

Metchosin Buffer Land

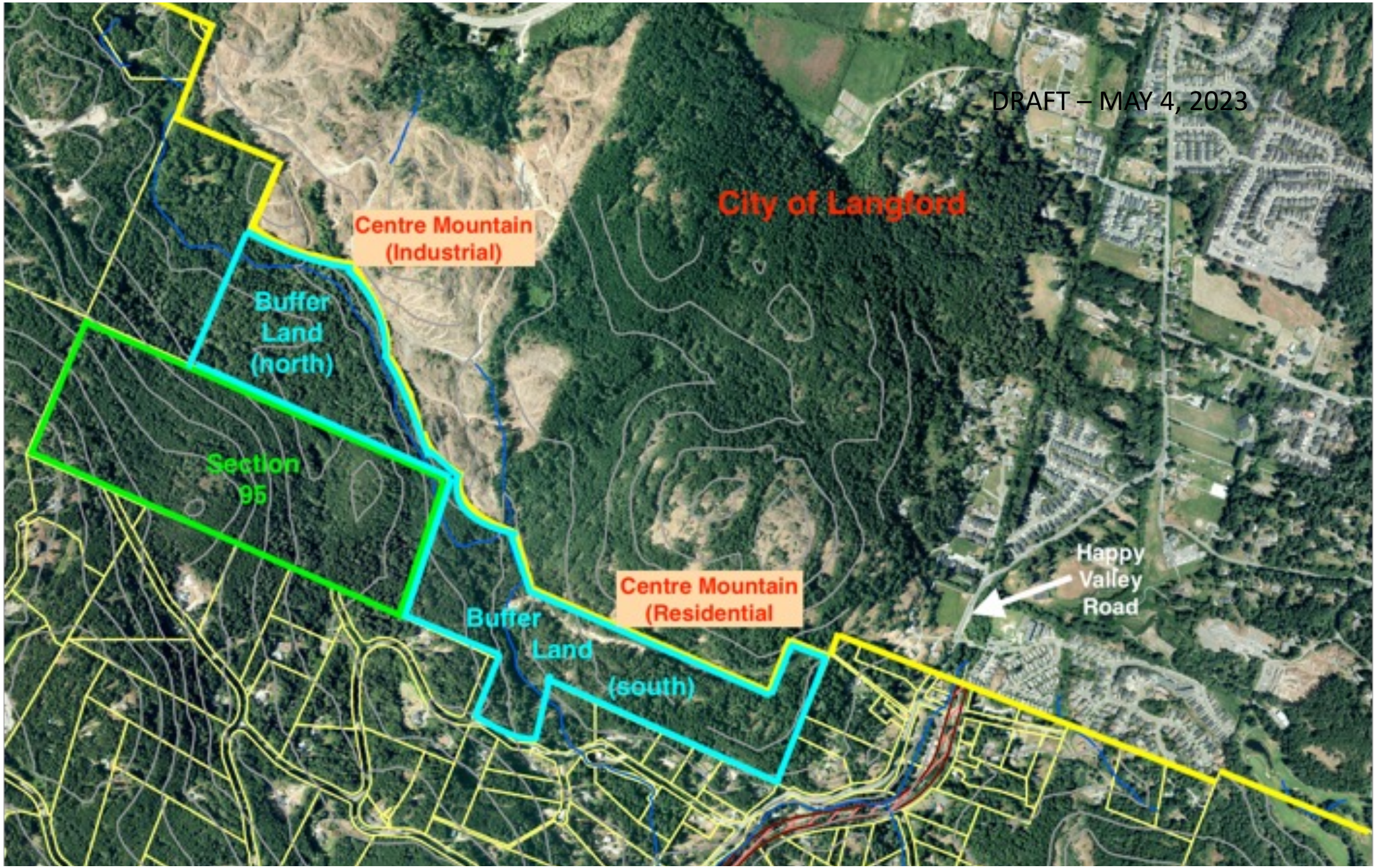
The future of this community-owned land.

Community Input Session #2

Meeting Objectives

- Review the purpose of the Buffer Land Working Group (BLWG)
- Discuss the work the BLWG has achieved to date
- Present the BLWG's preliminary recommendation for council
- Gather community input on the BLWG's preliminary recommendation for council and its work to-date.




DRAFT – MAY 4, 2023
City of Langford
Centre Mountain
(Industrial)
Buffer
Land
(north)
Section
95
Centre Mountain
(Residential
Buffer
Land
(south)
Happy
Valley
Road



Looking northeast – Buffer Land and CME residential development



Looking southwest– Buffer Land and CME residential development

Buffer Land Working Group – Purpose and Mandate

- Mandate: “identify and evaluate options for the future management of the Buffer Land, keeping in mind the concept of the Buffer Land being a “greenspace buffer” as presented in the 2017 land swap referendum.”
- Evaluate options based on several criteria:
  - Environmental protection
  - Neighbour impacts
  - Financial impacts
  - Practicality
  - Legal and land use considerations.
  - Other criteria the WG deems important
- All meetings public; must hold at least two community input meetings.
- Recommendations to Council within six months (i.e. October 2023)



Working Group Members

Nine members appointed by Council in April 2023:

- C. Jay Shukin (Chair)
- C. Shelly Donaldson (Vice Chair)
- Bonnie Bouveur
- Brian Grant
- Anna Hall (MEASC)
- Karen Hoffman (PTASC)
- Richard Simpson
- Gary Smirfitt
- Bailey Spiteri





Overview of Work to Date

- Held 7 meetings (between April and Sept).
- Community input session held on May 9
- Minutes and meeting information posted on the District's website.
- Generated a vision statement to help guide assessing options.
- Over 20 options generated for initial assessment.
- BLWG took an objective look at the full range of options.
- Research was conducted by BLWG members with the results tracked in concept tables and evaluated through a range of measures.





Vision statement

The Buffer Land will remain a greenspace that conserves the area's ecosystem, protects the water quality in the Bilston Creek watershed, and allows limited human activity.

The land is preserved as a protective ecological buffer to minimize the impacts of land use and urban sprawl that will come with the future increase in nearby population density.

The land will be managed effectively with strategic and operational plans and the appropriate resources (staff, budget) to maintain and inspire environmental stewardship.

Centre Mountain Residential Development

- Residential subdivision immediately adjacent to the Buffer Land.
- Up to 312 new homes to be built on 121 acres; includes 35 acres of parkland.
- A Covenant and Easement allows for a stormwater detention pond for the residential subdivision to be built on the Buffer Land. Will include provisions for maintenance access.
- Development timelines unclear.

Initial Concepts Reviewed

- Do Nothing (short-term)
- Do Nothing (long-term)
- Re-zone to Park Land
- Create a new zone for Park Land.
- Create a “nature park” similar to Blinkhorn.
- Develop an ecological conservation zone.
- Limit use to pedestrian access only.
- Create a multi-use recreation area.
- Work with a conservation-oriented land-trust
- Sell to the CRD
- Sell to the adjacent landowners.
- Different management options for North and South lobes
- Develop a “Trail & Swale” system
- Undertake a re-wilding effort
- A range of access/amenity options:
  - Fence off the entire Buffer Land (and other access options)
  - Fence off portions
  - Parking…trail signs…bathrooms

Concept & Background	Advantages (Pros) / Opportunities	Disadvantages (Cons) / Challenges	Additional Comments	Overall Assessment	
				Environmental Protection	
				Neighbour impacts	
				Fiscal Impacts	
				Practicality / Feasibility	
				Land Use Complexities	
				Community Input (consistent/inconsistent)	
				Recreational value	
				Total	

Status Quo (“Do Nothing”) Option

- Presumed that, from this point forward, there was no action by the District: no re-zoning, no maintenance, no garbage removal, no fencing.
- Best case: the existing trails were used by a limited number of people; no new trails created; Buffer remains essentially the same.
- Worst case: area has extensive and ad hoc uses: off leash dogs, mountain biking, a “party place,” no control over the spread of new trails.
- As owners, the District would continue to have responsibility (thus, liability), which could materialize in natural hazards, fire risk, etc..
- Gradual denigration of the land could impact value or lead to considerations around development, particularly with the current CR 2/3 zoning.

Preliminary Council Recommendation
A three-phase process

The Working Group is considering the following as its recommendation to Council. We are seeking community input.

- **Phase 1**: Rezone the Buffer Land to the existing Parkland zone (P3) as soon as possible.
- **Phase 2:** Initiate work to develop a new zoning designation that better reflects conservation / preservation goals. Apply this zone to the Buffer Land when ready.
- **Phase 3**: Develop a park management plan for the Buffer. Ensure adequate resourcing.

Phase 1: Re-zone to Parkland

- Current zoning is Commercial Recreational 2 / 3.
  - Allows for residential subdivision of 9.88 acres (CR2) or 4.95 acres (CR3).
  - Permitted Uses: dwelling, golf course, club house (restaurant, pro shop)
- The BLWG believes that this step will clarify the goal of the Buffer Land remaining a greenspace area.
- The parkland designation has protections against a future sale, pending the outcome of an alternative approval process or referendum.

Phase 2: Develop new parkland zone; apply to Buffer ASAP

- Current and most applicable zone in Metchosin's *Land Use Bylaw* (LUB) is Park and Open Space (P3).
  - P3 allows for residential subdivision (9.88 acres).
  - Permitted uses: Accessory uses and buildings; Civic use; Dwelling; Park.
  - The entire LUB section is on residential matters
- BLWG has researched park zones in other jurisdictions and feel a revised zone will better reflect community intentions with the Buffer.
- Key questions:
  - How long will it take to develop an appropriate zone description?
  - How long will it take to then pass a bylaw amendment (will require a public hearing)?
- These considerations lead the BLWG to the idea of the immediate rezoning.

Phase 3 (pt1): Develop a Park Management Plan

- A Buffer Land park would be unique for Metchosin, given the proximity to the CME residential development.
- A Park Management Plan could:
  - Confirm allowed uses.
  - Identify conservation areas and a conservation strategy/plan.
  - Annual maintenance plan.
  - Outline a monitoring / enforcement program.

Phase 3 (pt 2): Park Management Plan with Adequate Resourcing.

- Adequate resourcing (personnel and funds) are essential to ensure that:
  1) the overall management goals of the Buffer Land are achieved.
  2) the Buffer Land does not become a liability.
- Funds may be needed for:
  - Regular monitoring / enforcement of approved uses.
  - Remediation work.
  - Conservation and restoration projects.
  - Fencing and access management matters.
- Could Metchosin begin by allocating (all or a portion of) the annual Land Swap tax sharing amount to the Buffer Land? (~$15,000).

Key observation from the BLWG:

If Metchosin is to own the Buffer Land, it also has a responsibility to maintain and care for it.

Alternative: Consider selling the Buffer to the CRD.

- *For Discussion*: What are the alternatives if park rezoning and adequate park management are not possible or not taken up?
- Though not preferred by Metchosin residents or the BLWG, do we consider the option of a sale to the CRD, with conditions? Conditions could be: fair price, clarity on the CRD's plans, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, consideration of the Neild Road area residents.
- Advantages: revenue, liability reduction, additional parks & recreation resources including enforcement, parks experience
- Disadvantages: loss of control, future uncertainty, impacts to neighbours, more visitors.



Summary of Preferred Option

- **Phase 1:** Rezone the Buffer Land to the existing Parkland zone (P3) as soon as possible.
- **Phase 2:** Initiate work to develop a new zoning designation that better reflects conservation / preservation goals. Apply this zone to the Buffer Land when ready.
- **Phase 3**: Develop a park management plan for the Buffer. Ensure adequate resourcing.

We’re seeking your input as we prepare our recommendation to Council.



Discussion and Community Input