

## **CORTES OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. The Cortes Official Community Plan**

The basic purpose of the Cortes Official Community Plan is to establish an overall policy for the long-term development of the Island. It is here that the intentions of the community for its future development shall be stated as clearly as possible.

Section 945(1) of the Municipal Act states that "A community plan is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan". Consequently, zoning bylaws prepared for the area in question shall adhere to the intentions of the community as closely as possible. A Board of Variance has been established to serve Electoral Areas "I" and "J". The community welcomes this development as one that will allow more sensitive local decisions to be made in the solution of minor land use anomalies.

The Municipal Act also provides for the inclusion of environmental objectives in an official community plan. The anticipated lifespan of this plan is deemed to be 10 to 15 years, subject to periodic revisions.

An official community plan is a formal bylaw adopted by the Regional Board. It is intended as a guide to provide an indication of development policies for land use, environmental protection, transportation, and lot size development standards.

According to the Municipal Act, a community plan shall be in writing and may include plans, maps, tables, or other graphic material. It may specify approximate detail for location, amount, type, and density of proposed development (Section 945(2)a-g). It may also designate areas for protection of the natural environment and heritage sites, and from hazardous conditions, with guidelines included (Section 945(4)a-g)). Other details of the requirements for a community plan are in different sections of the Municipal Act. Every effort has been made in preparing this community plan to achieve the requirements of the Act.

An important distinction to be borne in mind is that regulatory bylaws, such as zoning bylaws, deal in detail with current land use and lot size standards. The community plan, on the other hand, takes a broader, long-range view, which may take years to achieve. Furthermore, the plan should be regularly reviewed to keep pace with changing attitudes and exceptions. The plan provides some clear understanding of the intended land use objectives for Electoral Area "I".

Census information suggests a population growth rate of 3% per annum for Cortes Island. That rate is reflected in the projections and requirements of the Plan.

Planning for the future can be a hazardous task as both technological and environmental changes and population growth exert inexorable and often unpredictable pressure. For such reasons the Plan looks ahead for a period of perhaps 15 years, particularly with reference to land use and population growth. For such reasons also, it is necessary to review the Plan regularly, so that community intentions and the bylaws enforcing them are kept up-to-date.

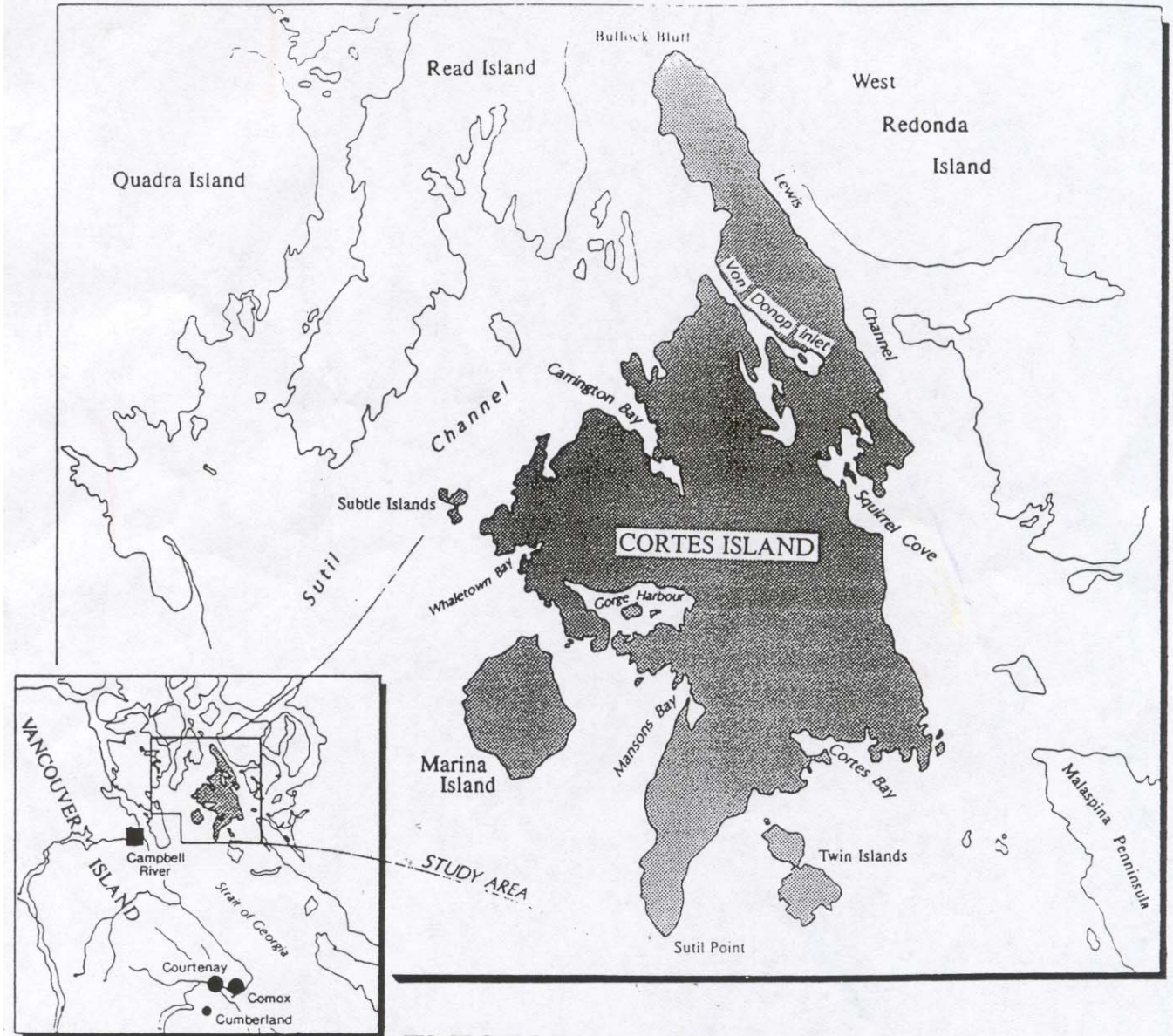
## **B. The Planning Area**

Cortes Island is situated on the northern end of the Strait of Georgia and comprises the main portion of Electoral Area "I" within the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona. While Cortes Island is actually located closer to the British Columbia mainland than to Vancouver Island, its historic past as well as its transportation access have tended to tie it more closely to Vancouver Island.

Cortes Island, the main island, extends 25.5 kilometres from north to south, and approximately 13.5 kilometres from east to west. The combined area of Cortes Island, the surrounding smaller islands (i.e. Marina, Twin, Subtle) and neighbouring islets, is approximately 13,340 hectares. Map 1, opposite, shows the extent of the planning area.

Population forecasts, based on 1991 Census information, estimate the 1996 population for Cortes Island to be 795 permanent residents. During the summer time, the population increases to over 1,100.

# MAP 1 THE PLANNING AREA



## ELECTORAL AREA 'I' (CORTES)