

## 7 Articles

### Lagoon Estates Colwood (Victoria BC) British Columbia



**A 660-unit \$350 million dollar five-tower and townhouse upscale housing development on 47.4 acres** designed for retirees and empty nesters by Esquimalt Lagoon in Colwood will go to public hearing. Colwood councillors have agreed to its planning and zoning committee's recommendation that bylaws be drafted to rezone property and amend the official community plan for Lagoon Estates. This development is one street over from [our location](#) adjacent to the Esquimalt Lagoon area on a 47.4 acre site in Colwood, one of the 13 municipalities making up the Victoria Capital Regional District on the southern tip of Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

- [May 10, 2006 Report to Planning & Zoning Committee](#)
- [May 16, 2006 Minutes of Planning & Zoning Committee meeting](#)

### Controversial lagoon project wins approval

Bill Cleverley, Times Colonist  
July 12, 2006

Colwood councillors have given the green light to a 585-unit high-density highrise development that will preserve 40 per cent of the 19.2-hectare waterfront parcel on Esquimalt Lagoon as greenspace.

Peter Daniel of Woodburn Management plans to put 28 buildings on the site that straddles the fish-bearing Sellick Creek and sits between Esquimalt Lagoon and a bird sanctuary to the southeast; Heatherbell Road (and Royal Roads) to the northwest; Seafeld Road to the northeast and Lagoon Road to the southwest.

The proposal called Lagoon Estates has split the neighbourhood, with many strongly objecting to highrises in their single-family area. But planning committee chairman Coun. David Saunders lauded Daniel at Monday night's council meeting for his responsiveness to community concerns.

Two of the planned buildings have been reduced to four storeys from eight and one to six storeys from eight. Three buildings are to be 10 to 12 storeys, but originally the developer was looking at 15 storeys.

Saunders said the "absolutely atrocious" existing zoning required only five per cent greenspace dedication. If the maximum number of duplexes allowed were built, along with illegal suites, the population of the subdivision and associated number of cars would be greater than what is being proposed, he said.

Coun. Gordie Logan said his vote in favour was more a vote against the current zoning.

"It would see really a beautiful piece of property ruined forever," Logan said of the existing zoning, adding that the Lagoon Estates project was a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to save greenspace next to a bird sanctuary.

Key for most of the councillors was the offer to retain 40 per cent of the property as greenspace, including a gift of the lower 6.5 hectares of waterfront for a park, \$4-million worth of improvements to the banks of Selleck Creek, and the development of two kilometres of trails.

Daniel said the value of the proposed park is \$13 million.

Coun. Jason Nault voted against the bylaw to amend the Official Community Plan for the development. But once that bylaw was passed, he voted in favor of the rezoning.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think we would be getting that much parkland out of this site," Nault said.

"The environmentally important lands for the migratory bird sanctuary are permanently protected as parkland. Again, under current zoning they could build pretty close to the lagoon and that habitat would be lost."

Only Coun. Cynthia Day voted against the rezoning.

She said she kept a tally sheet at the public hearing and by her phone, and that the people opposed to the development outnumbered those in favour.

"I think that is somewhat unfortunate, with the number of good things that were on the table," she said.

"However, I really did hear loud and clear from the residents who live down there that that's not the neighbourhood they want to live in.

"They didn't want to live next to 12-storey buildings. They knew what was on the table; they knew what was being offered and they clearly told me that's not what they want," Day said.

Mayor Jody Twa had excused himself to avoid a possible conflict, as he lives adjacent to the site.

The city and the developer now will spend several months reaching a detailed development agreement for the site before bylaws get final approval. The agreement will cover such matters as the exact location of buildings and roads, landscaping, drainage issues, sidewalks and traffic improvements.

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## **Colwood to focus on huge housing development**

By Bill Cleverley  
Times Colonist staff  
May 13, 2006

Colwood councillors will get their first official look Tuesday at a proposal to build a \$350-million, 660-unit, five-tower and townhouse-housing development at Esquimalt Lagoon.

Frank Limshue of Focus Engineering is making the application to develop a 19.2-hectare site owned by the Ridley Brothers Development Corp. between Royal Roads University and the lagoon.

The undeveloped site straddles the fish-bearing Selleck Creek and sits between [Esquimalt Lagoon](#) and a bird sanctuary to the southeast; Heatherbell Road (and Royal Roads) to the northwest; Seafield Road to the northeast and Lagoon Road to the southwest.

The development — to be called Lagoon Estates — would involve 28 buildings, among them three towers of 10 to 12 storeys and two of eight storeys.

The bulk of the housing would be clustered in what the developers call low-rise units (four to eight storeys) and terrace units (four to six storeys) for a total of 375 units.

The three “mid-rise” towers (two 10 storeys and one 12 storeys) would total 219 units. There also would be 66 townhouse units in 13 buildings. Most of the parking (1.6 spaces per unit) would be underground.

The proposal, which goes before council's planning and zoning committee Tuesday at 7 p.m., calls for almost one third of the site — or 6.5 hectares — to be dedicated as greenspace. Enhancement of the riparian (riverbank) habitat for Selleck Creek also is proposed.

Logged in the early 1900s and then farmed, the site has been occasionally cleared and drained, a city staff report says. It is now overgrown with largely invasive species and has some old-growth heritage trees, largely to the northwest.

The developer is also proposing to build most of the units to the rear of the property, away from the lagoon.

The current zoning of AG2 allows one and two-family dwellings and agriculture which, in theory, could allow 172 to 195 lots with a duplex on each for a total of 344 to 390 dwellings.

Mayor Jody Twa said the proponent has undertaken extensive consultation with the neighbourhood and with local conservation groups.

"I think the developer, by leaving the bottom third of the property untouched, has got a lot of people on board," Twa said. But he expects the project, which he estimated would take eight years to build, has a long road ahead before approval.

"It's a pretty dynamic project ... It's not like we're getting a store or a one-building or two-building project."

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### **660-unit project gets early backing**

By Bill Cleverley  
Times Colonist staff  
May 17, 2006

A five-tower 660-unit housing development that will radically alter the Colwood landscape beside Esquimalt Lagoon is being recommended to council.

Despite several residents expressing concerns about density and increased traffic, Colwood's planning and zoning committee decided to recommend bylaws be prepared to rezone the property and amend the official community plan. That is provisional on more than 20 conditions, ranging from the completion of geotechnical / hydrogeological studies to redesign of roads.

"I would like to see it go to public hearing," said committee chairman David Saunders. "It's a very exciting proposal."

Mid- to high-rise towers plus townhouses are being proposed by Peter Daniels for 19.2 hectares owned by the Ridley Brothers Development Corp. between Royal Roads University and the lagoon. To be called Lagoon Estates, the development would involve 28 buildings, among them three towers of 10 to 12 storeys and two of eight storeys.

Cole Clark, of 225 Goldfinch Rd., said he and his six neighbours will see their quiet neighbourhood transformed.

"I'm going to be looking at 100-foot high-density, glass and steel, fairly intrusive, overshadowing high rise across the street from me. It's not a three-storey thing ... but a huge building. It is going to block the sun," he said.

The undeveloped site straddles the fish bearing Selleck Creek and sits between Esquimalt Lagoon and a bird sanctuary to the southeast; Heatherbell Road (and Royal Roads) to the northwest; Seafeld Road to the northeast and Lagoon Road to the southwest.

The developer is proposing to build most of the units at the rear of the property, away from the lagoon, which would be untouched and preserved. The proposal also calls for enhancement of the riparian (riverbank) habitat of Selleck Creek.

Using photos, Daniels took the committee and about 80 people in the audience on a virtual tour of the site, showing how slopes and trees would shield visual impact.

Councillors Cynthia Day and Jason Nault, who do not sit on the committee, took the unusual step of addressing it.

Day said she wants to like the development but is worried about the traffic. "There's a substantial problem on the infrastructure side of things," she said. "More than 1.5 cars is going to be in each of those units because that's how people live today."

Nault, chairman of the emergency services committee, was concerned about the lack of connection of roads on either side of Selleck Creek.

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## Colwood trying to renew itself by growing up

By Edward Hill  
Goldstream News Gazette  
June 07, 2006

For residential development in Colwood's core, the higher and the denser the better, says Mayor Jody Twa.

Twa says his vision of Colwood, as it has been for at least a year, is to move away from single family dwellings along the Sooke Road corridor and towards higher density development.



"I see Sooke Road, Colwood Corners and Veterans Boulevard as not ideal for single family homes. In the future we might see low rises," Twa said in an interview. "It makes sense to put high density in the core, near the major town hub. If you look at Colwood Corners, there's not a lot of residential, but it's near shopping, the rec centre, the library and bus routes."

Twa said this kind of skyward development has been on council's radar since it unanimously approved a 17-storey building last year on Nob Hill Road. That project hasn't moved forward, but council last week approved 29-storey Royal Roads Place for land near Colwood Corners and Royal Roads University.

Twa said residents shouldn't worry about Colwood becoming peppered with towering apartments.

"High rises should be judged by the architecture and the site. In my vision, Colwood Corners is an appropriate area," Twa said. "We aren't talking about going into rural areas and putting up 29-storey towers."

Colwood's planning committee chair, Coun. David Saunders, warned the city won't be able to afford its services in 10 to 15 years if the tax base isn't diversified. Colwood has a weak commercial core and 80 per cent of its residential base is single family homes, Saunders said.

"There was a time when Colwood lacked the vision to increase its tax base, and clearly that is a reflection of the streetscape - we have none. There is no design in place," he said. "We need a tax base to afford what the city requires. We need higher densities, but that needs to be balanced with environmental concerns."

Royal Roads Place is a \$90 million, 163-unit tower that would be the tallest building in Greater Victoria. Coming on its heels is Lagoon Estates, a \$350-million 660-unit project touting townhouses and 12-storey apartments sprawled over 19.2 hectares overlooking the Esquimalt Lagoon. That project will likely come to a public hearing this month.

Both projects epitomize the high-density living spaces that could attract new businesses, high income earners and new property taxes council wants in the community. Lagoon

Estates would bring in an estimated \$1 million in tax revenues per year and Royal Roads Place about \$600,000.

Supplying amenities such as water and sewage capacity is not a problem, Twa said, but he admits there are nagging questions about the highway system.

"Our biggest concern is do we have enough infrastructure in place to sustain growth," he said. "Transportation infrastructure is the biggest concern in the (Capital Regional District)."

Saunders said the old zoning at 1945 Sooke Road, the proposed home of Royal Roads Place, and the current zoning at Lagoon Estates, is potentially a bigger traffic headache than with the proposed developments.

He also pointed out the increase in single family homes in Sooke will continue to put pressure on Colwood thoroughfares, whether the city allows apartments or not.

"If there was no development in Colwood, traffic would still increase," he said.

So far, there is little organized opposition to Colwood moving toward higher density living. Some residents opposed the 29-storey tower at last week's public hearing because it might ruin the character of the city, but just as many people were in favour.

Couns. Jason Nault and Cynthia Day argued against changing the official community plan to suit the development with little public input, but had few objections to the tower itself.

Joe Richardson, president of the Colwood Association for Smart Growth, a group seeking to halt urban sprawl, said he cautiously supports the high-density tower. But he said the official community plan needs to be reopened to plan how Colwood Corners and the tower will be reshaped into a true city centre.

"Now is the time to review the OCP and take in all aspects of Colwood Corners," Richardson said. "The centre could be really unique in the CRD. It could hook into the Lagoon and the Galloping Goose Trail. It could be a wonderful place and density doesn't necessarily detract from that."

Esquimalt Lagoon conservation watchdogs have taken a wait-and-see approach to Lagoon Estates, envisioned as a cluster of 28 buildings, some planned for 12 storeys near the western portion of the property at Heatherbell and Lagoon roads.

Arnold Rossander, president of the Esquimalt Lagoon Enhancement Association, said the association hasn't taken a stand either way, but said the amount of proposed parkland was encouraging.

"That land will be developed, it just needs developing in the right way," Rossander said.

Jody Watson, co-ordinator for the Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative, said the developer, Ridley Brothers Development Corp., has consulted with the group to ensure the lagoon's bird sanctuary is kept intact.

Watson noted all of the buildings in the plan are set back from the shoreline, about one-



third of the property will be kept as greenspace, and the developer promises to revitalize Selleck Creek for fish habitat.

"Our concern is with the shoreline habitat and that no contaminants are leaking into the lagoon," Watson said. "It is promising to see development that seems sensitive to the environment."

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## **Lagoon project pushed ahead, opposition grows**

**By Edward Hill**  
**Goldstream News Gazette**  
*Jun 16 2006*

### **Residents starting to speak out as proposal given first reading**

The Lagoon Estates waterfront development was given a first reading go-ahead by Colwood council Monday, but neighbourhood opposition is starting to heat up against the \$350-million project.

Lagoon Estates is envisioned as a high-density development on 50 acres of land that slopes between Royal Roads and the Esquimalt Lagoon.

Its most recent configuration involves 632 residential units spread through 26 buildings, including town homes, low-rise and high-rise apartments, two going up to 15 storeys. The developer, Woodburn Management Ltd., says it plans to leave 40 per cent of the land as park space.

Council gave first reading to amend the official community plan and to rezone the property to allow a high-density development. The project will now go to a public hearing at a date to be set.

Coun. Dave Saunders said he pushed the project onto the council agenda to kick-start the public process. He said the current zoning, which would limit the property to single family dwellings, would draw in more cars and wouldn't have the same parkland component as Lagoon Estates.

It is estimated the land could hold about 350 homes under existing zoning. Saunders suggested each home would have two or more cars, based on what is seen around the neighbourhood.

"That means another 1,100 vehicles," Saunders said. "Clearly the ramifications with the current zoning is detrimental."

But some residents are saying Lagoon Estates is woefully out of character with the nature of the neighbourhood.

Jan Blake told council the project is a "monstrosity" that should be stopped until it gets more public input. George Gogoulis said it is out of scale with suburban Colwood.

"This area is the jewel of Colwood. Something as large and out of scale as this is disrespectful and needs another look," Gogoulis said.

Rick Jeffery, a 36-year resident of Colwood and who was on the OCP's advisory planning commission, presented council with a 220-name petition opposing the development. He argued that high density belongs along the Sooke Road corridor, not in residential areas.

"I'm not opposed to developing the area. I'm opposed to the vision the developer put forward," Jeffery said. "Our message is slow down, do it right and get a development that reflects the community."

Jeffery said Lagoon Estates would still mean about 1,000 new vehicles clogging the area, the same volume of traffic that could park at Westshore Town Centre (formerly CanWest Mall). With Royal Roads property to the north and west and water to the east, he pointed out the neighbourhood has one access point at Lagoon Road.

Jeffery also said the City is allowing the project to proceed without knowing if the taxes and development charges would pay for increased pressure on infrastructure and city resources.

"Where is the cost-benefit analysis? They haven't done one," Jeffery said. "I think the taxpayers of Colwood would oppose this if they were subsidizing it."

Property developer Peter Daniel, with Woodburn Management, said the 50 acres is destined to be developed. Like Saunders, he said the choice is between higher density living and creating a 13-acre park, or low density that would draw more traffic, with very little preserved greenspace.

"It is better to save 40 per cent of the property and stop urban sprawl. To afford to do that, we need higher density," Daniel said. "Change is always concerning, but we want the best change and the best tradeoffs."

Lagoon Estates is being marketed to "empty nesters" and wealthy retirees who Daniel says won't produce the same rush-hour traffic patterns as a typical suburban area. He said a traffic study estimates 27 per cent fewer vehicles with Lagoon Estates, over a development with single family homes.

Daniel said he has spent the last six months talking with residents and environmental groups, at open houses or individually, and has changed the layout of the development four times to integrate neighbourhood input.

The prime sentiment from residents is not to block views, he said.

The current plan calls for two 15-storey and one 14-storey highrise on the west portion of the property, with low-slung townhouses and apartments rolling toward the water.

"The latest plan is a haircut and density at the top," he said.

Colwood expects to reap about \$1 million in new tax revenue from Lagoon Estates, and is charging the developer \$500 for each attached unit toward the affordable housing fund, and \$2,500 for each attached unit and \$1,500 for each apartment unit to an amenity fund.

Colwood can expect to take ownership of the 13-acre park, which covers the bottom third of the property leading to the lagoon. Daniel said the The Land Conservancy would be offered stewardship rights over the park and the revitalized Selleck Creek corridor, and the sales building as an interpretive centre.

"Selleck Creek has the potential to be a salmon-producing stream again," Daniel said. "This is a great opportunity to provide something special for the whole region."

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### Development gives a nod to nature

## Esquimalt Lagoon project in Colwood as notable for what will be preserved as what will be built

Bill Cleverley, Times Colonist  
Thursday, March 22, 2007

The Aquattro, Colwood's newest waterfront development -- a mix of 26 buildings including three 12-storey highrises, townhouses, terraced buildings and low-rise condominiums -- is as notable for what is being preserved as what is to be built.

Fully 40 per cent of the 50-acre property bordering Esquimalt Lagoon, including fields and old orchards that are home to all manner of birds and other wildlife, will remain forever as green space, donated to the municipality as park.

"I've always tried to leave something better than I found it, but I couldn't do that with this portion of the site," developer Peter Daniel, of Woodburn Management, said at an on-site news conference yesterday marking Colwood council's final approval of the project.



**Debra Brash, Times Colonist**

Peter Daniel of Woodburn Management shows off a parcel of land near Esquimalt Lagoon that will be kept as parkland in its natural state after the recently approved Aquattro development in Colwood is completed. Plans call for 40 per cent of the 50-acre property to be turned over to the municipality as park while the development will contain 563 residential units when fully built out.

"This is as good as it's going to get, and that's why we're saving it."

Already staked out is the future sales centre -- a building that will eventually be given to the Land Conservancy for use as a nature interpretative centre.

All of the development of the site will be to the back of the property, away from the water. In addition to 13 acres of the lower waterfront being provided as parkland, Daniel plans to enhance Selleck Creek, eventually stocking it with coho salmon and building about two kilometres of hiking trails.

Formerly known as Lagoon Estates, the project to be built out over the next five to seven years, has been renamed the Aquattro because of its unique orientation to the water, Daniel said.

"It symbolizes aqua -- water -- and quatro -- four -- because there are four different water foreshores in this project. The first is at the top of the property where we're creating several large ponds to complement the stream that's on the property -- so that's one foreshore. The stream will be about a kilometre in length and it will transit from the top of the site down to an estuary to the lagoon ... so that's the second foreshore.

"The third is the Esquimalt Lagoon itself, which is a bird sanctuary, and finally, there's a mile and a half of oceanfront beach in front of this property," Daniel said.

The design calls for the lowest, wood-frame buildings to be built nearest the park reserve, transitioning to the taller ones at the back of the property.

When built out, Aquattro will feature 563 residential units.

"By transferring the density from the bottom of this property to the top and keeping all the development away from the most valuable part of this property, we're able to keep this as a park and enhance the stream, which is going to give us a truly unique and remarkable development," Daniel said.

Transferring the density also allowed for the massive park dedication. Under the previous zoning only five-per-cent park dedication was required, city administrator Chris Pease said.

While many new condominium developments in downtown Victoria are featuring units in the range of 900 to 1,200 square feet, the Aquattro primarily will feature units that range in size from 1,600 square feet and up.

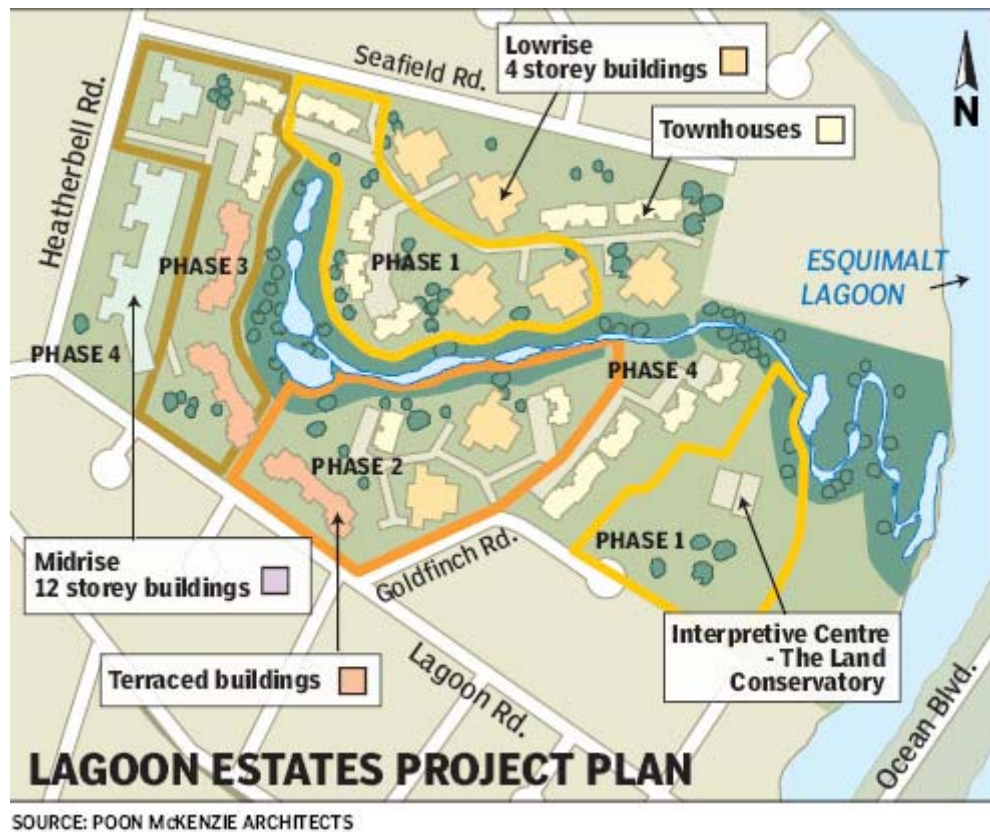
Prices will be in the range of \$400 to \$500 per square foot.

Virtually all of the units will feature sweeping views of the ocean, the Olympic Mountains and Victoria.

Plans also call for an activity centre and a clubhouse building for activities such as cooking classes, wine tastings and art exhibits.

Construction of the sales centre is slated for next week and the first residences in June.

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- [29-storey high-rise condominium tallest building in the capital region](#)
- [Recreation in Colwood, Victoria's westshore](#)