

CONTEXT

See also
UPPER LANDS;
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE;
BUILT FORM

The natural environment of West Vancouver is highly valued by residents; the forested mountainside and protected Capilano and Eagle Lake watersheds; the lengthy, scenic and rugged shoreline; salmon spawning creeks including Brothers, Cypress, Nelson and Eagle Creeks; and areas with significant vegetation such as arbutus groves and old growth trees. These areas are subject to control to protect their environmental attributes and to avoid incompatible development.

In developed areas, extensive private landscaping and landscaped boulevards, greenbelts and natural areas help define the character of neighbourhoods. In new neighbourhoods, developers are required to plan within an open space framework, to restore disturbed areas, and to replant to recreate this valued character.

The assessment of the environmental impacts of development requires an understanding of significant and often conflicting issues and values and private and public objectives. This Plan sets directions for achieving balance in the resolution of environmental issues. For example, careful evaluation is required to balance the provision of views to the ocean from new subdivisions while maintaining the community's forested character. Allowing for water related recreational activities and hiking along creek corridors entails protection of sensitive riparian habitat. Recognizing that residential development in West Vancouver typically results in large dwelling units with extensive landscaping and private amenities and relatively high areas of hard surfaces, mitigation of some of these impacts can be

achieved by requirements such as narrow road standards, unpaved gravel shoulders and on-site storm water retention and site sensitive building regulations.

The Plan recognizes the value of ecosystems located in the western area of the Municipality that are unique to the Lower Mainland. A 28-acre peninsula forming the west side of Horseshoe Bay constitutes part of Madrona Ridge and is commonly referred to as Telegraph Hill and Tyee Point. It is largely composed of exposed bedrock, with extremely steep terrain and a unique environment supporting distinctive flora. The area has been classified by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists as an Environmentally Important Site in the Lower Mainland. As well, a botanical survey by the Vancouver Natural History Society identified a variety of unusual plants, plus many arbutus and relatively rare manzanita trees and the endangered Vancouver ground cone in the area (*Boschniakia hookeri*; given the highest level of rarity, R1, by the National Museums of Canada).

The Natural Environment policies also support actions that will demonstrate the Municipality's capacity to be a leader in working towards environmental sustainability. They incorporate environmental principles for the public sector in planning and municipal works; for the private sector in acting within a framework of environmental responsibility; and for citizens in promoting the health of local ecosystems.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC TERMS:

Creek Corridor: The creek corridor includes the creek, lands between the creek and the top of bank, and lands adjacent to the top of bank. A creek corridor is determined through Municipal assessment and the application of Provincial and Federal regulations for watercourse setbacks, including on-site evaluation by an environmental consultant. It includes the established 100 year flood line of the creek and lands which the Municipality considers to be subject to hazardous conditions, directly associated with the creek environment and particularly sensitive to any potential adjacent development or otherwise an integral part of the corridor. A creek corridor will normally include the Creek Protection Area as defined by the Municipal Creek Bylaw.



The Foreshore: The term foreshore normally refers to land which lies between the high and low water marks, encompassing those areas of land that are alternately covered and exposed by the ebb and flow of tidal waters. West Vancouver is responsible, through a Head Lease acquired from the Province in 1984, for regulating uses on the land from the private property boundaries seaward up to one thousand feet off shore.



Difficult Terrain: A lot is defined to include difficult terrain in any situation where more than one-fifth of the total allowable building envelope has an existing grade exceeding 35% or where a driveway grade for the least steep driveway possible cannot be provided at less than 20%. This judgement is based upon the least steep driveway between the existing ground elevation at various points along the minimum garage front yard setback and the road or lane elevation immediately adjacent to the proposed lot

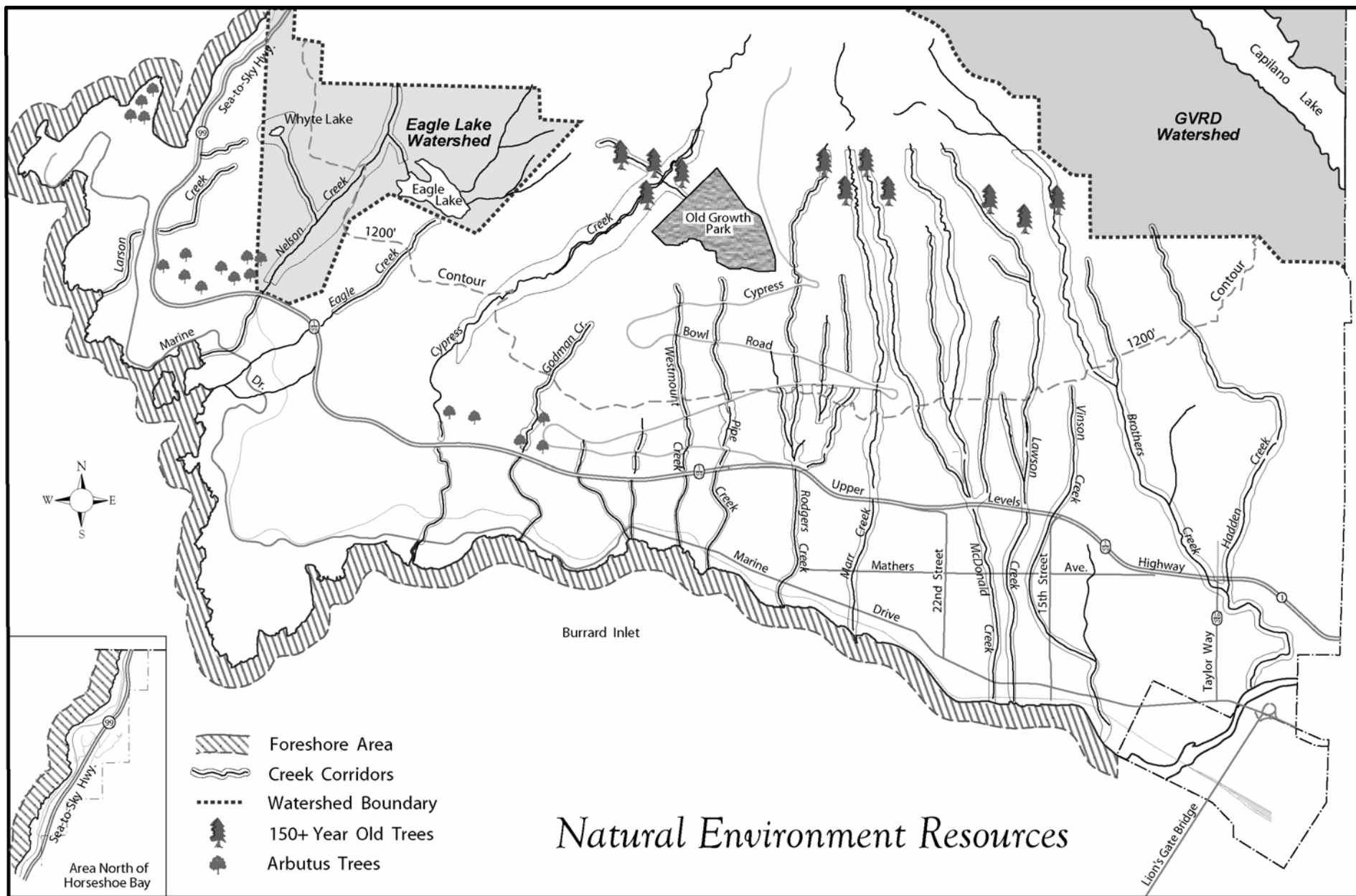
Areas with Special or Unique Biophysical Features:

Wetlands, arbutus groves, old growth sections of forests and unique plant vegetation in microclimatic conditions exist in various part of the community.

OBJECTIVES

Natural environment policies promote environmental stewardship, and are based on the following objectives:

- Protect important natural features: water courses, forests, the shoreline and foreshore and other environmentally sensitive areas and habitats.
- Demonstrate leadership in environmental management, practices and use of resources.
- Integrate storm water management practices with community planning.
- Ensure the safety of people and property from natural hazards in environmentally sensitive areas and creek corridors.
- Develop a thorough understanding of West Vancouver's natural environment in order to maintain and enhance its qualities.



Natural Environment Resources

POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA DESIGNATIONS

See also
UPPER LANDS

Policy NE 1

Provide for the protection of creek corridors and other environmentally sensitive lands throughout the municipality.

- Protect creek corridors by designating development permit areas and applying guidelines in the issuance of development permits.
- Cooperate with the Federal and the Provincial Governments to strengthen policies and programs to protect and restore salmon and trout spawning creeks, creek corridors, tributaries, wetlands, the foreshore and wildlife habitat.
- Prohibit new development and restrict redevelopment within creek corridors or significant environmental areas except for public works such as crossings for roads and services and municipal trails.
- Consider the restoration of creeks in already developed areas to provide for greater protection of creek systems from uplands to inlet.
- Prohibit activity that would, in the opinion of the Municipality, obstruct, foul the drainage conditions or otherwise negatively impact a creek.
- Encourage measures to protect rare and endangered species, arbutus groves, areas of old growth forest, and consider the importance of wetlands and connecting networks for wildlife habitat.

**Policy NE 2**

Minimize environmental and visual impacts of new development through design, construction and site restoration requirements.

- Take natural features of sites into account through evaluation of the potential environmental and visual impacts of a development proposal.

Policy NE 3

Maintain, protect and enhance the shoreline and foreshore and, where feasible, provide for public access.

- Protect the natural and ecological functions of the shoreline and foreshore.
- Regulate existing encroachments.
- Prohibit new private encroachments into the foreshore, except where required for practical access to the property or to protect the upland property. New encroachments of a minor nature may be permitted if specifically approved by Council after consideration of the natural condition and public access.
- Maintain Municipal docks and piers for short-term use by boaters and by permitted commercial

operations, and enhance opportunities for pedestrian use.

- Increase public awareness of the need to protect the foreshore and provision of the Head Lease.



Policy NE 4

Seek public ownership of environmentally sensitive lands, including creek corridors, where feasible.



Policy NE 5

Provide for the evaluation and protection of visually sensitive areas and special ecological areas

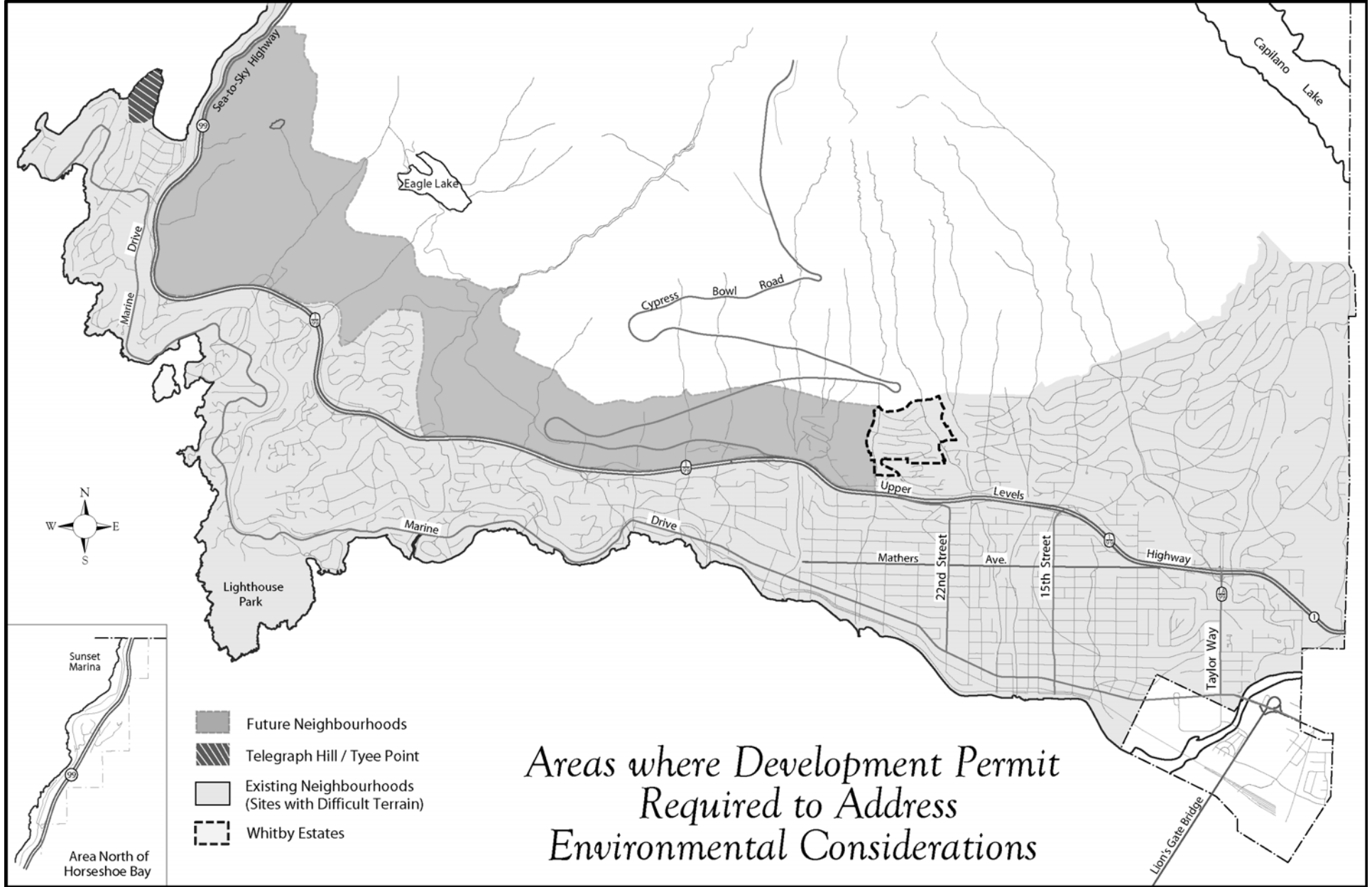
- Identify significant environmental features and develop means to preserve and protect them in long-range plans or through regulatory amendments.
- Recognize the value of ecosystems located in the western area of the Municipality that are unique to the Lower Mainland that contain fragile flora or fauna, significant landforms, cultural landscapes or areas of historic interest such as Arbutus Ridge, Telegraph Hill and Tyee Point areas.

- Restrict the zoning density for Telegraph Hill and Tyee Point in recognition of extreme terrain and severe environmental and access constraints in order to:
 - avoid creation of hazardous conditions in new development, and
 - provide for suitable development compatible with the natural environment and steep topography of the area.

Development Permit Area Designation NE 5

The Telegraph Hill and Tyee Point portion of Madrona Ridge, as defined and illustrated on the Telegraph Hill and Tyee Point Development Permit Area Designation Map NE 6, is designated a Development Permit Area.

Telegraph Hill and Tyee Point NE-DPA-5	Category	Local Government Act s. 919.1(1)(a) and (b).
	Conditions	The development permit area designation is warranted due to the area's very steep slopes, extensive exposed bedrock terrain, severity of grades for access, impacts resulting from construction of access, sensitive environmental conditions including unique and endangered species of flora, and severe environmental implications and site disturbance if development occurs on steep lands.
	Objectives	To ensure that development is sited, and site works are designed and undertaken, in a manner which avoids steep terrain, minimizes the impact on existing natural terrain and vegetation and protects areas with rare or unusual vegetation.
	Guidelines Schedule	Guidelines NE 5 and NE 6.



Areas where Development Permit Required to Address Environmental Considerations

Policy NE 6**Recognize and manage environmentally sensitive areas.**

- Avoid hazardous conditions and protect the natural environment in areas with steep slopes.
- Where works within creek corridors are intended to provide for the protection of private property, require that these works continue to be the responsibility of the private property owner.
- Consider designating the foreshore in the existing neighbourhoods as development permit areas to provide for their protection and to avoid hazardous conditions.

**Development Permit Area Designation NE 6**

Sites with Difficult Terrain within the Existing Neighbourhoods (Existing Neighbourhoods as defined and illustrated by the Natural Environment Development Permit Area Designation Map NE 6), are designated as a Development Permit Area.

Sites with Difficult Terrain NE-DPA-6	Category	Local Government Act s. 919.1(1)(a) and (b).
	Conditions	The development permit area designation is warranted due to the steeply sloping terrain throughout West Vancouver.
	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid hazardous conditions ▪ ensure greater environmental compatibility of development on sloping sites ▪ protect the natural environment on difficult terrain ▪ minimize site disturbance and blasting during construction.
	Guidelines Schedule	Guidelines NE 6.

	Exemption.	<p>No development permit is required where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. there is no subdivision application involved; or ii. a subdivision application is involved but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no lot in the proposed subdivision involves difficult terrain (difficult terrain involves situations where more than one-fifth of the total allowable building envelope on any lot has an existing grade exceeding 35%); or ▪ no lot in the proposed subdivision has a driveway grade that would be required to exceed 20%. (This judgment is based on existing or approved road or lane elevations immediately adjacent to the proposed lot, the existing ground elevation at the various points along the minimum garage front yard setback requirement, and the least steep driveway possible to join those two locations.) ▪ the subdivision will not create any additional lots (e.g. realignment of a lot line between two lots).
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Policy NE 7

Require an inventory and classification of natural assets in the evaluation of public and private projects.

- Require developers to provide detailed inventories and analysis of a site's natural assets in their preliminary planning.
- Encourage groups such as the Streamkeepers to develop and promote a base of knowledge regarding the Municipality's environment.

Policy NE 8

Integrate storm water management practices with community planning.

- Identify opportunities to restore creeks to a natural state within developed areas.
- Proposed detention facilities should be located and designed in conformance with policies that promote site sensitive design, and minimize development in creek corridors. Detention facilities would normally be located outside creek corridors unless an area within the creek corridor is

determined to be an environmentally desirable solution.



Policy NE 9

Encourage a "Good Neighbour" approach through education to mitigate instances of trees on private properties that block sunlight and significant views.

- Develop neighbourhood planning processes for the consideration of tree policies that recognize the

unique circumstances of different areas of the community.

Policy NE 10

Encourage tree planting on streets and manage cutting and pruning of public trees to maintain the balance between preservation of the streetscape and forested public lands, and residents' desire for access to sunlight and views.

- Consider reasonable requests for tree trimming on public property in order to maintain or restore significant views being eroded by tree growth or to maintain or restore access to sunlight.
- Consistently apply a policy for trees on public boulevards, while recognizing the need for flexibility in implementation.

**Policy NE 11**

In planning for development, recognize and manage the effects of tree growth on amenities such as access to sunlight, views and safety.



- For development of significant size,
 - a) require the submission of a tree survey prepared by a certified arborist or other

qualified professional to determine significant trees and tree groupings suitable for retention.
b) Require the submission of tree management and planting plans prepared by a qualified professional to establish a natural setting.

- Consider the long-term impacts of trees on views in subdivision layouts and building siting.
- Consider retention of groups of trees to promote a park like character.
- Avoid allowing trees to be planted in locations that may pose maintenance problems to services.
- Minimize visual impacts by restricting and phasing tree cutting before actual development.

Policy NE 12

Establish comprehensive environmental policies, bylaws, regulations, and practices.

- Review existing and proposed environmental regulations and practices including the Creeks Bylaw, tree cutting bylaw, storm water management practices, and the designation of creek corridors and waterfront lands as development permit areas.
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive municipal environmental policy based on a thorough review and public discussion of environmental issues in the community.
- Update existing environmental regulations and adopt new regulations and practices as appropriate.

Policy NE13

Development Permit Area Designation NE13

Areas of land in the Existing Neighbourhoods that contain watercourses and wetlands, (Existing Neighbourhoods as defined and illustrated on the Watercourse Protection Development Permit Area Designation Map NE 13), are designated a Development Permit Area.

Category	<i>Local Government Act s. 919.1(1)(a).</i>
Conditions	The development permit area designation is warranted to protect and enhance watercourses and wetlands in West Vancouver's existing neighbourhoods.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that development does not negatively impact watercourse or wetland environments or, where such impacts are unavoidable due to the existing configuration of parcels of land in relation to watercourses or wetlands, to ensure that development does not result in a net loss of productive fish habitat.
Guidelines Schedule	Guidelines NE 13.
Development may be exempt from the requirement for a Development Permit if the proposal is for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. renovation to interiors; ii. regular and emergency District maintenance activities for drainage control conducted in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Development Permit designation; iii. construction and maintenance activities carried out by, or on behalf of, the District and designed to enhance the coexistence of natural habitats and public trails; iv. construction and maintenance activities carried out outside of 15 metres of top of watercourse bank or edge of wetland; v. emergency works, including tree cutting, necessary to remove an immediate danger or hazard; vi. maintenance of the existing landscape conditions; or vii. the implementation of a fish habitat mitigation or restoration plan authorized by the senior government ministry or agency having jurisdiction.

Policy NE14**Development Approval Information Area Designation NE14**

Areas of land in the vicinity of watercourses and wetlands, as illustrated on the Watercourse Protection Development Permit Area Designation Map NE13, are also designated a Development Approval Information Area.

Category	Local Government Act s.920.01.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The objective of the designation of Development Permit Area NE13 is to ensure that development does not negatively impact watercourse environments or, where such impacts are unavoidable due to the configuration of parcels of land in relation to watercourses, to ensure that development does not result in a net loss of productive fish habitat. The objective of the designation of Development Approval Information Area NE14 is to ensure that an accurate, site-specific information base is available to guide the application of the relevant development permit guidelines.
Procedures	Development approval information requirements and procedures are set out in a separate bylaw enacted under s.920.1 of the Local Government Act.

