

Development in Union Bay

Updated August 2026

Welcome to Union Bay!

Part of the Comox Valley Regional District's (CVRD) Electoral Area A, Union Bay has a rich history set in a beautiful coastal environment. Development in the area has been discussed for many years – this backgrounder will provide additional information potential buyers should know about the Union Bay Estates lands, also known as the Kensington Comprehensive Development Area.



About Union Bay

K'ómoks First Nation and Union Bay

Union Bay is within the traditional and unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation who have lived in and been stewards of the area since time immemorial. The land is a part of K'ómoks rights and title included in their recent treaty signing and is included in their Cultural Heritage Policy. Provincial archaeological sites have been identified in the area.

Colonial History

In more recent times, Union Bay has served as an industrial hub connecting active logging and mining industries with a harbour that saw extensive shipping. There is ongoing remediation of neighbouring land to address issues with coal pollution left by industrial activity in the past.

It has a long-standing residential community of roughly 1,150 residents who live in a coastal, riverine environment adjacent to continued aquaculture and forestry industries.

All of this makes for a beautiful, diverse, sensitive, and culturally rich environment that requires thoughtful consideration about development processes and outcomes.

Working in a Regional District

Welcome to Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound). There are some things that you should know about developing in an electoral area as compared to a municipality.

- Roads and subdivision in electoral areas are not the jurisdiction of the regional district, but are managed provincially. Developers need to work with the Ministry for development approvals and infrastructure planning.
- New services in electoral areas need to be approved by residents in the area, as well as the CVRD board and Electoral Area Services Committee.
- CVRD services are funded by those who use the service. For example, only those who are in the fire service area, pay for the service. Funds from one service cannot be transferred to another service.

Developers will have to work with the CVRD's planning and development team to confirm plans to meet the area's requirements.

Union Bay and our Regional Growth Strategy

In 2011, the CVRD adopted a Regional Growth Strategy that maps out future growth for the Comox Valley. In that strategy, Union Bay is designated as a 'settlement node'. As a settlement node, Union Bay has a policy basis to support up to 10 per cent of the Region's planned growth following the establishment of community servicing.

Settlement nodes are intended to be developed in a compact and transit-supportive manner. Once water, sewer and transit service is established, the Kensington Comprehensive Development (Union Bay Estates) lands are zoned to enable housing supply that will exceed the 20-year housing needs identified in the CVRD's most recent housing needs report for Electoral Area 'A'; www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/housingneeds



A NOTE: Provincial Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing provisions do not apply to the Region's settlement nodes as they do not have community sewer servicing.



Kensington Comprehensive Development Area

Development of the Union Bay Estates land – part of the Kensington Comprehensive Development area – has been under discussion for many years. In 2010, a Master Development Agreement was signed, with minor changes approved in 2017.

There are five key areas where the CVRD has authority on development of the Kensington Comprehensive Development Area.

For background on the Union Bay Estates project, visit our website www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/unionbayestates

1. Master Development Agreement (MDA)

Two section 219 covenants, together comprising the MDA, are registered against the titles for lands within the "Kensington Comprehensive Development Zone" – currently referred to as the Union Bay Estates. These covenants set out a list of obligations on the land that apply to all successive owners.

The MDA contains a list of significant amenities to be provided by the owners both in advance of subdivision and during the development of the land it covers. The MDA also includes standards and specific amenities that development within the project must meet. Some amenities are due at specific dates or stages of development, while others can be provided at any time.

The MDA is found here:

www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/unionbayestates

Examples of amenities that have already been delivered:

- Affordable Housing Contribution [Sec. 2.5(a)]: Cash contribution provided in 2017.
- Initial Transfer of Parks and Trails [Sec. 2.5(b)]: Subject to conditions within covenants CB161549-CB16162.
- Donation of Fire Hall site [Sec. 3.1(j)]: Land has been dedicated but not serviced.

1. Master Development Agreement cont.

Examples of amenities not yet delivered, which are required prior to subdivision

- Remainder of Parks and Trails [Sec. 3.1(e)]
- Distribution of Water [(Sec. 3.1(r)]
- Sewer System [Sec. 3.1(s)]

Other amenities that have also not been delivered yet include:

- Affordable Housing [3.1(b)] to be provided no later than December 1, 2027, including: 6 lots (or cash-in-lieu) from CDA2 and 24 lots (or cash-in-lieu) from remainder of other CDAs
- Improvements to Parks and Trails [3.1(g), (h), (y)]: Consistent with CVRD Parks Dept design standards, constructed prior to receipt of occupancy permit [2.5(c)] including 15 years maintenance
- Construction of a Public Assembly Place [3.1(i)] in CDA1 or CDA3
- Transfer of a School Site Lot in CDA1 to the School District [3.1(k)]
- Donation of \$10,000 for bus shelters [3.1(o)]
- Donation of \$25,000 for public transit [3.1(p)]
- Construction of a transit exchange [3.1(w)]
- Use of geothermal technology or other similar measures in CDA3

Of particular importance, MDA section 2.2 states “*The Developer further covenants and agrees with the Regional District that it will not subdivide (other than by way of an Excluded Subdivision) or build on any portion of the Lands until the Developer has for that portion of the Lands being subdivided or developed, delivered to and approved by the Regional District detailed drawings, generally consistent with the Area Plan of:*

- the amenities to be provided;*
- the On-Site Works to be constructed; and*
- the improvements to be constructed on that portion of the Lands.”*

2. Zoning Bylaw

All subdivision and development, including the use of land, needs to be consistent with the Zoning Bylaw in effect, currently Bylaw 520. Section 1102 of the bylaw currently contains regulations specific to the Union Bay Estates Project.

3. Official Community Plan

All land alterations and the construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure may require the following Development Permits as described in corresponding sections:

Development Permit	Applicable Area	Guidelines*	
		OCP section	Zoning section
Freshwater	Area within 30 metres of a watercourse	80	1201
Coastal	Area within 30 metres of shoreline	81	1202
Eagle and Heron Nest	Specified radius around a known nest	82	1203
Steep slopes	Area on or within 15 metres of a slope with >30% grade	83	1204
Kensington Comprehensive	All lands within the Union Bay Estates Project (illustrated in Map 5 of OCP)	87	n/a

*Inclusive of all policies in OCP sections 76-79.

4. Floodplain Management Bylaw

Given the coastal and riverine environment, land development needs to be guided by a qualified professional. Development needs to be planned and designed to avoid flood hazard and coastal development strategy should be coordinated. CDA2, CDA3, and a portion of CDA1 are particularly affected. Buyers are encouraged to contact the CVRD to discuss how the Provincial and EGBC guidelines are applied relative to the CVRD's Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Bylaw (No. 890).

The siting of buildings or structures and the construction of floor systems is to be consistent with Bylaw No. 890. This includes the requirement for a professional engineer to prescribe site-specific flood construction levels and floodplain setback on lands within the vicinity of the coast, consistent with Provincial and EGBC guidelines which account for flooding events with the area's anticipated sea level rise.

4. Floodplain Management Bylaw cont.

Note that Bylaw No. 890 was adopted March 2026 and aligns the bylaw with the Provincial Coastal Flood Guidelines and has mapping prepared by KWL (www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/coastalflood). Questions regarding application of the mapping to specific sites and/or questions regarding the bylaw can be directed to CVRD planning staff.

5. Development Cost Charges

There are three Development Cost Charges that would apply to development of the Union Bay Estates lands.

Parkland Development

Parkland development cost charges support the acquisition and development of Electoral Area community parks and trails. As per Bylaw No. 238, all new dwelling units and tourist accommodations are subject to Parkland Development Cost Charges at the time of building permit issuance.

Water Servicing

The Union Bay Estates is within the Union Bay Water Local Service Area. Development Cost Charges will be charged in accordance with Bylaw No. 668.

A Potable Water Servicing Agreement www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/media/15405 was signed by the former Union Bay Improvement District (now CVRD) and Kensington Island Properties in 2017.

The agreement details standards and conditions for water servicing including commitments to funding the expansion of water infrastructure. Questions regarding water servicing should be directed to CVRD engineering staff.

Sewer Servicing

The Kensington Comprehensive Development Zone requires all lots to be connected to a community sanitary sewer system. The Master Development Agreement includes standards and conditions that the sewer system must meet. As there is currently no community sanitary sewer system in this area, it is the developer's responsibility to satisfy this obligation.

The CVRD has been exploring options to extend regional sewer servicing to Union Bay, in partnership with K'ómoks First Nation, through the proposed Sewer Extension South Project. This project presents an opportunity for the developer of the Union Bay Estates project to partner with government to deliver community sewer services to Union Bay. Further discussion with CVRD engineering staff is required to determine how such a partnership may satisfy Master Development Agreement conditions for a sanitary sewer system.

The Union Bay Estates is within the Comox Valley Sewerage Service Area. If regional sewer services are extended to Union Bay, Development Cost Charges will be charged in accordance with Bylaw No. 572. For more information, visit:

www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sewerextension



Questions? More Info?

Email: planningdevelopment@comoxvalleyrd.ca Phone: 250-334-6000

Web: www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/unionbayestates