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# PORT ALBERNI SHORELINE MASTER PLAN

prepared for the

**PORT ALBERNI HARBOUR COMMISSION**

and the

**CITY OF PORT ALBERNI**

by

**TAYLOR PEACH & ASSOCIATES LTD  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS AND PLANNERS**

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This document is intended to be used as a basis for the comprehensive planning and development of the Port Alberni waterfront. It is concerned specifically with the area extending from Clutesi Haven marina to the Port Alberni Harbour Commission offices in the South and bounded by the principal waterfront roads consisting respectively of Victoria Quay, Stamp Avenue, Third Avenue, Kingsway and Harbour Road. In addition, general guidelines are provided for areas which are related or linked to the principal study area.

A summary of the information presented herein is as follows:

### SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Outlines the background and rationale for these investigations and describes the general goals and objectives of the study.

The principal objective of this study is the development of a program for the shoreline and related areas of the community that would make the waterfront more accessible and attractive to residents and tourists while minimizing conflict with existing industrial uses.

### SECTION 2 - CONTEXT

Examines the context in which the study is being conducted as it relates to the development of the proposed program for the shoreline.

Considerations are provided regarding the location of the community on Vancouver Island and the significance of the shoreline in the community. A description of the various definable parts of the shoreline is also provided.

### SECTION 3 - ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Outlines the issues identified during the progress of the study and summarizes the results of the community consultation process. The inter-relationship of the various elements is discussed in relation to other activities or elements outside the study area.



## **SECTION 4 - SITE ASSESSMENT**

Provides information on the overall site assessment including identification of opportunities and constraints. Key items dealt with include roads and access, pathways, and the principal areas including, Harbour Quay and vicinity, Victoria Quay and Stirling Field.

## **SECTION 5 - RECOMMENDATIONS**

Describes in detail the various components of the Master Plan and provides recommendations on design, circulation, access and street enhancements, as well as suggested improvements and developments for the key waterfront areas.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Port Alberni waterfront has historically been occupied by a succession of sawmills, canneries, boat yards etc. and currently is dominated by MacMillan Bloedel operations which include plants producing lumber, plywood, pulp and newsprint.

Although it is anticipated that the major uses of the waterfront will continue to reflect forestry and related industries, which are the mainstays of the local economy, it is felt that it would be desirable for Port Alberni to diversify into areas in which it has not historically had a strong presence. An example is tourism which is beginning to play a more significant role in the local economy, but is not yet deemed to have a significant economic impact.

As a first initiative, in the early 1980's, the Port Alberni Harbour Quay was developed as a joint initiative of the City and the Harbour

Commission. The intent was to provide a facility that would serve the dual purpose of providing an attractive amenity for the use of the community and also serve as an attraction for tourism.

This facility has proven to be a popular addition to the waterfront, as are other immediate attractions such as the "Two Spot" steam locomotive and the MV Lady Rose. As a result of their popularity, it has been suggested that consideration be given to expanding the Harbour Quay and introducing other elements that would complement and enhance the current attractions.

However the introduction of such "people oriented" developments into what is still predominantly an industrial waterfront has also directed attention to the need for a basis to guide future development of the waterfront and reconcile the various and sometimes conflicting uses to which it is currently put.

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## 1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The intent of producing a Master Plan for the Port Alberni Shoreline has several goals:

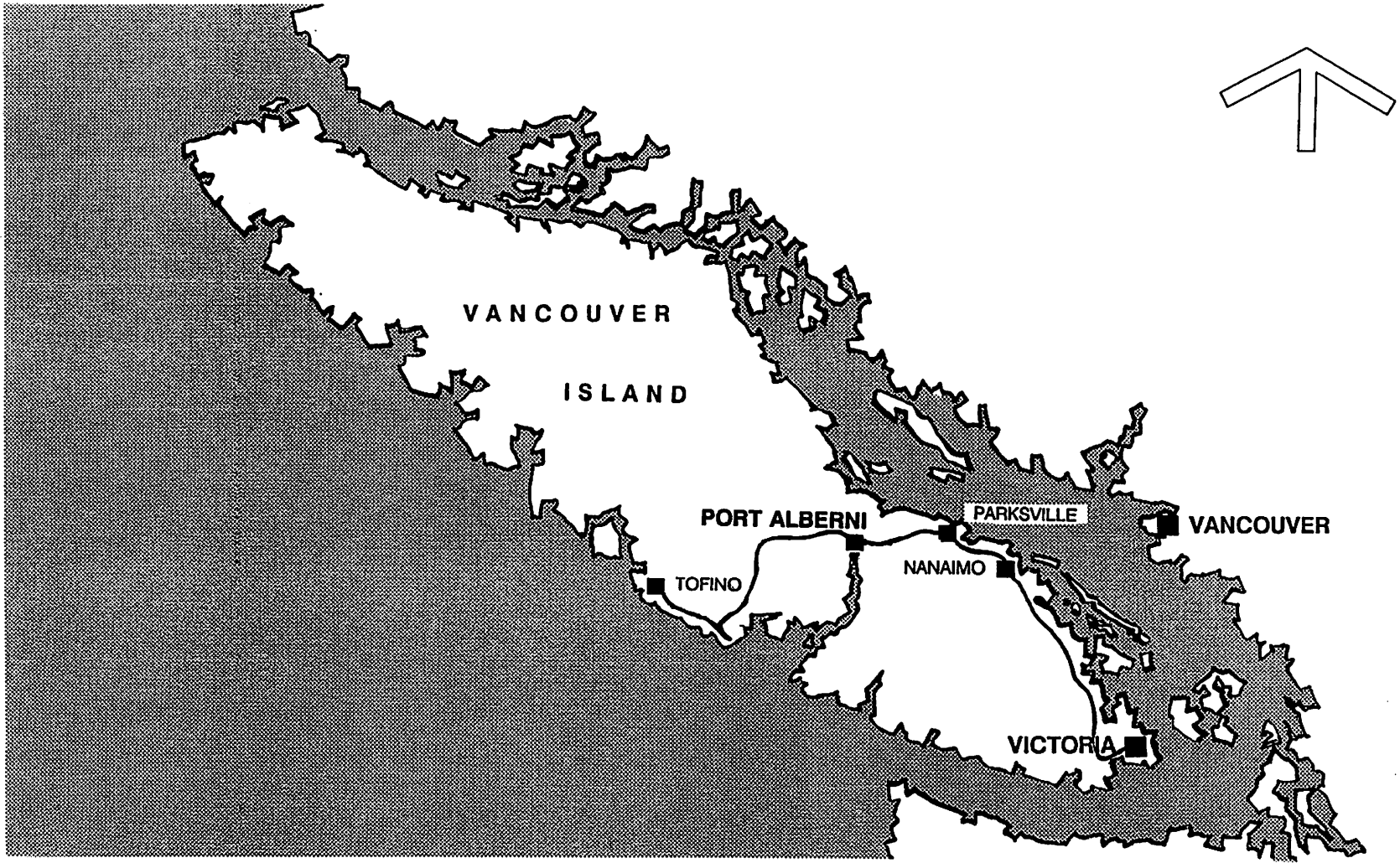
- To guide development over the medium to long term, so that the shoreline becomes a cohesive visual and recreational asset to the community and visitors;
- To create a series of nodes and linkages along the shoreline, activating its use and improving its accessibility;
- To suggest principles for decision-making relative to the total development, guidelines for land use, location of focal points, linkages and specific solutions for critical nodes such as Harbour Quay and Victoria Quay.

An objective underlining all of these goals is the creation of economic diversification through the development of an enhanced tourism industry and resultant increased activity for small business.

## 1.3 STUDY AREA

The study area extends from Clutesi Haven marina to the Harbour Commission offices in the South and is bounded by the principal waterfront roads consisting respectively of Victoria Quay, Stamp Avenue, Third Avenue, Kingsway and Harbour Road. Additional considerations included the principal access routes into the community, Stirling Field and the establishment of linkages with the other community parks that are near the study area.

REGIONAL CONTEXT



## 2.0 CONTEXT

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### 2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT - VANCOUVER ISLAND

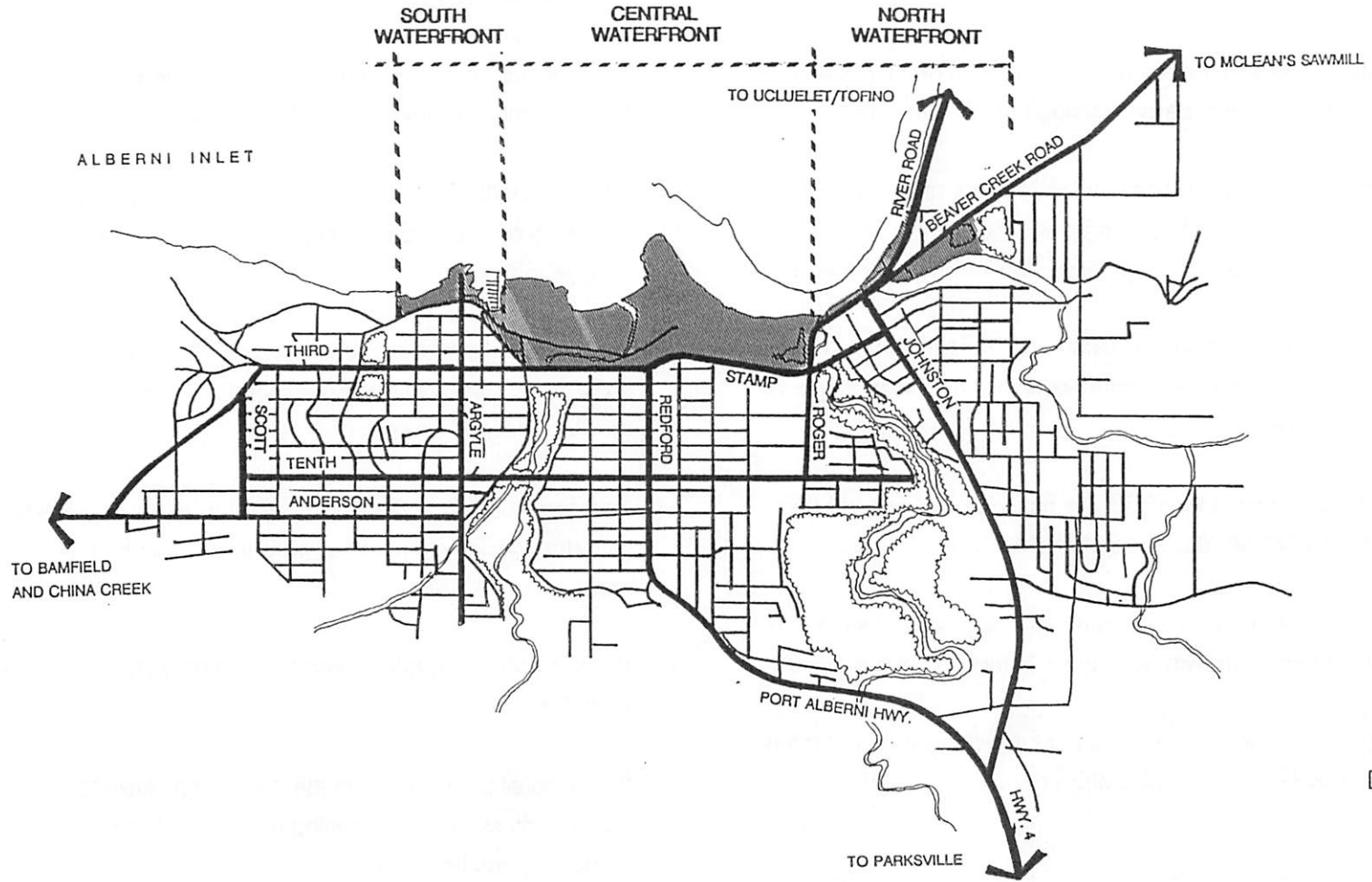
- Port Alberni is the gateway to the Pacific Rim on Highway 4 to the West Coast which passes through the community;
- The community is also a centre for regional marine travel for kayakers, tourists on excursion boats and also to service the various fish farms and fishing camps located along the inlet;
- The Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway terminates at Port Alberni and provides a transport connection to the east coast of Vancouver Island;
- The City is located at the head of a navigable deep water fjord, the Alberni Inlet, 48 kilometres from the ocean;
- The community's central location on Vancouver Island has contributed to it's growth as a forest industry centre & port;
- Nearby attractions include Sproat Lake Provincial Park, Stamp Falls Provincial Park and MacMillan Park.

### 2.2 AREA CONTEXT - PORT ALBERNI

- The present city was established out of the amalgamation of the twin cities of Alberni and Port Alberni in 1967;
- The forest industry is the community's mainstay with MacMillan Bloedel sawmills, a pulp and paper mill and logging divisions located in the city;
- Commercial fishing accounts for over 20% of the provincial salmon yield with over 300 commercial boats operating out of the Port Alberni harbour;
- The community has developed with heavy industry along the waterfront, commercial areas next inland and then residential areas;
- Current population is estimated at 18,000 with a trading area of 25,000;
- Recreational facilities, within the community, include an indoor pool and fitness facilities, curling rink, ice and roller skating and outdoor sports fields and courts;



# AREA CONTEXT



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- The community has a nationally recognized museum which is located in the city operated Echo Centre;
  - Recreational opportunities in the area include sports fishing, golfing, scuba diving, boating, camping, caving, hiking.

### 2.3 STUDY AREA - SOUTH WATERFRONT

#### Harbour Quay to Assembly Wharf

##### Ownership:

- Esso property is privately owned;
- Balance is Crown land administered by the Port Alberni Harbour Commission;

##### Existing Uses:

- McLellan Marine Contracting operations;
- Esso Bulk Fuel Depot, tank farm and marine fuelling facility;
- Barge grid;

- Launching ramp;
- Water Street Wharf, capable of mooring vessels up to approximately 60 meters, currently accommodating the Francis Barkley;
- Parking for approximately 65 vehicles adjacent to the Water Street Wharf.

#### Harbour Quay

##### Ownership:

- City of Port Alberni - administered by Harbour Quay Commission

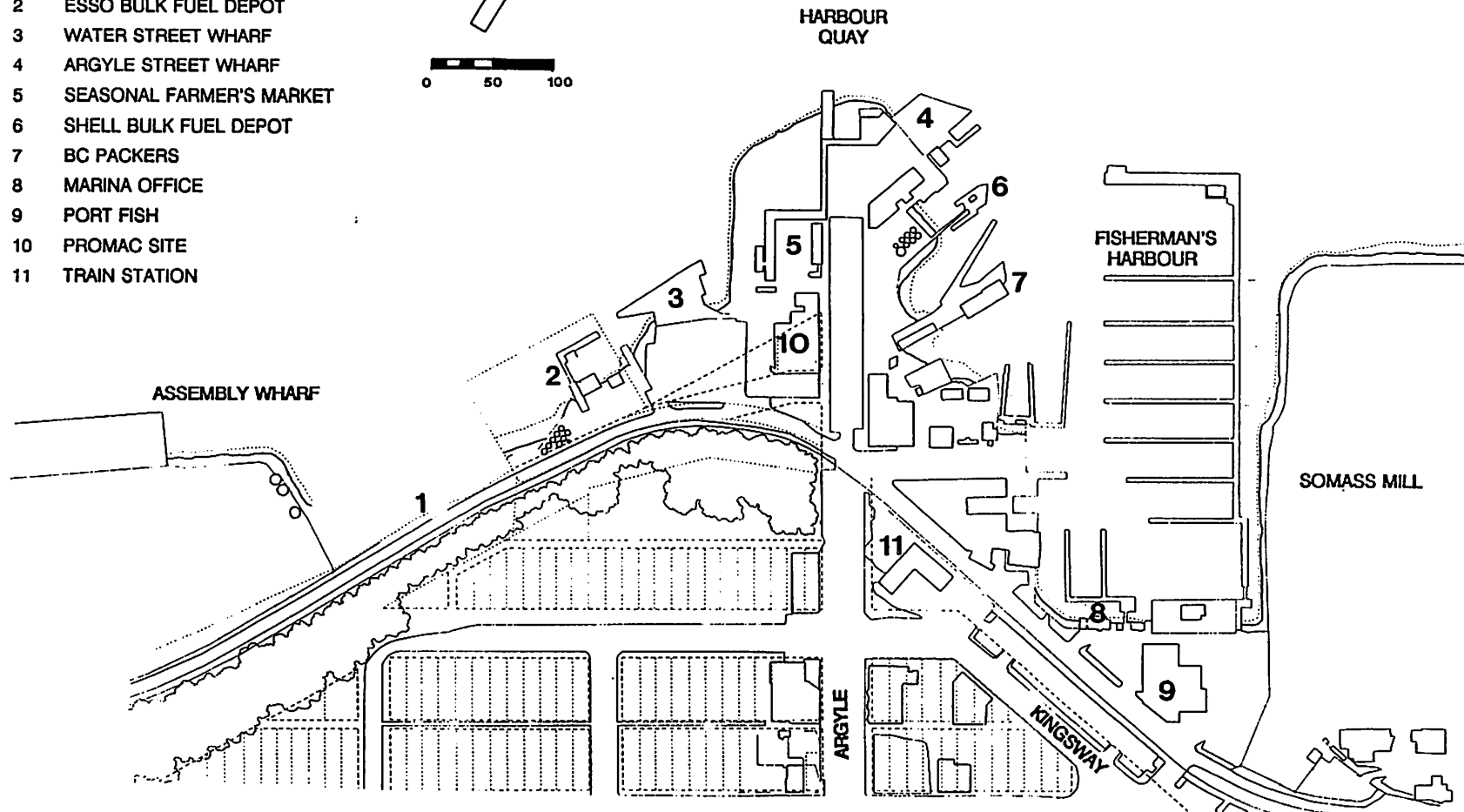
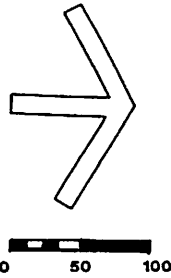
##### Existing Uses:

- Argyle Street Wharf, capable of accommodating vessels in excess of 30 m on two faces, but currently accommodating the Lady Rose on one face and a service boat float on the other;

# SOUTH WATERFRONT

## LEGEND

- 1 MCLELLAN MARINE CONTRACTING OPERATIONS
- 2 ESSO BULK FUEL DEPOT
- 3 WATER STREET WHARF
- 4 ARGYLE STREET WHARF
- 5 SEASONAL FARMER'S MARKET
- 6 SHELL BULK FUEL DEPOT
- 7 BC PACKERS
- 8 MARINA OFFICE
- 9 PORT FISH
- 10 PROMAC SITE
- 11 TRAIN STATION



- 
- Light, marine related industry;
  - Seasonal farmers market;
  - Tourist oriented shops and restaurants;
  - Shell Bulk Fuel Depot, tank farm and marine fuelling facility;
  - Abandoned former BC Packers dock;
  - On-street parking.

#### Fisherman's Harbour

##### Ownership:

- Crown land administered by the Port Alberni Harbour Commission.

##### Existing Uses:

- Commercial fishing harbour;

- Port Fish, a commercial fish smoking and canning operation;
- A commercial ice making facility;
- Marina office;
- Parking.

#### 2.4 STUDY AREA - CENTRAL WATERFRONT

##### Ownership:

- MacMillan Bloedel Ltd.

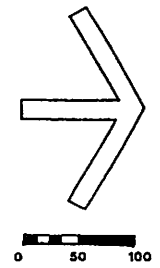
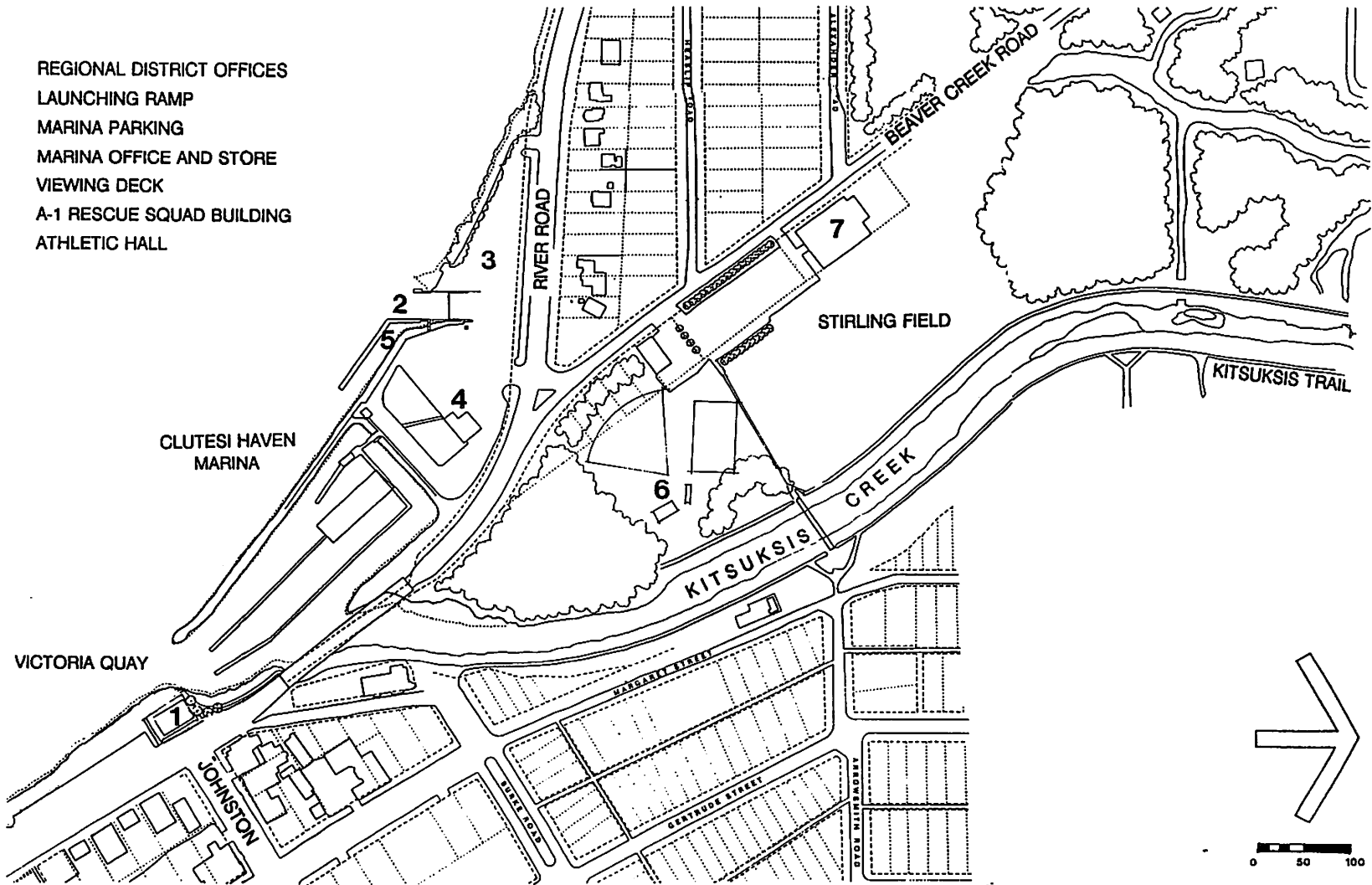
##### Existing Uses:

- Alberni Pulp & Paper Division, pulp mill operations;
- Somass Mill Division, sawmill operations;
- Related industrial operations parking and storage.

# NORTH WATERFRONT

## LEGEND

- 1 REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES
- 2 LAUNCHING RAMP
- 3 MARINA PARKING
- 4 MARINA OFFICE AND STORE
- 5 VIEWING DECK
- 6 A-1 RESCUE SQUAD BUILDING
- 7 ATHLETIC HALL



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## 2.5 STUDY AREA - NORTH WATERFRONT

### Victoria Quay

#### Ownership:

- City of Port Alberni

#### Existing Uses:

- Light commercial;
- Regional District Offices;
- Current parking for in excess of 100 vehicles.

### Clutesi Haven Marina

#### Ownership:

- City of Port Alberni, leased to Harbour Commission.

#### Existing Uses:

- Moorage for 250 vessels with covered moorage for 28 berths;
- Launching ramp;
- Parking for approximately 170 vehicles;
- Marina office and marine store;
- Viewing deck.

### Stirling Field

#### Ownership:

- City of Port Alberni

#### Existing Uses:

- Field sports, and tennis outdoors;

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- Indoor sports in the Athletic Hall;
  - Undefined parking for approximately 200 vehicles;
  - Meeting hall/offices for "A-1 Rescue Squad".

## 2.6 ZONING

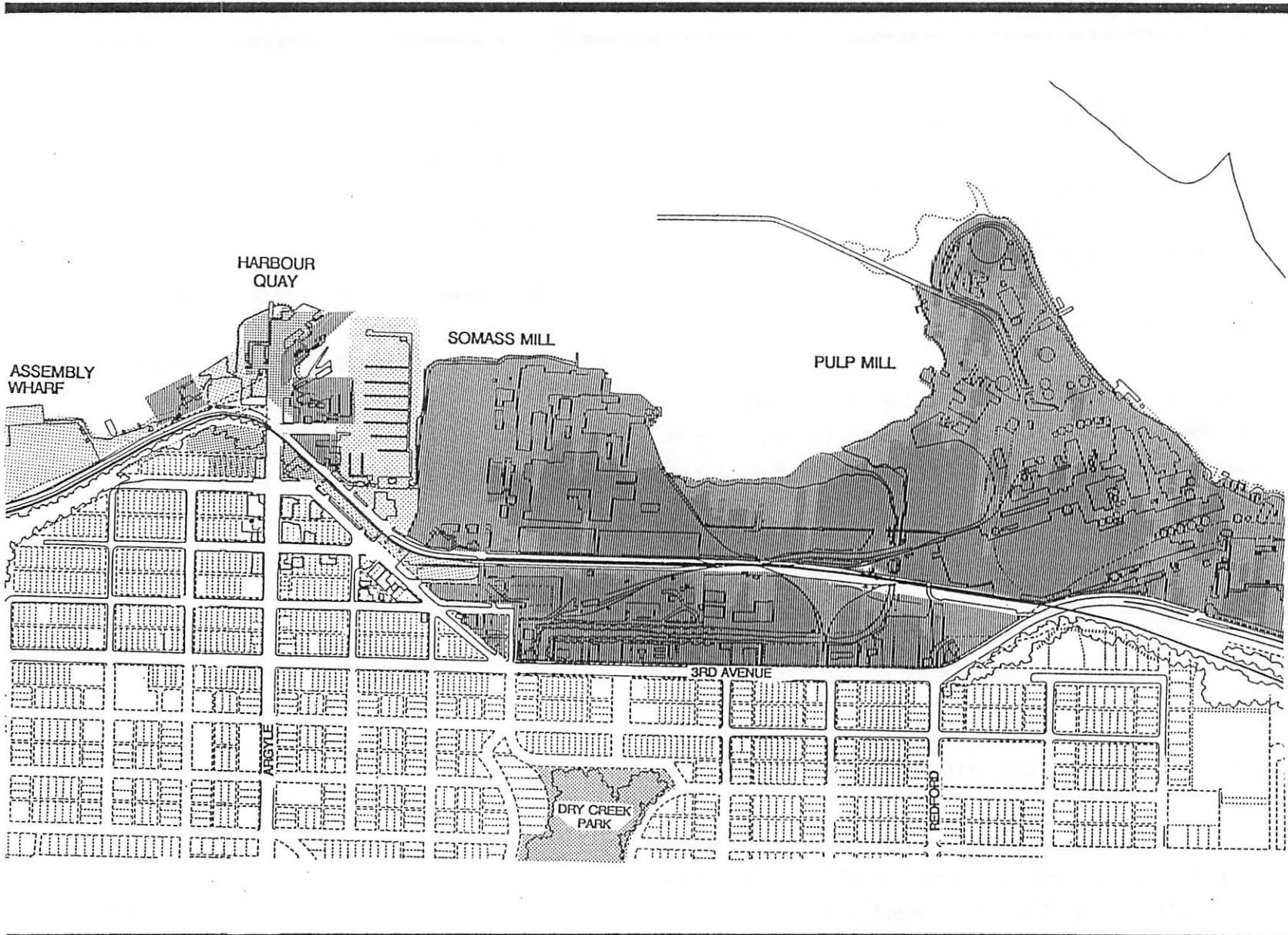
Current Zoning in Port Alberni is based on the Official Community Plan Bylaw completed in 1972. In this plan, the majority of the shoreline is zoned as heavy industrial with the following noted exceptions:

- Vicinity of Harbour Quay which is zoned Commercial, General and Retail;
- Victoria Quay and Clutesi Haven which are both zoned Park and Institutional;

## 2.7 RELEVANT PLANS AND STUDIES

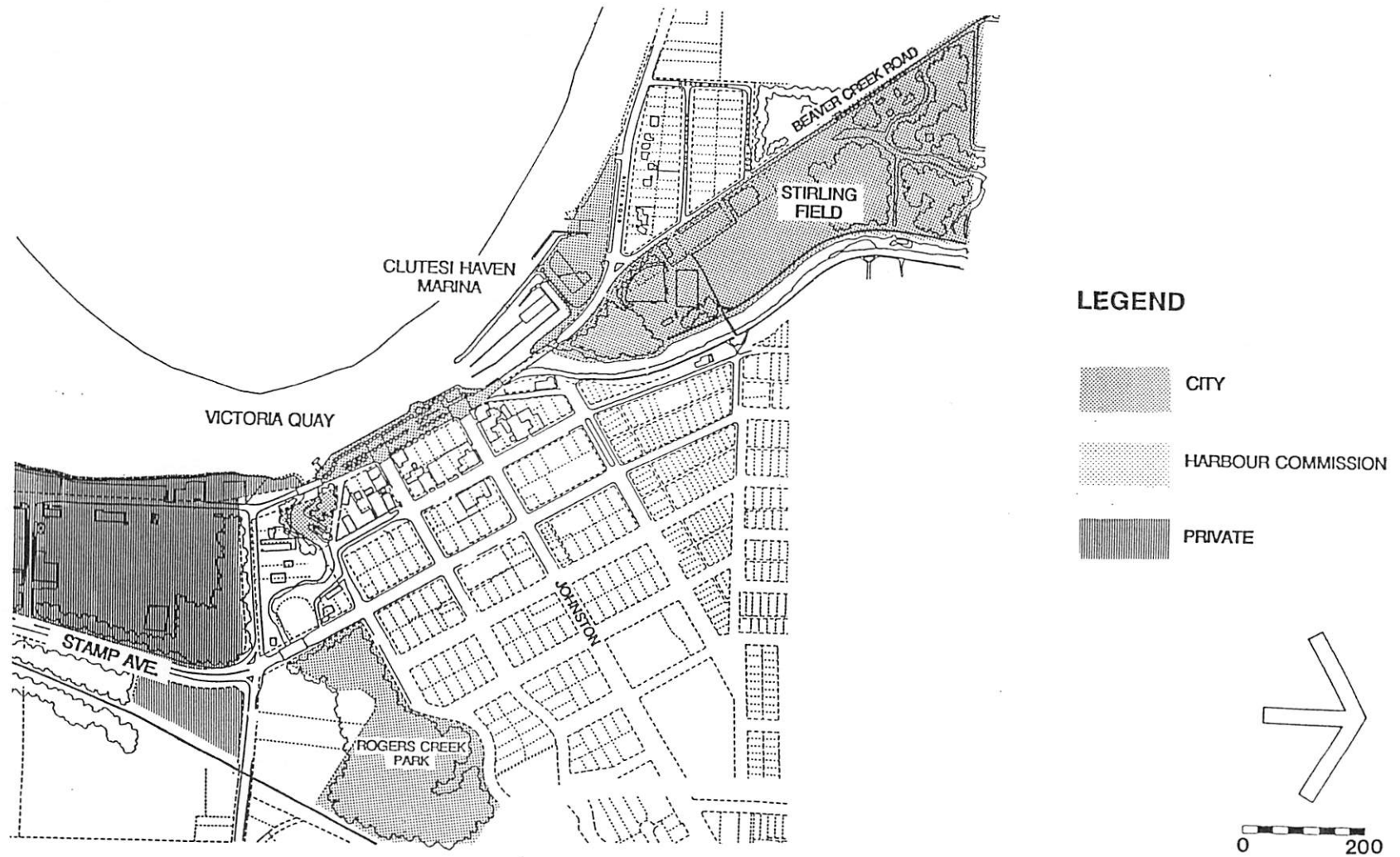
A number of plans and studies were reviewed that contain data or information that was used as a basis for the preparation of the Shoreline Master Plan. These documents include:

- Contribution of Tourism to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Economy, 1989
- Port Alberni Harbour Commission - 5 Year Business Plan, 1989
- Alberni Valley Museum - Economic Feasibility Study, 1985
- Harbour front Feasibility and Design Study, 1982
- Official Community Plan Bylaw, 1972





# LAND OWNERSHIP



## 3.0 ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

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### 3.1 BACKGROUND

A significant portion of the work associated with developing the master plan involved contacting knowledgeable individuals in the community to determine what they perceived to be the opportunities and constraints related to development of the shoreline.

This was done so that the expertise of residents of the community, who know in-depth the climate, patterns of use, and local character, could add a dimension to the plan which would increase its usefulness to the client, and complement the knowledge which the consultants brought to the project. Due to the constraints of time and availability it was not possible to consult with every individual who had valuable contributions to make; but a number of innovative suggestions were contributed by key persons interviewed.

The following sections set out the suggestions and issues which local citizens perceive as important to the planning of the shoreline. Since the comments are presented largely as they were received, in some instances there may be contradictions.

### 3.2 OVERALL PLANNING ISSUES

It was felt that the overall goals of the Shoreline Development Master Plan should be to provide increased community access to the waterfront and suggest an attractive blend of industrial, commercial and tourist-oriented facilities, in order to encourage economic growth for the whole community. Specific comments were as follows:

- The shoreline plan should include a mix of public and industrial/commercial uses.
- The waterfront is one of Port Alberni's most attractive attributes, and better access and utilization would be very well accepted by residents and visitors alike.
- Pedestrians, boats, and vehicles all have distinct needs and these needs should be identified and studied equally in the Master plan.

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- Signage is an important issue, from the entrance to the City at all points, to comprehensive planning related to a theme along the major routes to Harbour Quay.
  - The shoreline development will tie in with the diversification of the local economy into tourism.
  - Although tourism offers opportunities for economic development and growth industry, town residents are also important users of the shoreline. The real aim of this plan should be to enhance the town for residents, build up "town spirit", and thus create support for more tourist attractions which would bring in more of those now passing through to Long Beach.

### 3.3 PERCEIVED NEEDS

#### Waterfront Access

- There is a need for more public access to the waterfront, including water-based activities. The waterfront should be a place for people of the community.

#### Harbour Quay

- Harbour Quay's biggest problem is that there is no water component, limited moorage, and a growing demand. The Harbour Commission has a list of charter vessels waiting for moorage.
- Harbour Quay has a waiting list for commercial space. Some seasonal shops have asked permission to operate year-round. There is potential for expansion of available small commercial facilities.
- Parking for Harbour Quay needs to be expanded.
- The grassed area in the Harbour Quay is extensively used by both residents and tourists, and should be preserved.
- It was suggested that floats could be added to Harbour Quay to extend its area.
- There is a lack of wharf loading facilities for freight and passengers for the Lady Rose. The Lady Rose proprietors

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have requested moorage with a new office and warehouse at the Water Street Wharf, which would make their space at Harbour Quay available.

#### Tourist Needs

- There is a shortage of high-quality accommodation. A hotel and marina complex would be an advantage to the waterfront. Accommodation capacity in Port Alberni is marginally adequate for tourists now visiting at peak periods.
- Sport fishing facilities and services are at capacity. Most sports fishermen originate in California. The peak season lasts 18 weeks.
- Whale watching is growing as a tourist activity. The Lady Rose, Bamfield Inn, and Imperial Eagle charters use the Quay for loading and unloading in March, April, and May.
- There is a need for improved water access for recreational boaters and seagoing whale charters.

#### Mixed Use

- The waterfront plan should safeguard the commercial and industrial sector. Industry could also be an attraction for tourism. Incentives could be provided to attract more shipping and industrial activity, especially from the Pacific Rim.
- Pedestrians, boats, and vehicles all have distinct needs and these needs should be identified and distinguished on the plan.

#### Moorage

- There is a major lack of facilities for itinerant moorage for private boats. Pleasure craft and commercial fishing vessels compete for berthing space. There is currently a waiting list in excess of 250 for permanent moorage at Clutesi Haven Marina and the turnover is about ten berths a year. Temporary moorage is not wait-listed, so no estimate of demand is available. China Creek is also at capacity.
- A floating dry dock could be planned for the study area, to provide facilities for vessel maintenance locally.
- There was some feeling that a new marina adjacent to the Water

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Street dock would be too exposed for recreational moorage.

- A nautical/fishing theme for Port Alberni and a logging theme for Alberni could be incorporated into the overall Master plan.

### 3.4 BEST USE OF SHORELINE LAND

- Lupsi Cupsi point is a beautiful area, and presents good possibilities for public use.
- The BC Packers site is for sale and would have high potential for small cruise vessels.
- The Shell tank farm conflicts with the pedestrian orientation of the Harbour Quay and has been identified as a possible hazard in the tsunami report for the area. All fuel now arrives by tanker truck rather than by barge as used to the case. So the tank farms do not need to be located on the waterfront although they are a fuel source for all contractors, water taxis, etc.
- The land at the north end of the MacMillan Bloedel property up to the shoreline was previously used as a park, and continued use by the public would be desirable.

### 3.5 BEST USES OF ADJACENT LAND

- Linkages are as important as nodes in this plan.
- Industry could help develop the shoreline on the west side.
- There is a need for more camping and RV parking facilities. The existing parks should be related to the waterfront; a boardwalk around the MacMillan Bloedel mill would be desirable.
- The museum's location at Echo Centre is difficult for tourists to access, and it could potentially be located in the shoreline area of activity.
- The Kituksis Creek Dyke walkway around Stirling Field should be tied to the shoreline plan.
- The potential of Argyle Street has not been explored enough. Nanaimo is a good prototype for development of the downtown urban centre.
- A marina could be built on the flats just across from Clutesi Haven marina.

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- A Nature Trail could be developed on the west bank of the Somass River across from Clutesi Haven Marina. The nearby bird sanctuary is an attraction to local residents and tourists. There could be parking areas on the highway on that side to complement the shoreline plan.
  - The restoration of the McLean Sawmill, adopted as a project in principle by Parks Canada, will affect uses along the shoreline, and should be related to it.

### 3.6 SPECIFIC ATTRACTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

- A Tourist Information Centre could be located at the site of the Regional District office either in the existing building if it is suitable for relocation or in a new building.
- Consideration should be given to providing an observation point near the Harbour Commission offices to allow visitors and residents to watch ships being loaded.
- There could be an enhanced fishing pier by the Regional District office.
- A boat tour could be offered, but the boat must be large enough to withstand heavy prevailing winds and the accompanying waves.
- There is a need for a new arena and track and field facility, and some funding is available in relation to the BC Summer Games' access to GO-BC dollars.
- The Santiago was the Spanish ship which first sailed around this area. Its restoration has been extensively researched, and it would present an important attraction to the shoreline area. She could be moored at Harbour Quay, and could be a floating exhibition from April to September.

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### 3.7 CONSIDERATIONS FOR LONGER-TERM PLANNING

#### Tourism

- Some of the major factors now identified which affect future planning are contained in the Novacorp/Economic Planning Group Forestry and Tourism study done for the Regional District, and the Sports Tourism study for the Port Alberni Valley. The new tourism plan will ask for 300 new berths for Port Alberni.
- The tourism season is June to October in Port Alberni. The shoulder season is expanding.
- Tourist volume is 750,000 tourists per year, and 250,000 vehicles, on the highway through Port Alberni, mostly destined for the West Coast. Parks Canada's statistics on visitors to Long Beach indicate approximately 500,000 visitors per year. Indications are that 20-25,000 stop in Port Alberni.
- The airport project which includes a 4000 foot runway may encourage additional tourism.

- Port Alberni is the only local community in the area that has not developed its tourism potential. There is not only potential for attracting tourists visiting the West Coast, Port Alberni's central location on Vancouver Island should also be highlighted.
- The steelhead hatchery has improved fish resources and there are several new guide operations.
- Port Alberni has traditionally depended on the forest industry for employment. The labour force is used to high-wage, large benefit jobs. Tourism is perceived as low wage and seasonal, with low benefits. Training in tourism and the hospitality industry is not available locally.

#### Future Growth and Change

- The Community Futures Economic Development Strategic Plan identified a need to attract more events, diversify, and create new ventures.
- It is important to look at recreational land adjacent to the waterfront, non-forest related industrial land, and the MacMillan Bloedel Plywood Plant, as future usable areas.

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- Development of the Port will bring in more commercial fishermen.
  - There is a close relationship between Port Alberni and its Japanese sister city of Abishiri. Investors from Japan have scheduled a visit in the spring of 1991.
  - The BC Summer Games will be held in Port Alberni in 1992, with major funding from GO BC.
  - The population of Port Alberni is about 18,000. Although Port Alberni has a reputation for being dependent on the forest industry's cycles, recent experience shows that the population is quite stable and did not leave during the recession of the early 1980's.
  - There is felt to be a need for Coordination of Planning between the various levels of government.
  - The land facing the shoreline is only partially controlled by the City. The sewage lagoons are the City's jurisdiction; the Regional District controls the rest of that shore.
  - Strong Communities through the province will pay for a facilitator for economic development projects.
  - The settling ponds across from the Harbour Quay and MacMillan Bloedel's mill present a minor visual problem. There is an issue of MacMillan Bloedel expanding the use of the settling ponds.
  - The Tseshaht Band owns the land at the south end of the inlet, and plans to develop a marina, campsites and a fish plant there. The requirements to be fulfilled to develop the marina include:
    - Approval by DFO for the breakwater and fill;
    - Road access: MacMillan Bloedel's road and the road which serves the residential area are not suitable;
    - There is no fresh water service at the site;
    - There is no sewage services at the site.
  - The Band is also doing a preliminary study for a destination resort. Studies are being undertaken for hatcheries and other fisheries management activities related to the development. This would be welcomed by the City of Port Alberni.



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### Environmental Concerns

- There is a local perception that pollution is chasing away potential tourists and retirees from Port Alberni. DFO and the local sports fishing organization have expressed dissatisfaction with the present situation.
- The combined sewage system could be an issue for the Alberni Environmental Group, which is concerned with the preservation of the estuary and the colour of the water in the harbour.
- The commercialization of the fishery is important to the Tseshaht Band's future plans, and they will work toward restoration of productive waters.

- The Tseshaht Band's prime concerns are the quality of the water in the harbour, and the effects of pollution on fish return. The Band would like to see no harmful effluent.

### Climate

- The climate of Port Alberni, which has a great deal of wind and rain, should be considered in the design of buildings, pathways, and transportation systems.

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Along with the identification of waterfront issues and community expectations, a detailed investigation was undertaken of the existing conditions and land uses along the shoreline.

The ensuing sections describe the results of these investigations, outline opportunities that became apparent and also relate them to the unique constraints imposed along the shoreline at each location and unique feature or attraction.

### 4.2 ROADS

The access to the community and the main traffic routes are key factors in the overall network of linkages that were considered in the this study. They tend to visually influence and reinforce the communities perception of itself and in addition they are important in establishing the initial perception that visitors have of Port Alberni.

For this reason, the traffic circulation in Port Alberni is dealt with in approximately the same sequence as a visitor arriving from the east might encounter them: namely starting at the north end of the waterfront, near Clutesi Haven marina And proceeding towards downtown.

Approach to Port Alberni



The main access route to Port Alberni from the east is Highway 4, from Nanaimo and Parksville which enters Port Alberni at the junction of Johnston Road and the Port Alberni Highway (Redford). This junction has an attractive and imposing sign, however it is only

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visible at a distance of approximately 100 meters due to a curve in the highway. Before this, a number of conflicting and/or confusing directional signs are located along the highway.

The result is that travellers, who may be confused by all the information presented in this short period of time, typically stay on the highway, continue down Johnston Road and on to Tofino, effectively bypassing most of Port Alberni.



### Johnston Road



Johnston Road is the continuation of Highway 4 and as such carries the majority of the traffic that passes through the community. It accommodates a mixture of residential, light commercial and shopping for the last few blocks leading down to Gertrude and Victoria Quay.

Key decision points for motorists are at the Gertrude intersection and at the end of Johnston Road. Notes are as follows:



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- The directional signage for the Gertrude intersection indicating downtown and Harbour Quay, is easily missed by visitors;
  - The signage at the foot of Johnston omits mention of Port Alberni;
  - The end of Johnston is not as attractive as it could be due to the view of the pulp mill, lack of green space and condition of the Regional District Building although the seasonal plantings in front of the building are attractive;
  - There is little indication of any amenities in the immediate area or in the community;
  - The street trees and seasonal banners are a positive element in this street, however, this major road could benefit from a beautification plan.

#### River Road



The portion of this road under consideration in the study extends from Clutesi Haven Marina to Roger Creek. Key points noted:

- This is a busy road with considerable truck traffic and difficult pedestrian crossings at Clutesi Marina and Stirling Field;

- Beautification and landscape enhancement would be beneficial on both sides of the road;
- Additional and more descriptive signage is desirable;
- The pedestrian pathway on the River Road Bridge is narrow and feels uncomfortable due to the close proximity of truck and other traffic.

#### Stamp Avenue



Stamp Avenue is the continuation of Gertrude Street and extends from Roger Street to Redford. The street is fairly wide and bounded by MacMillan Bloedel operations to the west and an undeveloped treed area to the east along the rail alignment. Proceeding from Gertrude, the street is dominated by the pulp mill operations directly ahead. There is relatively little other development along most of the street, with the notable exception of the Barclay Hotel. Points noted:

- Visually obtrusive elements on MacMillan Bloedel property. (wood chip sorting, parking, storage area, aspects of the pulp mill, etc.)
- There is a lack of continuous sidewalks;
- There is insufficient signage, especially near the Redford intersection;
- The existing treed area at the North end of the MacMillan Bloedel property is one of the few green spaces within the study area that is relatively close to the waterfront and could be enhanced.

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## Redford Street



This street runs through a residential and motel area but does not have a very distinct image or many positive visual qualities as would benefit an alternate access to the City. Key Points noted include:

- The signage at the junction does not indicate other attractions (Harbour Quay, Visitor Information, etc);
  - Many areas along the road, particularly the last few blocks before Third Avenue would benefit from selective enhancements;
  - The Shaw Cable building at the foot of the street is a somewhat unattractive focal point that could benefit from enhancement.
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- The intersection of Redford and Third Avenue, currently offers somewhat unappealing and unscreened industrial views; MacMillan Bloedel wood chip sorting, cranes, storage of equipment and parking;



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### Third Avenue



The portion of Third Avenue within the study area extends from Redford Avenue to Argyle in the downtown core. The street is a relatively pleasant mixture of businesses ranging from fast food to car/truck rental outlets, gas stations and mini-warehouse storage. Notes were as follows:

- The street has wide lanes with moderately fast traffic, adequate parking, but existing elements do not encourage stopping to

stroll or spend any substantial amount of time exploring the area;

- Insufficient sense of identity; although the existing trees are a positive element, they are somewhat lost against the predominantly single storey buildings and wide lanes, plus the trees, which have a low crown, partially obscure store signs;
- Store fronts and signs lack consistency and do not seem to respond to a set of specific design guidelines;
- Various disruptive and unsightly elements require screening or beautification such as the area immediately south of Redford;
- Traffic flow patterns at the Kingsway intersection are confusing in terms of direction and traffic flow;
- Due to lack of signage or other visual elements, natural flow of traffic is down Kingsway rather than continuing on Third to the Downtown area.

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Kingsway (and adjacent areas)



- There are no continuous sidewalks and undefined street parking conflicts with pedestrian flow;
- Signage is inadequate;
- Selective screening or beautification is required along the street;
- The appearance of existing businesses would benefit from a set of specific design guidelines.

This area leads from the Third Avenue intersection down to Argyle.

Notes are as follows:

- This predominantly light industrial road currently lacks unity and theme;
- Kingsway provides access to various MacMillan Bloedel parking lots and buildings, but their configuration results in a chaotic look to the area;



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## Argyle Street



The area under consideration extends from Fourth Avenue down to Harbour Quay and includes the downtown core of Port Alberni.

- This portion of Argyle does not have sufficient visual cohesiveness and identity;
- Businesses do not seem to respond to any consistent guidelines with regard to the design of store fronts and signage;

- The road is quite wide yet the sidewalks are somewhat narrow;
- Harbour Quay is a main feature as one looks down Argyle, yet there is no visual or thematic connection which is reinforced by the lack of commercial development near the Quay;
- The past improvements to the downtown area are positive, however, a set of design guidelines for store fronts could further improve the visual quality of this area.

## 4.3 PATHWAYS

There is currently an extensive and well used system of pedestrian paths in Port Alberni. However there is still a need for additional paths, particularly in the vicinity of the shoreline, and a need to provide connections and linkages. A discussion of the opportunities and constraints for each follows:

### Link to Roger Creek Park

- Currently there is no clear visual link or direct pedestrian access to the park from the waterfront;

- Signage for the park is inadequate, particularly at Gertrude;
- The mouth of Roger Creek, across the street from Victoria Quay, offers an opportunity for the development of a small green space facing River Road and visible from the waterfront;
- The existing trail system in Roger Creek park could be expanded and enhanced.

#### Link to Dry Creek Park

- It appears possible to develop a trail along Dry Creek (west of the Third Avenue commercial area) and provide a connection to the park through Dunbar Street;
- The park's frontage on The Quadrant and particularly its entrance does not do justice to what is the largest and arguably the most significant park in the community;
- Interpretive and directional signage are not provided.

#### Link to Weaver Park

- Currently no formal linkages to the waterfront or to surrounding areas;

- The portion of this Park west of Third Avenue is undeveloped.

## 4.4 OTHER LINKAGES

### Rail Line

- The rail line corridor through the community could be more visually interesting and would benefit from selective enhancement and screening;
- The alignment offers the opportunity to develop recreational and interpretive tours as well as an alternative transportation system;
- The right-of-way could provide pedestrian linkages and in some areas, space for parking;
- The history of the rail line could provide interpretive potential.

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## 4.5 VICTORIA QUAY & VICINITY

### Victoria Quay



Victoria Quay is an area, at the foot of Johnston Street, that is currently in the process of being upgraded to a design that has been developed by the City. Points noted:

- This site has an imposing and close range view of pulp mill; this offers a good opportunity to provide the public a

comprehensive interpretive program and establish the waterfront image as marine and industrial;

- Due to size limitations, most of this site will be utilized for parking;
- The location is important since it provides access to the waterfront and is visible by travellers along Johnston Avenue and River Road;
- Interpretive potential includes: salmon run, the nearby bird sanctuary across the inlet, and industry;
- Existing businesses could benefit from facade improvements and landscaping.

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### Clutesi Haven Marina



This is the main public marina for Port Alberni and is located off River Road at Kitsuksis Creek. It is very well used and currently has a waiting list in excess of 250 boats. notes are as follows:

- The land across the Somass River has a natural and pastoral quality that contrasts with the rest of the waterfront;
  - Currently the site offers limited pedestrian access to the water;
  - The parking lot area has a strip of vegetation along the shore, limiting visual and physical access;
  - The landscaped strip adjacent to the road requires enhancement;
  - Pedestrian pathways and/or sidewalks along the road are inadequate and discontinuous;
  - The parking lot is often full during the summer months with overflow into Stirling Field, but during peak demand times this is also inadequate.
- There are good views of the water from the marina site; this is one of the few areas on the waterfront from which the pulp mill is not visible;



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### Stirling Field



- The pedestrian link to the waterfront is difficult due to the poorly defined crosswalks at River Road;
- The effective and well used trail system that links to Spencer Park offers potential for enhancement and future extension;
- The parking lot and adjacent grass fields provide parking during special events in the summer and provide overflow parking for Clutesi Haven Marina;
- Due to its location adjacent to the Tofino Highway, the site could be appropriate for a high profile attraction that would act as a "hook" for the tourists passing by to the West Coast.

The main focus of this area has been team sports, such as tennis, soccer and baseball, however, with the City moving these activities to new facilities near the Echo Centre, it has the potential to be developed into a facility that features both active and passive recreational activities. Notes are as follows:

- The area is not currently very distinguishable from the highway as a developed park and amenity and it does not display a good sense of entrance or strong identity;

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## 4.6 HARBOUR QUAY & VICINITY



In the early 1980's, the Port Alberni Harbour Quay was developed as a joint initiative of the City and the Harbour Commission. The intent was to develop a facility that would serve the dual purposes of providing an attractive amenity for the use of the community and also serve as an attraction for tourists.

This facility has proven to be a popular addition to the waterfront, as are other immediate attractions such as the "Two Spot" steam locomotive and the MV Lady Rose. However the introduction of such "people oriented" developments into what has and is still predominantly an industrial waterfront has resulted in some logistical problems. Site assessment notes are as follows:

- 
- The Quay is used to full capacity during the summer months but under-utilized during the fall and winter. If there were a greater range of shops and merchandise the Quay would be more of an attraction for residents and visitors plus business would likely improve in the fall and winter;
  - The existing restaurant is too small although it is well sited with good views;
  - The small slide and children's play area is effective but more attractions for children could be provided;
  - The fishing harbour is very well used and there appears to be a shortage of commercial and private moorage space;
  - The BC Packers site is in poor condition and currently somewhat of an eyesore; however it does have potential to be developed into an attractive addition to the Quay;
  - The Lady Rose is a major attraction for the Quay, however storage of cargo and loading of the vessel at the Argyle Street dock conflicts with parking and pedestrian movement;
  - A waiting area for the Lady Rose and Francis Barclay would be desirable;
  - More pedestrian access to the water's edge should be provided;
  - The site would benefit from a better focal point for visitors (the existing fountain does not provide enough visual interest);
  - The semi-enclosed space south of the main Quay area does not seem to be well used;
  - The existing picnic tables are well used and there is a need for more areas to sit;
  - The existing pedestrian pier is well used, sometimes for fishing; an extension of the pier and/or fish cleaning facilities could be considered;
  - The Shell Tank farm conflicts with the pedestrian/tourism focus of the Quay;
  - Many of the buildings adjacent to the Quay could benefit with facade improvement to an established standard;
  - Many areas of the Quay could be improved with feature landscaping.



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North of Harbour Quay



This area extends to the boundary with the Somass Mill and comprises the fishing harbour, a light marine commercial area and parking areas. Aside from the activity in the harbour the only other main attraction in the area is the Port Fish building which contains a commercial fish smoking and packing operation and a small fish sale outlet. Notes are as follows:

- The entire area would benefit from additional landscaping and selective facade improvements;
- The fish sales facility located in the Port Fish building is not evident and does not appear to be thriving in this location;
- Signage could be improved and interpretive signage would help to explain the various activities being observed;
- The waterfront at the Somass Mill is not being utilized and should be considered for the provision of additional moorage or other similar uses.



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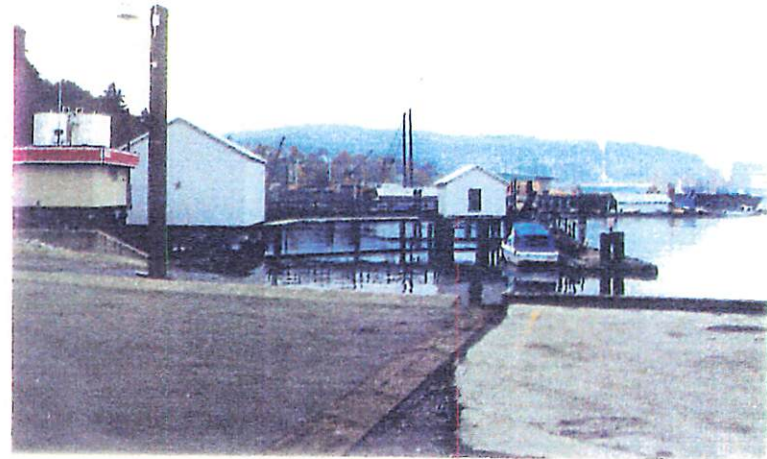
### East of Harbour Quay

The area to the east of Harbour Quay forms an informal gateway to the Quay and is dominated by the former E & N train Station. The area also includes a small park known as "Sea Cadet Park" which is located on a bluff at the foot of Argyle overlooking the Quay. Notes are as follows:

- The train station has recently undergone extensive restoration and improvement to the exterior facade; It is understood that interior renovations are ongoing;
- The boundaries of the parking area adjacent to the station have a limited amount of landscaping which could be enhanced;
- The buildings at the foot of Argyle would benefit from facade improvement and other renovations;
- There is no visual or thematic connection between the downtown and the Quay;
- Sea Cadet Park has the potential to provide views of the harbour, a link to Weaver park and additional parking for Harbour Quay;

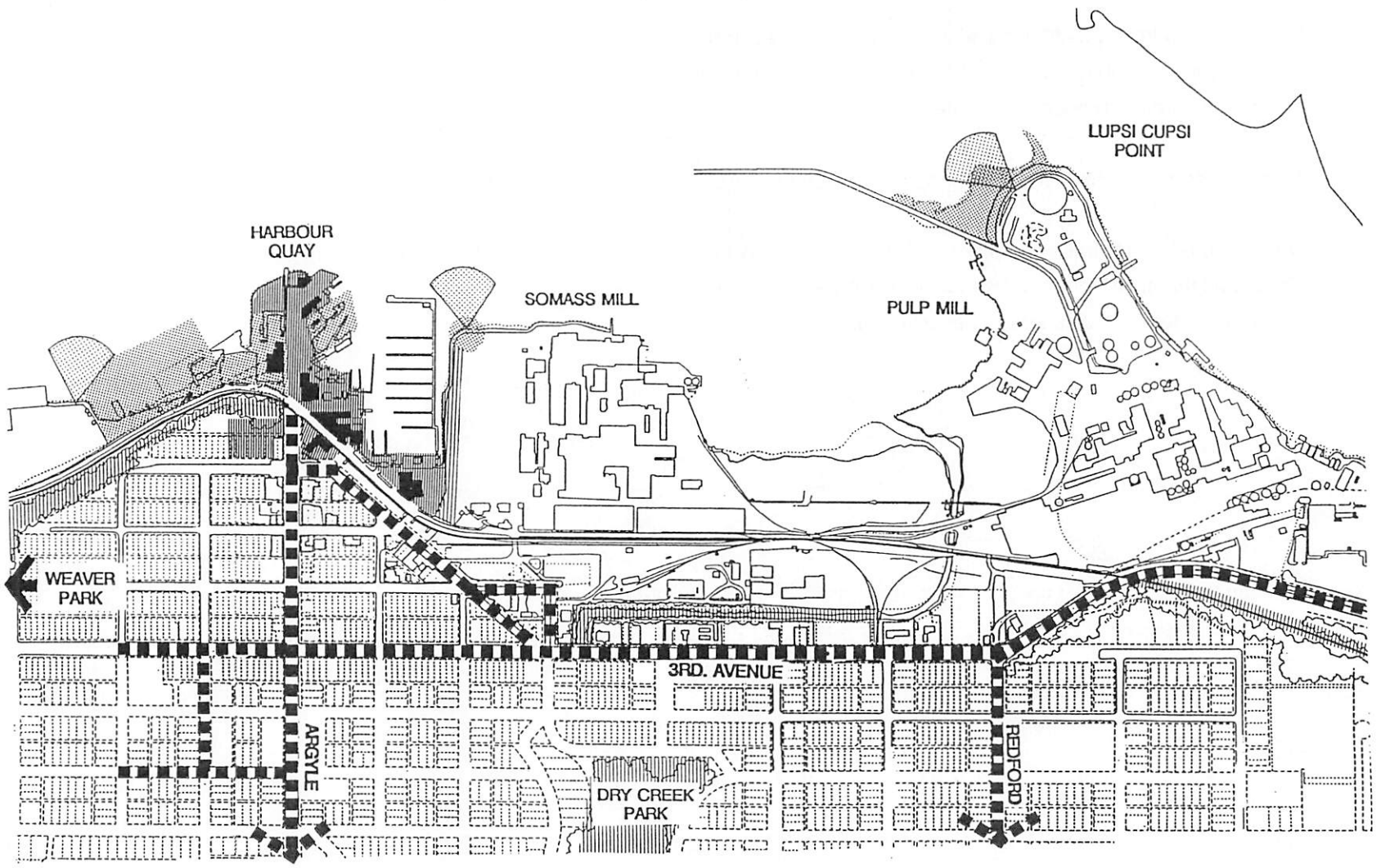
- The park would benefit from enhancement and selective upgrading including additional plantings.

### Harbour Quay to Assembly Wharf

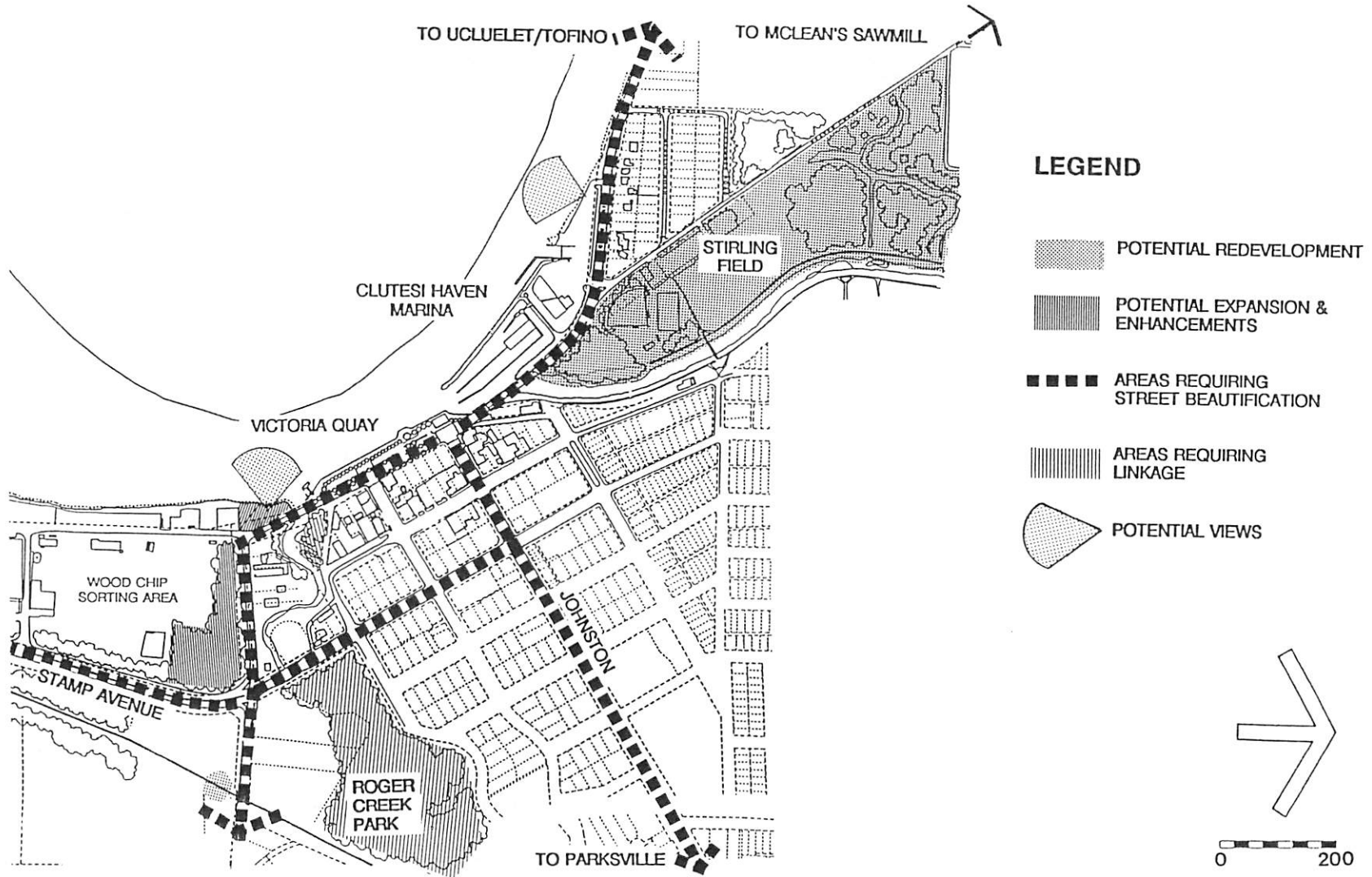


This area currently accommodates a variety of small marine related industries and an Esso tank farm. It is bounded to the South by the Harbour Commission property which is used primarily for storage. Notes are as follows:

- 
- The area is primarily light industrial and currently has little attraction, in spite of the fact that it is one of the few portions of the study area with accessible waterfront;
  - There are no street enhancements or other visual attractions;
  - There is considerable truck and other vehicle traffic along Water Street, and this along with the absence of established pathways or sidewalks tends to discourage pedestrian use.



# SITE ASSESSMENT



## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

During both the public consultation and the on-site assessment, a number of key questions were addressed:

- How is the shoreline currently used and by whom?
- Who will be the principal users of the waterfront in the future?
- What is the character and scale of the natural and man-made environment?
- What are the traffic circulation patterns and problems?
- Where are the barriers to physical access?
- What are the visual opportunities and constraints?
- What are the opportunities for establishing and/or strengthening the linkages along the waterfront and in particular between Harbour Quay and Victoria Quay?

The closer look at the waterfront that this exercise provided turned up many unrealized areas for revitalization, opportunities for improvement of public access, development of new economic activity, and the general creation of new life and energy. In addition, areas with functional or visual problems were identified.

In the following sections a listing is provided of the various recommendations which collectively form the basis of the Shoreline Master Plan.

### 5.2 DESIGN GUIDELINES

The development of each area along the waterfront reflects its use, its opportunities and also the influences of the surrounding area. These differences are dealt with in the recommendations provided in the following sections. However there is also a need for common guidelines that can enhance linkages and establish a "theme" that will help to visually unify what is otherwise a somewhat spread out and disparate waterfront.

A summary of these recommendations are as follows:

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## Zoning

- Zoning for each of the various areas along the waterfront should be evaluated and updated considering existing and projected uses;
  - Design guidelines should be developed for each zone encompassing building height, appearance, setback, landscaping and signage;
  - A review and approval process should be established to ensure that all new developments are in accordance with the established design guidelines;
  - All significant commercial and industrial developments, particularly along the shoreline, should have to submit a report outlining the visual impact of any proposed new development as a part of the approval process.
- Interpretive signage should be provided to identify all historical locations along the waterfront;
  - Descriptive signage should be provided to describe existing industries, such as the pulp mill, which dominate the waterfront but are often quite obscure to both the community and visitors;

## Theme

- A consistent theme should be developed for all major routes in the community and reflected in signage, crosswalks, street furniture, lighting (where appropriate), landscaping and banners;
- Bus stop designs should be developed that reflect the theme and include visitor information;
- Where appropriate, the theme for particular areas such as Victoria Quay and Harbour Quay should be reflected in the style and materials of facade in all the buildings within a reasonable distance;
- If felt to be desirable, elements could be incorporated in the theme (banners, lighting etc.) that could be modified to better

## Signage

- Clear, visible and consistent directional signage should be provided at all key locations to inform visitors of available amenities, information and interpretive centre, Victoria Quay, Harbour Quay and downtown;

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reflect area differences while still incorporating enough elements to provide continuity.

### 5.3 CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

The principal arterial route through the study area consists of a continuous linkage starting at Victoria Quay at the intersection of River Road and Johnston and continues along Gertrude, connecting to Stamp Avenue, Third Avenue to Argyle and Kingsway to Harbour Quay.

In evaluating this route, it became apparent that aside from requirements for additional signage and selective route beautification and enhancement, the route appears adequate and appropriate with two notable exceptions as follows:

#### Redford Connector

A significant amount of industrial traffic along this route originates in the general vicinity of the Redford intersection, proceeds south in the direction of Harbour Quay then doubles back along the industrial road to the Mill.

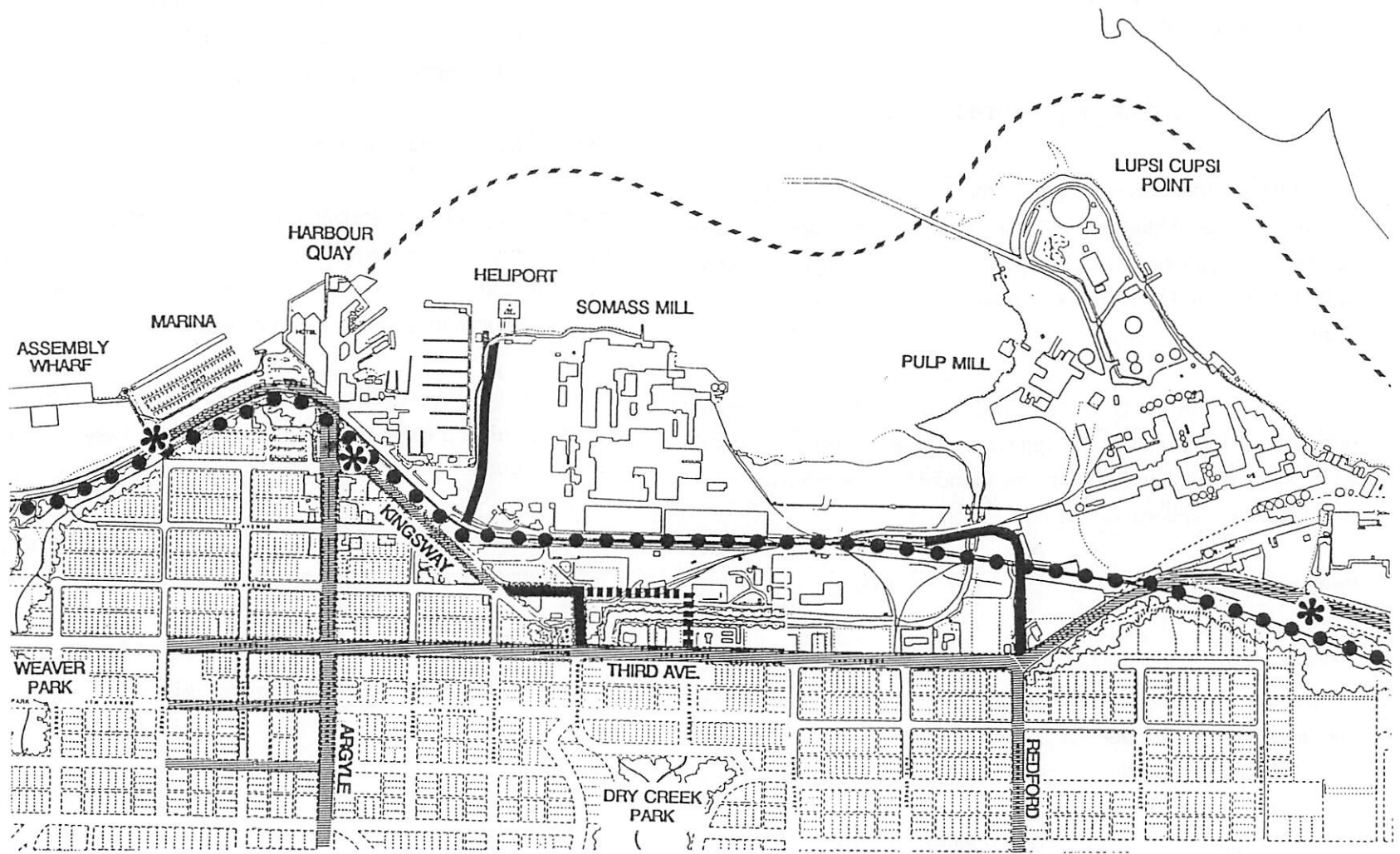
- It is suggested that extending Redford to connect with the industrial road, with a bridge across Dry Creek, will provide a

more direct route for much of the industrial traffic and significantly reduce the amount of industrial traffic and the potential for conflict along the waterfront.

#### Kingsway/Third Avenue Intersection

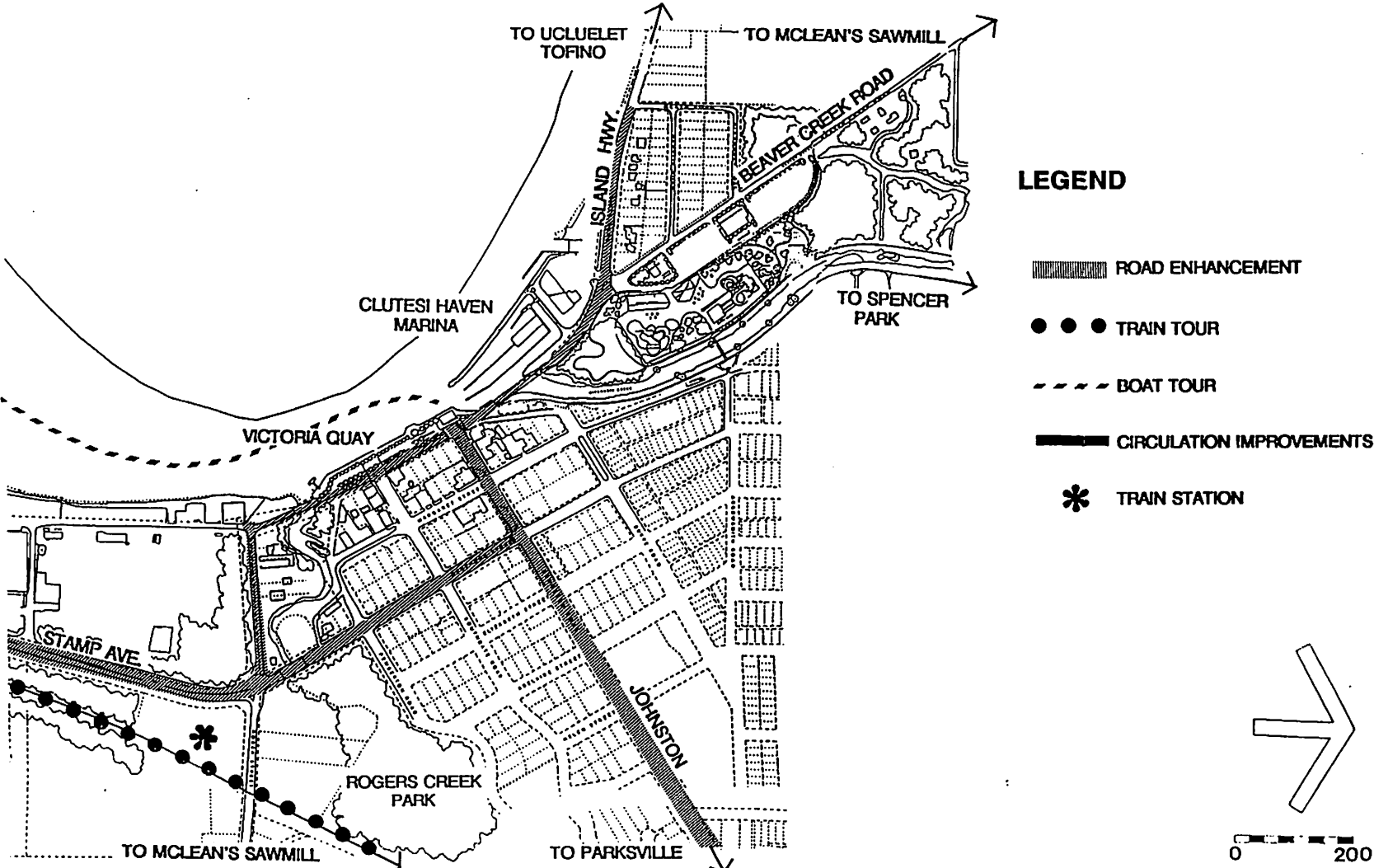
This intersection has a reputation of being one of the safer in the city, perversely due to the fact that everyone knows it is potentially hazardous and makes the appropriate allowances. Unfortunately the same allowances may not be made by visitors.

- It is recommended that the Kingsway connection to Third be closed off and traffic re-routed down Second Avenue and then on to Dunbar where an appropriate signal should be provided;
- As an alternative to the Dunbar connection, Second could be extended to connect with an extension to Napier;
- In either event, in the longer term, it would be desirable to reduce the grade on the Third Avenue hill.





# CIRCULATION AND LINKAGE IMPROVEMENTS



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## 5.4 ACCESS AND ROAD ENHANCEMENTS

### Approach to Port Alberni

- Create an effective large sign to take the place of the various small and conflicting signs presently in place. This sign should be strictly directional, simple and clear;
- Consider implementing a "circle tour" that would encourage visitors to explore more of the community. A suggested tour could start at the junction, and include the following segments:
  - down Redford to Third;
  - along Third to the downtown and Harbour Quay;
  - up Argyle to Tenth;
  - along Tenth to Roger;
  - down Roger to Gertrude;
  - Gertrude to Johnston.

### Johnston Road

- Implement design guidelines;
- Enhance signage at Gertrude and Victoria Quay;
- Consider developing a theme for store fronts and signage;
- Develop street enhancement and beautification scheme for entire street;
- Widen sidewalks at intersections in business district to better define crosswalks and street parking;
- Provide additional landscape enhancements along the street where appropriate.

### River Road

- Implement design guidelines;
- Develop continuous sidewalks along both sides of the road, and improve the connections to the bridge walkways;

- Consider extending the structure of the bridge next to the marina to accommodate a sidewalk at one side, outside the railing, leaving the existing one as a bikeway;
- Develop visible crosswalks at street corners and other key areas;
- Provide directional and interpretive signage;
- Enhance the landscaping along the street.

#### Stamp Avenue

- Implement design guidelines including a street beautification plan with additional trees and flowering shrubs for selective screening and enhancement;
- Continue the developed theme for this key route;
- Develop more distinctive crosswalks;
- Enhance the existing treed area presently screening the MacMillan Bloedel wood chip sorting operations and develop a footpath through the trees to connect to the sidewalk along Stamp Avenue;

- Develop additional feature plantings in front of the mill;
- Consider planting the existing street medians with large deciduous trees;

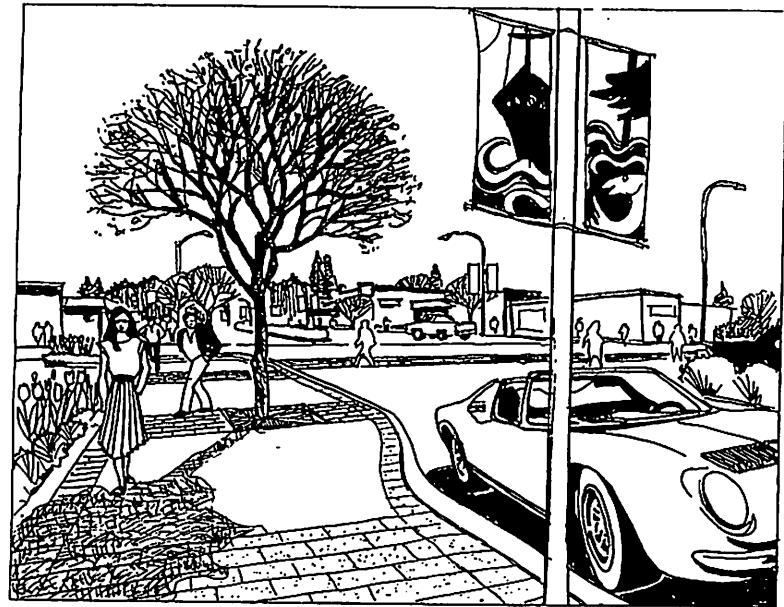
#### Redford Street



- Implement design guidelines;
- Provide directional signage at the foot of Redford and combine with feature landscape elements such as massed shrub plantings, and seasonal flowers to reinforce the "gateway" aspect;
- Develop a green buffer consisting of local landscaping and a row of trees (ie: poplars) on the west side of the existing driveway to screen the industrial operations and beautify the intersection at Third Avenue;
- As an alternative, consider closing the driveway and routing the traffic to the existing driveway located north, on Stamp Avenue. This would provide sufficient room for a mini park that would be one of the gateways to Port Alberni. Signage (acknowledging MacMillan Bloedel), a thematic feature (special lighting, flags, banners, or a sculpture etc), and seating;
- Consider the Redford extension to the industrial road (as per section 5.3);
- Develop distinct crosswalks at the intersections conforming to design guidelines for key routes;

- Provide banners and other enhancements along the street to reflect the developed theme;
- Look at possible areas that require enhancement along street.

### Third Avenue



- Implement design guidelines;
- Consider re-doing the sidewalks with a paving pattern (pavers) and widening some areas to connect to crosswalks, and make parking more protected and distinguishable; Utilize some of the sidewalk widenings, where appropriate, to incorporate plantings and sitting areas;
- Carry through the theme as described above, to include the blocks between Dunbar and Argyle;
- Consider developing a planted median;
- Store fronts and signage should be encouraged to adhere to established design guidelines.

#### Kingsway Street

- Carry through the established main route theme and develop a tie-in with Harbour Quay elements, ie: light standards and some of the building construction details;
- Develop crosswalks and continuous sidewalks at both sides of the street;

- Develop appropriate roadside parking;
- Develop substantial landscaping including rows of street trees planted islands and planters where possible;
- Close off the Third Avenue intersection (as outlined in Section 5.3) and consider the development of a small street end park with landscaping. This would be an appropriate place for interpretive and directional signage.
- Continue with the established guidelines for the Second Avenue - Dunbar or Napier extension.

#### Argyle Street

- Implement design guidelines;
- Consider developing an appropriate theme for store fronts and signage;
- Develop a street enhancement and beautification scheme for the entire street;
- Widen sidewalks at intersections in the business district to better define crosswalks and street parking;

- Provide additional landscape enhancements along street where appropriate.
- Consider providing wider sidewalks, more defined crosswalks and parallel parking using either a distinctive paving pattern or the use of two shades of pavers;
- Create a landscaped median;
- Carry through the Harbour Quay theme in such elements as banners, light standards and paving. Consider reflecting the style and materials of facade in all the buildings within two blocks of the quay;
- Encourage commercial development throughout and particularly near the Quay.

## 5.5 PATHWAYS

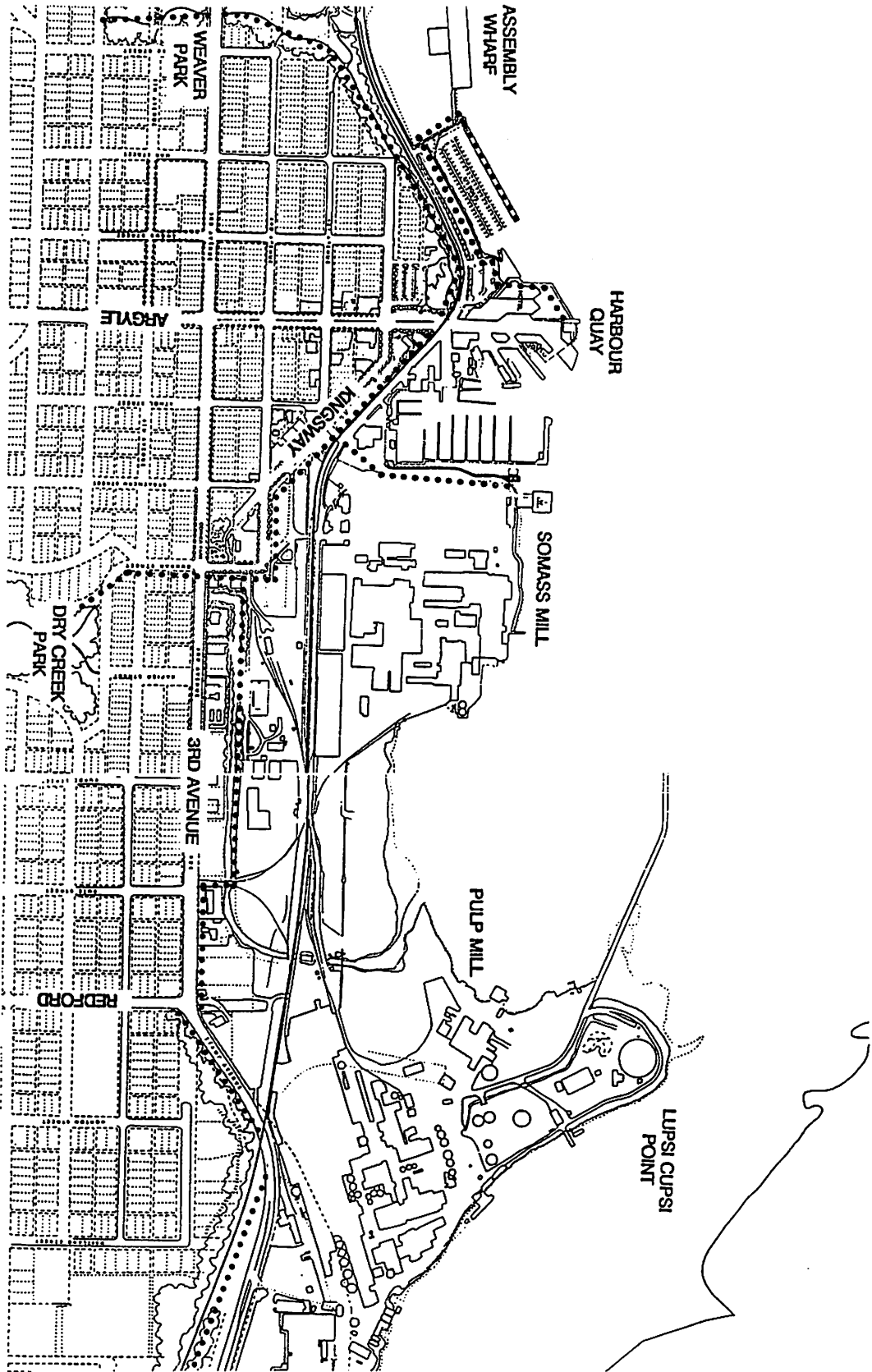
The principal goal of the shoreline pathway system is the establishment of a continuous pedestrian linkage extending from Clutesi Haven Marina to the vicinity of the Assembly Wharf with linkages to other parks along the route as appropriate.

Key aspects of the pathway system should include:

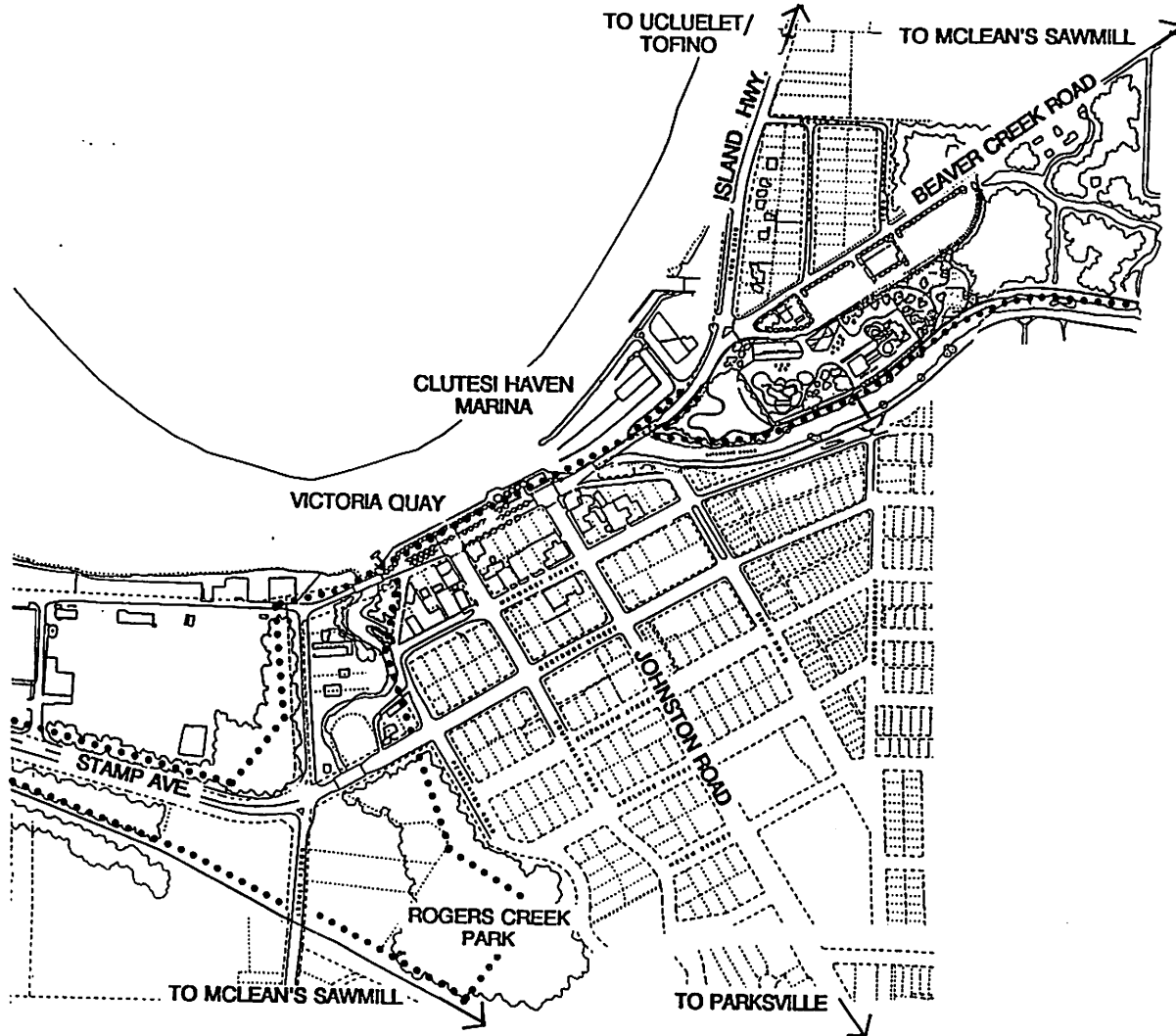
- Maximum pedestrian access to the waterfront wherever this is not in conflict with existing industrial uses;
- The capability of accommodating both pedestrians and bicyclists wherever possible;
- Using existing vegetation with additional plantings where required to provide a continuous varied walking or cycling experience;
- Appropriate interpretive and descriptive signage indicating historical sites along the waterfront and also describing existing industrial and marine operations;

With reference to the accompanying diagrammatic plan, and starting from the south in the vicinity of the Assembly Wharf, the path will have the following segments:

- A link to Weaver Park starting in the vicinity of the Assembly Wharf;
- From the Assembly Wharf, along Water Street with a linkage to the floating breakwater;

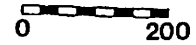
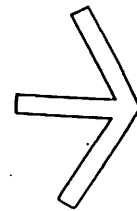


# PATHWAYS



## LEGEND

..... PATHWAYS





- Along the waterfront past the marina to Harbour Quay;
- Kingsway, down Second to Dunbar with a link to Dry Creek Park;
- Off Dunbar along the west side of Dry Creek;
- Along Dry Creek to the Rail Bridge at the "Y" then to Third Avenue;
- Along Third Avenue to the Redford Intersection;
- Along the East side of Stamp Avenue to the rail line;
- Along the Rail line to the area opposite the pulp mill office.

At this point the path splits into two segments as follows:

- Along the rail alignment to a connection with Roger Creek Park and then along the creek downstream to the waterfront; and;
- Across Stamp Avenue at the main entrance to the mill, then along the West side of Stamp Avenue and into a path system extending through the green area at the north end of the MacMillan Bloedel Property;

- Continuing through the green area to the foot of Roger then across the Roger Creek Bridge to link up with the path from Roger Creek park;
- Along the waterfront at Victoria Quay;
- Across the Kitsuksis Creek Bridge and along the waterfront at Clutesi Haven with a link to Stirling Field and beyond to the existing pathway along Kitsuksis Creek.

Key Points with regard to the principal linkages mentioned above are as follows:

#### Weaver Park Link

- Develop a trail from Water Street, in the vicinity of the Harbour Commission offices, along the north bank of the ravine rising up to street level and then to Weaver Park.
- Provide additional plantings and landscape enhancements plus hillside retainment and stabilization as required.

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### Dry Creek Link

- From the main path on Dunbar, follow existing sidewalks to Dry Creek Park;
- Develop Dry Creek Park's frontage to The Quadrant so it can be perceived as a major park and important amenity;
- Consider additional landscape treatment and signage along The Quadrant;
- Expand the facilities within the park and include additional trails plus interpretive and directional signage.

### Roger Creek Link

- Develop a small green space on the north side of the creek as an extension of Roger Creek Park and provide access to the existing trail system throughout the park;
- Extend and enhance the existing trail system in Roger Creek park;
- Establish a trail connection to the railroad right-of-way;

- Develop feature landscaping and signage along Gertrude and Pemberton to create a better sense of entrance and identity for the Park.

### Rail Line Pathway

- A pathway with landscaping should be developed along the rail line right-of-way to provide an attractive walking experience for pedestrians and enhance the rail line corridor.
- Interpretive and descriptive signage should be provided to give an explanation of the history of the railroad and other areas of significance along the route.

## 5.6 OTHER LINKAGES

### Steam Train Excursion

The steam train excursion, which currently operates along the waterfront in the summer, is to be expanded in the future with additional equipment that will allow longer trips to destinations such as the McLeans Sawmill. As a result of this the rail line will become a significant and highly visible tourist corridor through the community.

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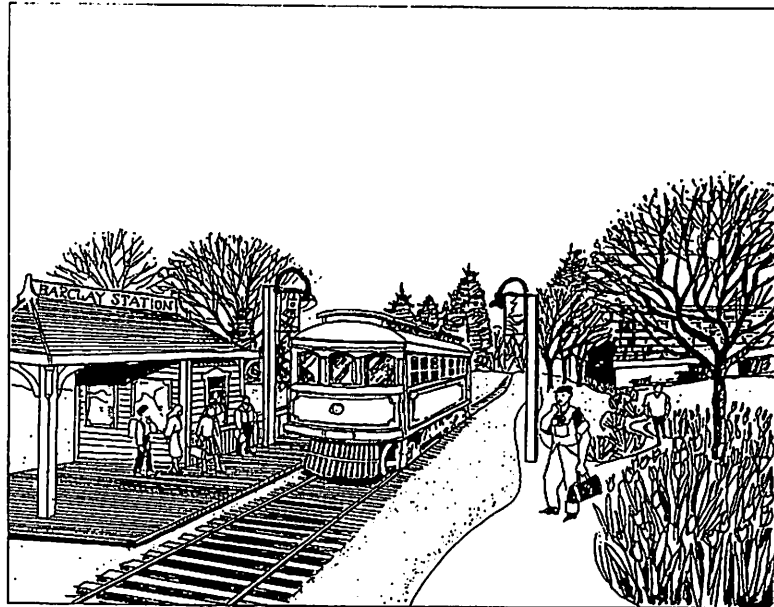
A disadvantage is that the close proximity of the train station to the popular Harbour Quay will result in additional demand for parking in an area that already is somewhat taxed during the peak season.

It is therefore recommended that:

- In concert with the path beautification discussed in Section 5.5, a visual analysis should be undertaken of the entire rail corridor to identify areas that require screening, upgrading or general improvement;
  - An appropriate audio "tour" should be developed that would explain the various parts of the rail line both current and historical, possibly including a presentation on the forest industry and an introduction to the McLeans site;
  - Consideration should be given to having several stops along the route and allowing people to purchase a "day ticket" and board at different locations to decrease the demand for parking at the Harbour Quay Station;
- Consider developing a number of small stations at important points such as:
    - The proposed Harbour Quay marina,
    - MacMillan Bloedel pulp mill, (to access the mill tour)
    - The Barclay Hotel,
    - Johnston Street,
    - Spencer Park (to access the park's pedestrian trail that connects to Stirling Field)
  - Consider providing additional vehicle parking in the immediate vicinity of each station.

In addition to the above, it is also recommended that consideration should be given to developing ways of linking other attractions such as the pulp mill tour and a proposed demonstration forest to the steam train excursion to allow for a more comprehensive visitor experience.

## Tramway/Parking



In developing the Shoreline Master Plan, two difficult circulation issues were identified; that of adequate parking to deal with peak demands at the various attractions along the waterfront, and providing a round trip linkage for the pedestrian pathway system.

Parking is a problem, in peak season, in the vicinity of Harbour Quay and also at Clutesi Haven marina. It will become worse in the future with expansion of the Steam Train Excursion and also the expansion and enhancement of Harbour Quay. However it is neither

appropriate nor possible to provide all of the parking at any of the locations that would be required to meet peak demand since this would result in considerable under-utilization for the balance of the year and would be in conflict with other uses of the area.

Allowing the train to be boarded at different locations, each with some parking, would tend to alleviate parking demand somewhat, particularly in the vicinity of Harbour Quay. However it is doubtful that the train could provide an effective linkage because to do so would be in conflict with its primary intent which is to provide an excursion to the McLeans Sawmill.

As an alternative, it is suggested that consideration be given to providing a streetcar or tram that would operate continually between Harbour Quay marina and a station at Spencer Park with intermediate stops at the above listed train stations.

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Advantages would include the following:

- Existing and additional parking that may be provided along the route could be shared, decreasing demand at any particular location and freeing up space that otherwise would be required for parking in the vicinity of Harbour Quay;
- Communities that have retained or reinstated streetcars have found that they are a strong tourist attraction;
- The streetcar would establish a linkage between the businesses along Johnston and the downtown and Harbour Quay area;
- Residents along the route could use the streetcar for transit purposes to access major waterfront employers such as MacMillan Bloedel and the various shopping areas.

#### Boat Tour

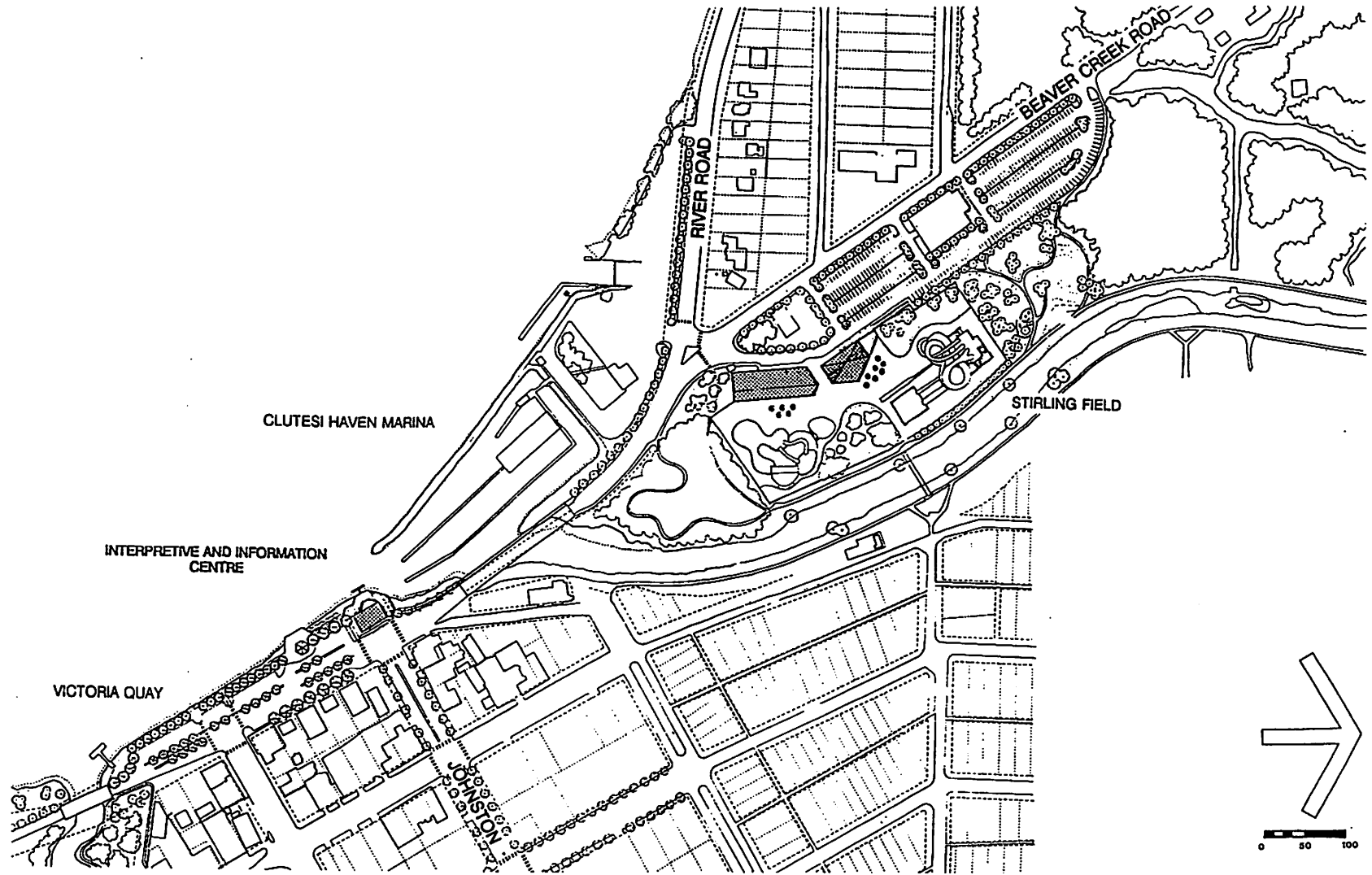
Residents of marine communities often tend to take their waterfront for granted, and forget that to visitors, the everyday uses of the waterfront, including marine traffic and industrial uses of the shoreline are a considerable attraction. It is therefore suggested that

a boat tour be encouraged which would link Harbour Quay with Victoria Quay with intermediate stops at a potential park site at Lupsi Cupsi Point and also on the west shore of the Somass River.

Key points to consider are as follows:

- The boat tour would provide alternate return transportation to pedestrians originating at either end of the waterfront;
- It would have the capability to access areas such as Lupsi Cupsi Point that would not otherwise be available to the public;
- Consider developing an interpretive program for the tour focusing on Port Alberni's industry and fishing, as well as relevant historical aspects relating to them;
- A new park at Lupsi Cupsi Point would offer the possibility of creating a destination marine park, within, yet removed from the City, accessible only by boat. From preliminary considerations, it appears that the site offers attractive views of the city and also up the inlet and could be enhanced by with additional fill, selected screenings and plantings.

# NORTH WATERFRONT RECOMMENDATIONS



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## 5.7 NORTH WATERFRONT: VICTORIA QUAY & VICINITY

### Stirling Field

In excess of 750,000 people pass through Port Alberni every year on their way to the West Coast yet less than 4% actually stop or spend any time (or money) in the city.

The intent of much of the development and improvements proposed herein are to provide attractions and an overall environment that would encourage tourism, however, the majority of these improvements are proposed for parts of the community that currently tourists don't even see. By contrast, virtually every traveller to the West Coast drives right past Stirling Field, which places it in one of the best locations to provide a "hook" to delay tourists for a few hours, pass on the message as to the other attractions that the city has to offer and hopefully encourage a longer stay.

In addition, due to the relocation of existing sports fields, the site is available for redevelopment and enhancement which could include the following considerations:

- Create a distinct and strong focal point for the park. This could be an amenity such as a water slide, amusement, or theme park;
- Develop subordinated facilities and attractions that functionally reinforce the main amenity. (ie: water and conventional playgrounds, well developed picnic areas, information/interpretive kiosk, food concessions, sitting areas, small grass field for unstructured games, trails etc.)
- Create visual elements that reflect the theme for Port Alberni and make the park attractive and distinct. (ie: feature landscaping, a sculpture, monument or thematic object, flags, banners, well designed signage, etc.)
- Develop and landscape the park frontage along Beaver Creek Road, emphasizing the portion that faces Island Highway so it can be easily recognized as an attractive amenity from the highway. (visual continuity, colour, signage, etc.)
- Improve the park's pedestrian link to Clutesi Haven Marina by developing better relationships between crosswalks, sidewalks and the trail system.



- Strengthen and enhance the present pedestrian trails throughout the park.
- Develop more parking to serve new facilities and to provide overflow for Clutesi Marina and waterfront users.
- Develop an image throughout the park consistent with the waterfront theme.
- Provide the appropriate green buffers to the adjacent residential area.

#### Clutesi Haven Marina

Clutesi Haven Marina functions well as-is and the only improvements proposed are those that would enhance the site, continue the community theme or complement the proposed developments for Stirling Field. Key points are as follows:

- Develop a landscaped strip and continuous sidewalk along the side of the road and entrance;
- Develop a walkway from the picnic area and shore to the main sidewalk along the road to connect to Victoria Quay;

- Develop a waterfront theme at this point (lighting, banners, cohesive signage etc.);
- Open views in the vegetation strip along the parking lot;
- Consider developing observation decks and/or a boardwalk along the shore;
- Develop a safe crosswalk to Stirling Field Park.

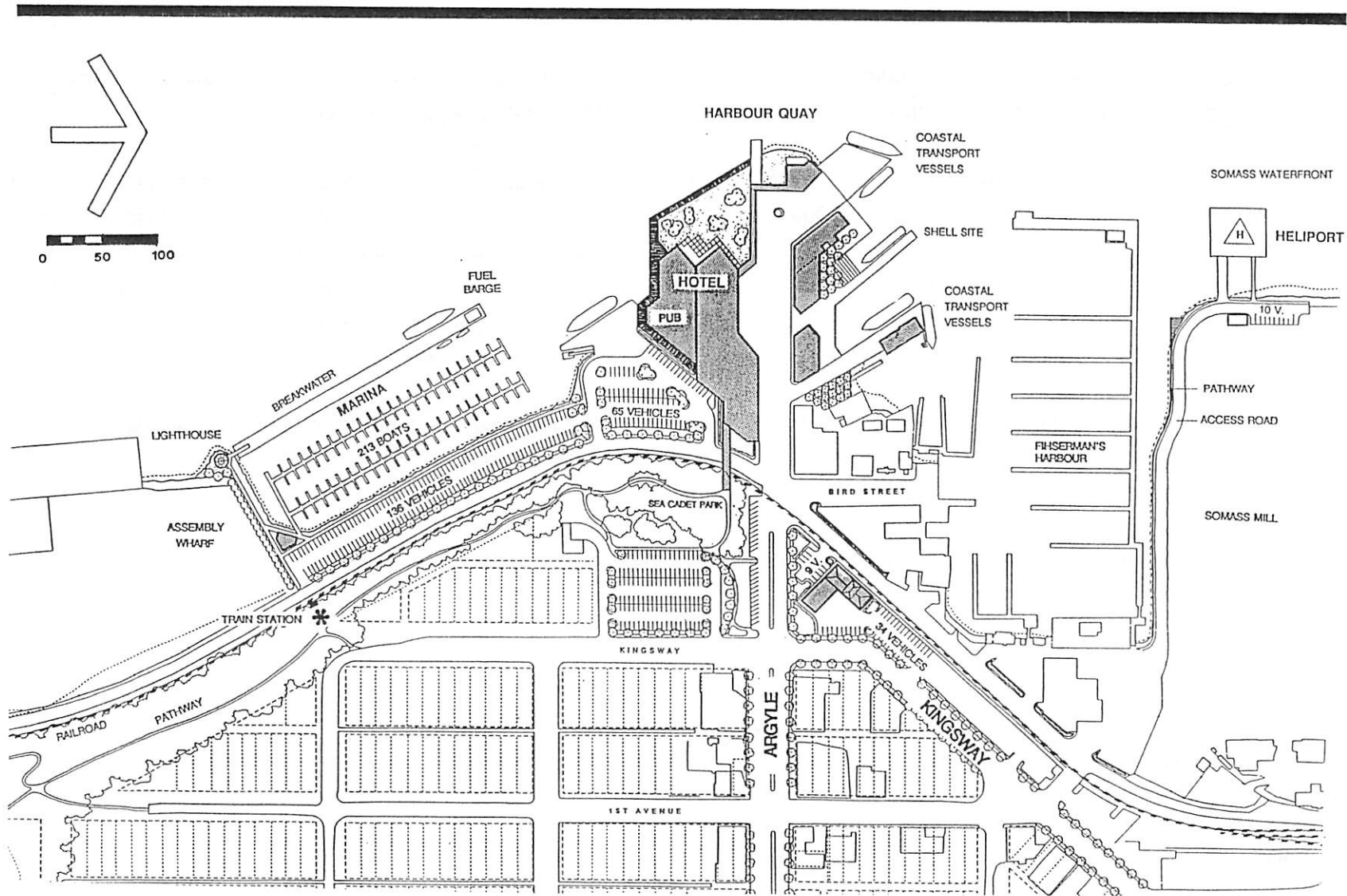
#### Victoria Quay

Victoria Quay is in need of major improvements including facade improvements, road and parking improvements and general enhancements and beautification, however, the majority of this has been dealt with in the plans that have been already developed for the site by the City which are currently being implemented.

In addition to the implementation of these plans it is also recommended that consideration be given to the following:

- Remodel and restore the present Regional District building site into an interesting and distinct focal point to be visible from Johnston Avenue. Consider housing a tourist information centre

# SOUTH WATERFRONT RECOMMENDATIONS



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and display of the various industrial operations. Develop the surrounding area with decks and landscaping;

- Develop street and crosswalk designs to reflect the marine theme and some design elements of Harbour Quay;
- Establish a link to Roger Creek Park;
- Encourage commercial development across from Victoria Quay;
- Implement design guidelines for signs and store fronts;
- Develop sitting areas along the sidewalk;
- Encourage restaurants, the sale of fast foods, souvenirs, art galleries etc;
- Encourage street vendors and entertainers;

## **5.8 SOUTH WATERFRONT: HARBOUR QUAY & VICINITY**

Harbour Quay is an established attraction for Port Alberni with a developed theme and a defined function, however it has yet to reach

the "critical mass" of shops and other amenities that would allow it become a significant tourist draw.

The focus of much of the proposed improvement is related to continuing the existing mix of commercial and light industry uses with selective enhancements. In addition, recommendations are provided regarding specific opportunities for additional development or better utilization of existing areas that became apparent during the progress of the work.

The following is a summary of the proposed improvements and developments:

## General Site Enhancements



- Re-design the existing fountain as a more significant visual element. Consider incorporating a sculpture and modifying the water jets;
- Build new shops and extend the existing buildings to incorporate a greater variety of businesses;
- Consider consolidating the existing restaurant and Lady Rose areas into additional shops, with offices above;
- Refurbish building facades that conflict with the Harbour Quay theme by using the same colour scheme, materials and style of signage;
- Enhance the existing paving surface by incorporating a second colour of pavers as well as a paving pattern;
- Maintain the general colour scheme for Harbour Quay and enhance it with selected colour accents to enrich its visual quality and convey a more lively image;
- Consider replacing the existing banners with a colourful design composed of symbolic images reflecting the theme for Port Alberni. Consider also incorporating the existing Quay logo in the banner design;
- Develop guidelines for the design of store signs and replace existing as appropriate;
- Create landscaped areas where possible and incorporate more trees on the site.

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- Develop open areas facing the water for sitting, outdoor performances, eating etc.
  - Create opportunities for outdoor activities and small performances;
  - Enhance these spaces as appropriate with special paving, street furniture, signage, landscaping, awnings etc.

#### Harbour Commission Offices

The Port Alberni Harbour Commission is one of the only ports in B.C. that maintains its administrative offices in the same location as the storage and shipping operations. Although this may have been desirable in the past, it may not be as necessary now. As an alternative, it is recommended that consideration be given to developing office space in the Quay. This would serve the following purposes:

- The Quay need additional businesses and off-season traffic; one way of providing this is by encouraging marine related offices to locate in the Quay;

- Typically the businesses could be located in two or three storey building with the ground floor space available for interpretive displays and stores;
- The Harbour commission by becoming an "anchor" tenant would encourage other businesses to relocate in the area and hasten development;
- Such uses would also be complementary to the development of the proposed hotel mention offices for whale watching coastal tours etc.

#### Hotel

The development of a sophisticated 60-70 room waterfront hotel should be considered at the south end of the Quay at the present Promac site. This would address the need to increase commercial space, provide a more varied food service and overnight accommodation. Key considerations are as follows:

- The hotel should be configured so as to minimize the effect on existing views of the water from key areas such as Argyle Street and Harbour Quay itself;

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- Style, scale, materials and colours to tie in with the rest of Harbour Quay;
  - Rooms should face primarily south and west;
  - The north face of the hotel at ground level should be primarily small shops
  - A major restaurant should be included facing south or south-west, but accessed and visible from the quay area;
  - A pub could be included facing the proposed marina;
  - A pedestrian promenade should be provided on the south side of the hotel, along the shore to provide for a continuous walking experience along the outside of the Quay;
  - Consideration should be given to providing a covered pedestrian link or bridge connecting the hotel with the parking area at Sea Cadet Park, this would allow visitors direct and convenient access to the hotel from the parking area.

#### Cruise Ship/Coastal Transport Vessel Moorage

There is an increasing demand in the vicinity of Harbour Quay for more and better moorage for the many vessels that serve the tourist trade, whale watching, fishing excursion boats and coastal transport.

Since these uses are complementary to the focus of the Quay, the following recommendations are suggested to make better use of existing moorage and provide additional moorage where possible:

- Relocate the service boats to an area adjacent to the existing B.C. Packers site to free up both faces of the Argyle Street dock for moorage of larger vessels;
- Consider renovating and improving the B.C. Packers property to accommodate coastal transportation operations with two moorage spots provided. This would free up the Argyle Street dock and eliminate conflict and congestion:
- Demolish the existing building behind the B. C. Packers building to improve truck access to the pier;

- Re-model the B.C. Packers building to accommodate an office, waiting room and a cargo storage area. Develop the rest of the building as either shops or food services;
- Develop pedestrian sitting areas on the B.C. Packers pier where there is no conflict with truck traffic;
- Formalize the shore edge by filling to create more shore frontage and tie in with pier;

#### Shell Site

Fuel tank farms in Port Alberni have been historically located on the waterfront primarily because fuel deliveries used to arrive by barge. This justification no longer exists now that all fuel arrives overland plus it is now generally considered undesirable to locate fuel storage in a tsunami zone.

In the case of the Shell Tank farm, there is the added problem that the operation of the fuel facility in the middle of what is a developing attraction is undesirable and in conflict with the other uses of the Quay. It is therefore recommended that the Shell tank farm should be removed from the Quay and the site and wharf enhanced to provide additional moorage. Key considerations include:

- Consider the development of an interpretive display for the "Santiago" and redevelop and enhance the existing wharf to accommodate the Santiago and/or to provide additional moorage;
- Develop an open landscaped pedestrian area for outdoor eating and viewing the "Santiago" and Harbour activity.
- Allow for areas that would accommodate street performers and vendors;

#### Marina:

Consider the development of a marina and associated facilities in the area between the Quay and the Assembly Wharf. With reference to the accompanying diagram, the proposed Harbour Quay marina would consist of the following key components:

- Floating Breakwater - This would be a 187 meter long concrete caisson-type breakwater anchored to shore at its inside edge, then by crossed anchor chains extending to anchors in deep water and either to anchors or rock anchors on the lee side. Shore access would be by gangway that would provide fair weather pedestrian access.



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The breakwater would be designed to permit the moorage of vessels on both sides and would accommodate a fuel barge at the outer end. It is anticipated that the fuel barge would be provided by a distributor.

- Marina - The marina would be fully serviced with electrical, lighting, potable water and sanitary disposal, and capable of accommodating up to 213 boats of various sizes ranging typically from 6 to 10 meters in length. A combined marina office and marine store could also be provided.
- Shoreline Improvements and Parking - Shoreline improvements would include removal and relocation of all existing infrastructure and businesses in the area between the Harbour Commission Site and Harbour Quay, selective filling, levelling and shoreline improvements and creation of a level parking area for 136 vehicles with landscape enhancements along Water Street.

A shoreline pedestrian walkway would be provided that would run along the waterfront from Harbour Quay and terminate at a small promontory, "Lighthouse Point", built on fill at the south end of the floating breakwater. This promontory would be the

site of the relocated Chrome Island Lighthouse and would provide a viewing area for watching the ships being loaded at the assembly wharf and also for accessing the floating breakwater.

#### Sea Cadet Park

This park has the potential to provide views of the harbour, a link to Weaver park and additional parking that would serve both downtown and Harbour Quay. Specific recommendations would include:

- Formalize the vehicle parking lot, utilizing the newly acquired lots;
- Develop viewpoint areas along the top of the bank;
- Develop a trail system throughout the park and along the top of the bank to connect to Weaver Park;
- Consider acquiring and demolishing the existing building on Argyle and develop a landscaped strip and a sidewalk facing Kingsway.

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### Fisherman's Harbour

Fisherman's Harbour is one of the most active and congested parts of the Port Alberni waterfront. Although this is a working waterfront, the activity in the harbour is a major attraction and as such it would be appropriate to consider some selective enhancements to the area. Considerations would include the following:

- Provide additional landscaping and selective facade improvements throughout the area, reflecting the theme developed for Harbour Quay but differentiating this area as "Fisherman's Harbour";
- Relocate the fish sales facility currently located in the Port Fish building to Harbour Quay;
- Consider running tours through the fish canning operation complete with "tastings" and turn the current fish sale facility into a reception area;
- Provide interpretive signage along the shoreline as appropriate;
- Develop a shoreline promenade with viewing areas and other enhancements as appropriate;

### Somass Waterfront

Although in the past, a dock to serve ocean going ships was maintained at the Somass mill, currently the waterfront in this area represents an under-utilized asset. Given the demand for additional moorage in the vicinity of harbour Quay and the need for more available waterfront, it is recommended that access be developed to this area with the following considerations:

- Provide a double lane road along the edge of the Somass property to access the waterfront;
- Continue the shoreline pedestrian promenade on the water side of the road from Fisherman's Harbour and develop a viewing deck/pier at the end to allow viewing of the harbour;
- Introduce landscaping improvements and other features to enhance the area;
- Consider the development of the old Somass Wharf site to provide for a small parking area, an office/service building and the provision of a wharf or a heliport (as shown).