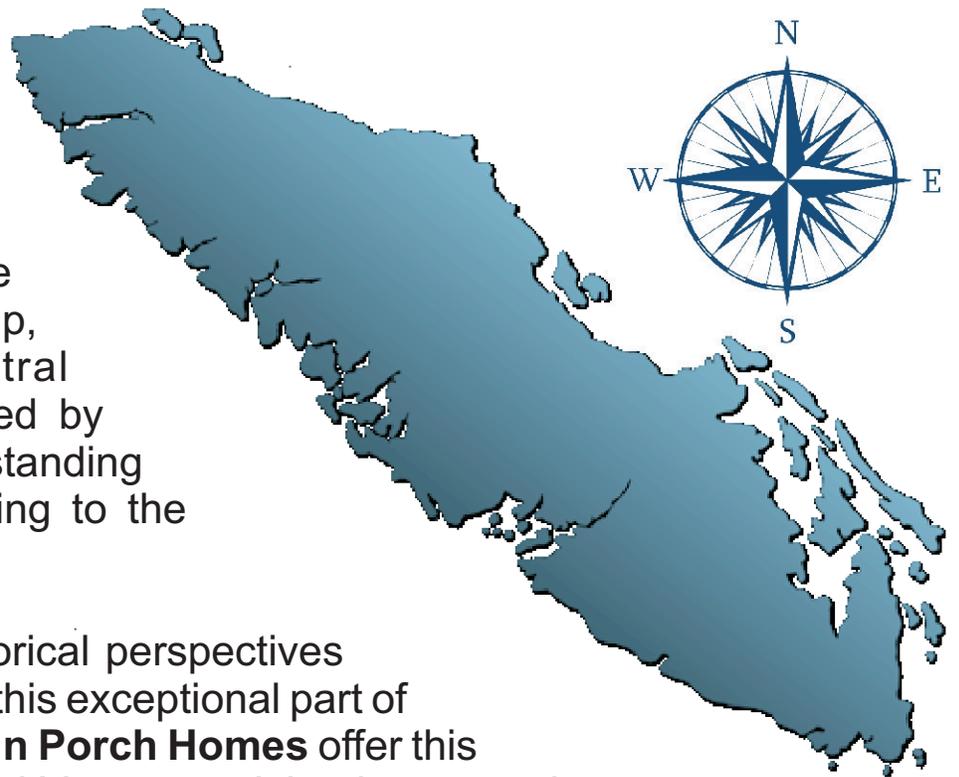


*“Community: A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.” Dictionary.com*

# Regional Round-Up: Central Vancouver Island

**B**lessed by Nature, enhanced by the people who live there, Vancouver Island is a beautiful and vibrant part of British Columbia. While exceptional from tip to tip, Vancouver Island’s central regions are especially prized by homeowners - both long standing and with new arrivals coming to the area from across the globe.

To offer some insights, historical perspectives and other information about this exceptional part of the Island, your friends at **Sun Porch Homes** offer this quick snapshot of the Central Vancouver Island area, and the unique communities and neighborhoods that help to make it such a very special place.



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# Vancouver Island Overview

**M**ore than 460 kilometers long and 100 kilometers wide at its broadest point, Vancouver Island is the largest island along the west coast of both North and South America. Home to a population of more than 770,000, Vancouver Island is not just the site of the provincial capital it is also a wonder of natural beauty, environmental diversity and economic prosperity that is the envy of the province.

European exploration of Vancouver Island first began more than 200 years ago, first by the Spanish and later by English explorers, most notably Captain George Vancouver in the late 1700's. First Nation peoples have lived and thrived all across the Island for millennia, benefiting from the region's benign climate and rich abundance of flora and fauna from time immemorial. First Nation residents continue to be valued members of contemporary Vancouver Island society, operating thriving economic entities and producing art and cultural material prized worldwide.

While a solitary landmass, Vancouver Island is typically visualized as three separate but intertwined geographic regions. The northern third, collectively referred to as the North Island, is centered on the population hubs of the Comox Valley and on the City of Campbell River further north. A storehouse of fibre and mineral resources, the North Island remains essentially a frontier region with the resource extraction industries the powerhouse that drives its economic engine.

The South Island, home to the British Columbia capital city of Victoria, is physically the smallest yet is the most populous portion of Vancouver Island. The South Island is the seat of government, a home to industry and is the site of an expansive catalog of retail, educational and professional services. The northern border of the South Island is the Malahat, which is a visually stunning mountain pass with its starting point found in the Village of Mill Bay.

Nestled between these two wildly divergent geographic and cultural extremes is the Central Island, an expansive region in terms of both environments and societal amenities. Centered on the City of Nanaimo, Central Vancouver Island is home to about one third of the Island's population and is very much a self-contained region offering its residents every imaginable service and retail option.

While its business sector is fueled to a lesser extent by the resource industries that help to found it, the economy of today's Central Island region is much more diverse. A Mecca for tourists, a home to unmatched educational and healthcare facilities, and a popular oasis for residential development, the Central Vancouver Island region's primary population centers are strung like a series of beads on a necklace along the area's eastern shoreline, facing the welcoming waters of the Georgia Strait.





# Parksville / Qualicum Beach

The Oceanside area is only minutes from Nanaimo

Collectively referred to as the Oceanside communities, the Town of Parksville and the Village of Qualicum Beach are known worldwide for their expansive beaches and exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities. With a combined population of more than 20,000, the two urban centers serve as the commercial nexus for a multitude of smaller rural communities scattered throughout the Regional District.

The Oceanside is also the gateway to the City of Port Alberni and to the world-class natural splendors of Island's pristine West Coast – most notably the Village of Tofino and the famed Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

While First Nation habitation has continued unbroken since the dawn of time, the first Europeans moved into the region in the 1870's, drawn not by coal as in other parts of the area, but by the lush soil and rich agricultural potential the region offered.



Farming and forestry powered the local economy and continue to play a pivotal role in the lifestyle of the area. Even today hundreds of farms, in varying sizes, continue to provide the Central Island area with an almost embarrassing abundance of produce and proteins.



**Village of Qualicum Beach has unique charms** population, have helped to turn the region into an increasingly popular destination for retirees from across the nation.

As the years of the 20th Century progressed and the tastes and nature of society changed, tourism and recreation became an increasingly important part of the local economic mix. With spectacular beaches right at its doorstep, the Oceanside communities automatically became prime visitor destinations – a trend that has continued to flourish right up until the present day.

In addition to agriculture, tourism and retail / commercial services, the Oceanside has increasingly benefited from an aging national population seeking an idyllic retirement lifestyle. Retirement living and all of the ancillary services related to supporting a greying

Residential development, a thriving hospitality sector and a distinctive character all of its own makes the Oceanside communities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach vibrant and thriving components of the Central Vancouver Island area.



**The City of Parksville is famous for its beach**





# City of Nanaimo

Initially explored and developed by industrialists seeking the black riches of the local coal fields, the City of Nanaimo first began to take shape in the middle of the 19th Century. A key element in powering the British Empire during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, Nanaimo-mined coal was shipped worldwide, and played a significant role in powering the world during the early years of the 20th Century.



But advancing technologies and changing global needs saw the demand for the black mineral wane, with the last of the local mines closing shortly after the end of the Second World War. Founded as it was by forward thinkers, Nanaimo entrepreneurs helped to drive the city's development through the middle of the Century by capitalizing on its expansive local forestry resources, such as the opening of the still important Harmac pulp mill located just south of the city during the 1950's.

**Nanaimo is the second largest city on Vancouver Island**

Today, with a population of more than 90,000, the City of Nanaimo is far and away the largest urban center in the region and its primary source of employment, services and retail options. Nanaimo in the 21st Century remains linked to its resource-based roots while embracing the technologies and societal needs of the future.

**City is the main service center for the Central Island**

Offering abundant shopping and professional service options, much of Nanaimo's contemporary economy is tied to its position as a key educational and healthcare services provider. Home to the degree-granting Vancouver Island University and a host of public and independent educational institutions, education is a crucial part of the city's local economy.



Island Health and its operation of the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (among many other medical facilities) are among the city's main employers and economic mainstays. Nanaimo is also the second busiest deep water port on Vancouver Island. The recently announced expansion of the nearby Duke Point Industrial park will only enhance and expand on that importance moving forward.

shopping venues located throughout the city. But just as the Central Vancouver Island region flourishes due in large part to the distinctive and diverse nature of the communities that inhabit it, so to Nanaimo's character and success has occurred thanks to the unique aspects of its individual neighborhoods.





# North & Central Nanaimo

North Nanaimo is famed for its rustic splendour

Among the newer sections of the City of Nanaimo, the segment of the community referred to as North Nanaimo is home to many of the larger malls and most sophisticated and sought-after residential developments found in the city. Capitalizing on its breathtaking ocean views, some of the most expensive homes in the region are located in this area.



But like the Central Island itself, North Nanaimo is also a neighborhood of diversity, as housing options of all styles, from modular homes to townhouses to waterfront mansions can be found within the zone. With schools of all grades dotting the region, a wealth of available shopping options, and housing for any lifestyle and budget, North Nanaimo is very much a family-focussed region of the city.

## Central Nanaimo: Convenient & Family Friendly

A much more established portion of the City of Nanaimo, Central Nanaimo was fully developed in the immediate post-war years. Residentially-focussed, Central Nanaimo is located in the immediate area of the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, and is well served by schools, shopping and other essential services. For every

The BC Ferry Corporation terminal at Departure Bay



sector of the population, from retirees to young families, Central Nanaimo has become the right choice. Apartments, townhomes and a multitude of character homes can be found throughout the neighborhood.

Situated in easy proximity to the Departure Bay Ferry terminal, Central Nanaimo is also the main embarkation point for travellers coming to and from the Island, with malls and services conveniently located to access this marketplace opportunity. A neighborhood with charm, history and a wealth of resources, Central Nanaimo has been developed with ease of living in mind.

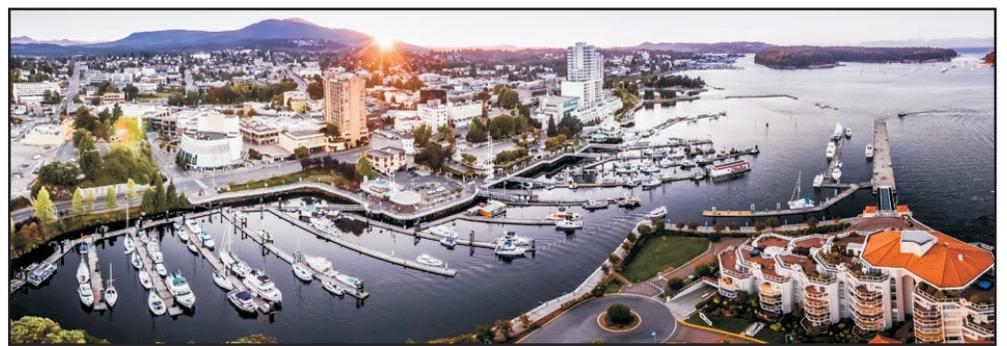




# Downtown & South Nanaimo

Nanaimo is known world-wide as the Harbour City

The traditional core of the City of Nanaimo and the oldest and most historically significant part of the city, the Downtown / Old City neighborhood is centered on its harbor area and the immediate slopes leading from the waterfront. Dotted with character homes, turn of the century architecture and a distinctive sense of being, the Downtown is less about residential living and more about commercial services.

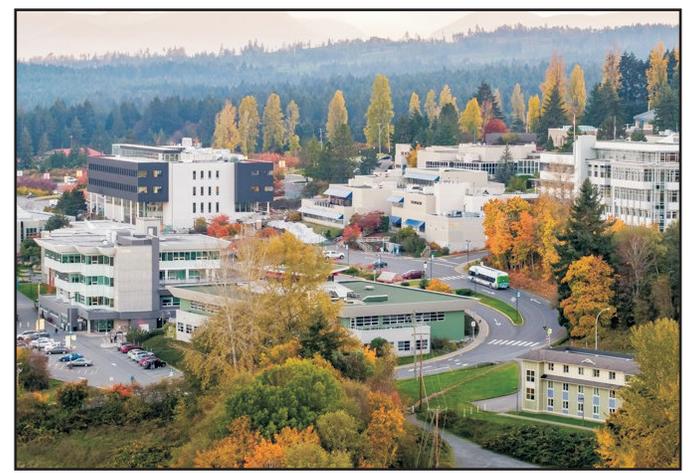


Today modern developments such as the Vancouver Island Conference Centre operate in the immediate area of century old business storefronts and offices – living testament to the vibrancy of the city’s business community. But change is in the air, and increasingly residential development is starting to make its presence felt as downtown residential towers take shape and local residents lovingly maintain and preserve homes that in many cases have been in the same family for generations.

Nanaimo’s Downtown / Old City Quarter offer charm and a unique flavor that sets it apart from every other neighborhood in the city. A section busily re-imagining itself, the oldest part of the city is actively preparing for the future.

## University District: A Popular Neighborhood

Much like the downtown core, the South Nanaimo / University District has roots that lead back to the city’s founding. South Nanaimo was initially developed to provide living space for miners working in the region’s coal mines early in the 20th Century. But over the years as needs changed the region took on a life of its own, becoming a residential neighborhood with its own history and community spirit.



Vancouver Island University’s Nanaimo campus

Blessed with shopping, hospitality and recreational opportunities South Nanaimo is very much a family-friendly part of the city. New residential subdivisions are actively taking shape along its southern boundaries, while classic character homes of all sizes and styles dot the neighborhood.

The aptly named University District is an integral part of South Nanaimo, abutting the fringes of Vancouver Island University. The ideal neighborhood for students and families, the University District is served by all grades of school, from pre-school to graduate, and offers easy access to local shopping and services.

As with other parts of the neighborhood, a great deal of new residential construction is currently underway to help service the anticipated need, while classic properties continue to be preserved and enjoyed. The South Nanaimo / University District may have long roots, but it shares a vision squared fixed on tomorrow.





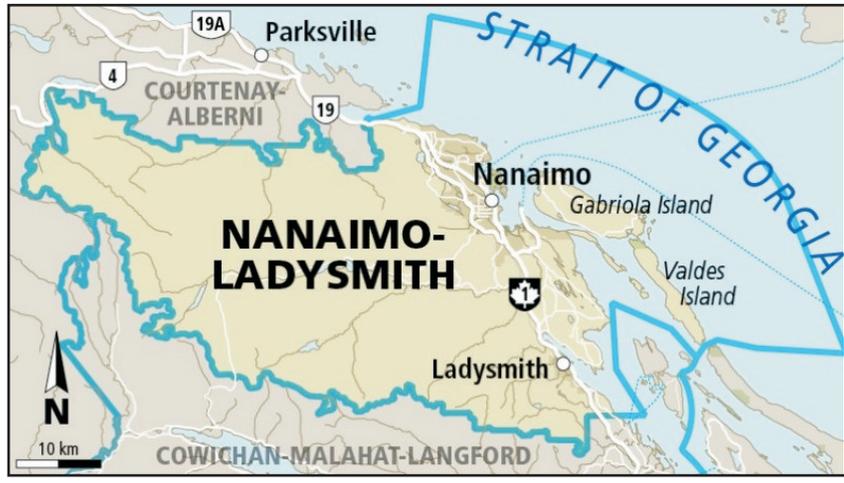
# Town of Ladysmith

The Town of Ladysmith is known for its charm & distinctive character

Located only minutes away but worlds apart, the Town of Ladysmith is a unique and distinctive part of the Central Vancouver Island region. As was the case with Nanaimo, the Town of Ladysmith owes its very existence to a global need for coal early in the 20th Century. Founded in the dawning years of the Century for workers at the local mines, the town has evolved and grown over the years by actively recognizing and embracing change.

Located within the Cowichan Valley Regional District (about 15 minutes south of Nanaimo), the Town of Ladysmith has a population of more than 8,500 and has become the main service center for the northern portion of the Regional District.

Originally known as Oyster Harbour, Ladysmith continues to be home to the people of the Stz'uminus First Nation as it has for thousands of years. Developed as a community by famed Coal Baron Robert Dunsmuir, the town began to take shape in 1904 as a company town to help service the entrepreneur's local coal mines. But as with other local communities a fading global need for coal forced the town to adapt to changing economic times.



First embracing the region's burgeoning forest industry, and later as a shopping and service hub, the Town of Ladysmith has flourished thanks to its willingness to adapt and evolve. Constructed on a series of rolling hills the Town of Ladysmith is noteworthy for the number of elegant character homes that line its streets, while new construction and local residential subdivisions are testaments to the faith its residents place on the community's still-evolving story.

**We are excited that you are considering Vancouver Island as your new home. If you would like to learn more please visit our website: [www.SunPorchHomes.com](http://www.SunPorchHomes.com)**

