinding signage that could fit well within the village are provided below.

Wayfinding signage that alludes to the ocean – in Gibsons:



Attractive shared signage with a village feel (Cannon Beach, OR, Tofino)