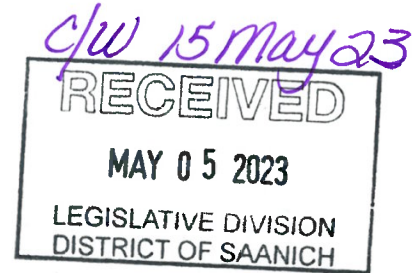




The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning
Date: May 5, 2023
Subject: Strategic Official Community Plan Update – Draft Official Community Plan (General Plan) and Phase 2 Engagement
File: 2330-25 • Official Community Plan Review



RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Draft Official Community Plan (Draft Plan) and the Phase 2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with the Draft Official Community Plan (General Plan) resulting from the Strategic Official Community Plan Update project. The Report also provides Council details on the upcoming Phase 2 consultation on the Draft Plan (Attachment A) scheduled to take place between May and July 2023.

BACKGROUND

Council Direction

At the March 21, 2022, Committee of the Whole meeting, a motion was carried to move forward with a focused update to the Official Community Plan. The motion from Council states:

“That it be recommended that Council endorse the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Official Community Plan (OCP) Update.”

On March 27, 2023, Council received an update from Staff on the progress of the OCP project and the Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report for information. The accompanying Council Report also recommended Council direct Staff to consider how Local Area Plans and Centre, Corridor and Village Plans relate to the OCP Bylaw as part of upcoming public engagement on the Draft Plan. Council supported this approach for moving forward.

Project Overview

The Strategic OCP Update project was initiated in Spring 2022. The intent of the project is to update the current OCP and adopt it with a new/current date based on a focused scope of work. The rationale for this strategic approach is to build on the overall direction in the 2008 plan much of which is still relevant, and on recent strategic processes/adopted Council direction. It

also allows the District of Saanich to use resources efficiently to make priority updates in a short time frame.

The five core **Project Objectives** for the Strategic OCP Update and those which have shaped Staff's workplan are:

1. Incorporate recent work of Council – policy, plans (e.g. Housing Strategy, Climate Plan) and important discussions and partnerships with First Nations;
2. Integrate new demographic data and other relevant statistics;
3. Update the land use framework to include policy direction for “Corridors”, expand on “missing middle” housing/infill policy, update guidance on park components of a complete community, and emphasize walkable neighbourhoods;
4. Refine the OCP's sustainable development framework; and
5. Strengthen the monitoring and implementation components.

Planning Process & Timeline

The Strategic OCP Update is being undertaken in three phases and is on track to be completed in 2023 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Strategic OCP Update - Project Timeline

The first phase of the project is now complete and was focused on compiling and analyzing background information, incorporating elements of recently adopted plans and policy into the OCP, assessing best practices, and developing draft policy and maps/visuals, within the scope identified in the Terms of Reference. The second phase is underway and focuses on stakeholder and public review of the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan will be updated and brought forward to Committee of the Whole for consideration in Phase 3.

DRAFT PLAN OVERVIEW

Foundations, Framing, and Context (Project Objectives 1, 2, and 4)

Reflecting the scope of the Strategic OCP Update, the Draft Plan retains the 2008 District of Saanich Vision and three-pillar sustainability foundation (Natural Environment, Social Well-being, and Economic Vibrancy). The values identified in the original 2008 were incorporated into the objectives in the Draft Plan and/or section framing language.

Supplementing the three-pillar approach, the current update incorporates additional lenses to frame the conversation and support implementation. These elements help ensure a robust sustainability approach and are woven into the overall policy framework and related evaluation

and monitoring processes. Table 1 provides an overview of the different components of the OCP's integrated vision.

Table 1: Sustainability Approach Elements

Component	Role	Description
Three Pillars of Sustainability	Guiding Framework	Core sustainability approach guiding the OCP vision. It integrates three pillars - Environmental Integrity, Social Well-being, and Economic Vibrancy – into overall policy direction and decision making.
One Planet Living	Policy Lens + Engagement Tool	Based on the three pillars, One Planet Living expands these into ten principles which support living within the capacity of the planet's resources. It provides a policy lens and engagement tool to assess global impacts of individual actions and local policy decisions. It recognizes global inequities with regards to access and use of resources.
15 Minute Community	Policy Lens + Implementation Tool	Planning approach to make the District of Saanich a 15-minute community where all households within the Urban Containment Boundary are within a 15-minute (or 1.2 km) walk of key amenities that support daily living. Where these amenities do not exist, long-term planning to guide land use change will occur to meet community needs. Integrates One Planet Living and three pillar principles at a local scale.

As part of framing the Draft Plan policies and objectives, the Draft Plan also identifies the contemporary challenges and opportunities facing the District of Saanich. In addition, the Planning Context section was revised to provide more background on Saanich's relationship with First Nations as well as details on early non-European immigration. The 2021 census and other recent data was also incorporated.

The District of Saanich's response to climate change was elevated to a core plan foundation to recognize the integrated approach required to achieve the District of Saanich's climate targets while also increasing community resilience through a range of adaptation strategies. While high-level policies are identified at the start of the Draft Plan, climate change response is woven throughout all sections.

Land Use Framework Changes – New Policy Areas (Project Objective 3)

Several changes and refinements were made to the Land Use Framework (LUF) in the Draft Plan. In keeping with the project Terms of Reference, these were focused on:

- Adding a Corridor designation;
- Clarifying Centre and Village boundaries;
- Strengthening neighbourhood infill policy;
- Incorporating guidance for parks planning/acquisition that focuses on a hierarchy of walkable parks and open spaces; and
- Reinforcing the 2008 OCP's direction to develop complete communities based around walkable neighbourhoods supported by sustainable transportation options.

As part of the reworking of the Land Use Framework existing policies and framing language were updated to better integrate with recent Council work (Project Objective 1).

Strategic Directions

The Draft Plan identifies four strategic directions to guide growth and development:

1. Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary

Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) to support the retention of agricultural land and natural areas while also reducing urban sprawl, supporting sustainable transportation options, and encouraging efficient use of infrastructure and public investment.

2. **Accommodate most New Development in Primary Growth Areas**
Plan for most of the District of Saanich's new housing and employment growth to be accommodated in vibrant walkable Centres and Villages linked by Corridors, frequent transit service, and All Ages and Abilities cycling infrastructure. Continue to improve the range of services, amenities, active transportation connections, and higher-density housing and employment opportunities in these areas.
3. **Expand Housing Diversity in Neighbourhoods**
Support a broader range of housing choices in Neighbourhoods through infill to better meet community needs and provide housing opportunities for all stages of life. Support the inclusion of a mix of ground-oriented houseplexes, low-rise apartments, and townhouses offering different tenure types and affordability levels.
4. **Make the District of Saanich a 15-Minute Community**
Building on the existing network of Centres and Villages, make the District of Saanich a walkable 15- minute community where all households within the Urban Containment Boundary are within a 15-minute (or 1.2 km) walk of key amenities that support daily living. Where these amenities do not exist, long-term land use planning to guide land use change will occur to meet community needs.

Corridor Designations

As part of the updated LUF, corridor designations were added. Corridors are segments of major or collector roads which link Centres and Villages together and connect Neighbourhoods to mixed commercial areas. They integrate land use with frequent transit service, higher density housing options, and active transportation infrastructure. In the Draft Plan, Primary Corridors are mapped, while Secondary Corridors are introduced. Primary Corridors are identified along segments of Shelbourne Street, McKenzie Street, Quadra Street, Tillicum Road, and Burnside Road. Secondary Corridors will be identified through future detailed planning in consultation with the community.

The OCP includes future land use designations for Primary Corridors. Within areas designated Primary Corridors, building forms up to six-storeys in height are a supported use. Additional heights are also supported where Primary Corridors intersect Centres (up to 12-storeys) and Villages (up to 6-storeys). Of note, not all Centres and Villages include a Primary Corridor; where this is the case, maximum supported building heights in Centres are eight-storeys and in Villages are four-storeys (no change from the OCP 2008). The maximum building height in Neighbourhoods remains four-storeys. As part of the final OCP Bylaw adoption, the Interim Policy on Building Height for Corridors and Neighbourhoods (May 9, 2022) will be rescinded. More details on future land use designations are available in section 7 of the Draft Plan.

Clarifying Centre and Village Boundaries

Another component of the Draft Plan update has been to identify parcel-based boundaries for all Centres and Villages rather than conceptual areas so no interpretation on the location of the boundary is required. Where the detailed planning has already occurred (i.e. Uptown, Shelbourne Valley, Cordova Bay, Cadboro Bay), these boundaries have been incorporated into the OCP mapping. Where detailed planning has not yet occurred, initial boundaries were identified using a 400 m radius (i.e. 5-minute walk) for Centres and a 250 m radius for Villages

and then rationalized based on a set of criteria and local conditions. As detailed planning is completed for the remaining areas, the OCP will be amended to reflect boundary updates.

Infill Housing within Neighbourhoods

Building on the Housing Strategy, the Neighbourhoods section has been updated to provide more policy guidance around infill housing within Neighbourhood areas. The focus is on supporting growth consistent with neighbourhood scale and increasing housing diversity in terms of type, tenure, and affordability. This will be supported by additional work through the Neighbourhood Homes study anticipated to start later this spring.

Access to Parks

While the 2008 OCP includes a target for total parks per capita, the Draft Plan incorporates policies supporting equitable access to different types of parks. This includes linking parks policy with the 3:30:300 Rule adopted by Council as a guiding principle in 2021. This states:

- Everyone can see at least 3 trees from their home;
- All neighbourhoods where people live have at least 30% canopy cover; and,
- All homes are within 300m of a park or green space to ensure urban forest benefits are sufficient and accessible to all.

The Draft Plan also speaks to the importance of ensuring Primary Growth Areas include access to park space, urban plazas, and green infrastructure to enhance the livability of these denser urban areas where residents are less likely to have access to private green space.

Complete Communities

Building on the OCP 2008 concept of “complete communities” the Draft Plan moves the District of Saanich towards becoming a 15-minute community (discussed under Table 1 and in the Strategic Land Use Directions). This concept is reinforced through policies to integrate land use with sustainable transportation options and increase neighbourhood connectivity for people walking and biking to reduce GHG emissions and support a healthy, livable community.

Incorporating Recent Council-Endorsed Work (Project Objective 1)

The Draft Plan also incorporates major strategic plans and initiatives since 2008 that have been endorsed by Council. Examples include the Climate Plan, Housing Strategy, Active Transportation Plan, and the Agriculture and Food Security Plan, all of which included significant community consultation. A large volume of work has occurred since 2008 and these updates to policies and framing – consistent with Council direction – can be seen throughout the document.

Plan Implementation (Project Objective 5)

Implementation is an important component of the Draft Plan. This section speaks to the relationship of the OCP with other plans as well as how amendments will be handled moving forward. As part of Phase 2 consultation, Staff will be exploring options for how area-specific plans are linked with the OCP moving forward particularly given that many Local Area Plans are out of date and have no direction to be updated.

The Draft Plan also identifies several priority actions for implementation. These actions are identified because they play an important role in moving the community towards the District of Saanich Vision and achieving One Planet Living. Actions are presented with a clear start and end date. Some of these actions may trigger future OCP amendments to provide consistency with the District of Saanich’s strategic policy framework.

Related to this, monitoring progress towards the District of Saanich Vision is also essential to ensure that the OCP continues to be an effective tool for guiding land use and planning decisions and meeting community needs. At five-year intervals, an evaluation of the progress of the Draft Plan will be undertaken to assess the following:

- Status of the implementation of priority actions;
- Progress of Strategic Land Use Directions;
- Updating demographic, housing, and household census data; and
- Alignment with other policy documents and initiatives.

A series of indicators will accompany the monitoring plan (discussed in the next section).

Document Layout

The update of the Draft Plan includes a significant revision to document layout and design to give it a fresh, new look and make the document easier to navigate and use. Graphical elements have been added to help to communicate OCP concepts and Vision. The new design is user friendly and provides a visual cue that this is a new and updated OCP (with a new date).

PRELIMINARY INDICATORS FRAMEWORK

To support Draft Plan evaluation, a series of indicators is under development. An initial list of indicators has been included in Attachment B for information. These indicators seek to complement other District of Saanich and Regional monitoring programs (e.g., Climate Plan, Housing Strategy, Annual Report, Regional Growth Strategy) by linking high-level indicators together to assess progress towards the District of Saanich Vision. The Preliminary Indicators Framework (Attachment B) will be included in Phase 2 engagement.

Aligning with the Draft Plan evaluation timeline, these indicators will be tracked on five-year intervals aligning with the Canadian Census and providing greater opportunity to observe trends. The reporting will be used to help identify emerging issues that may have an impact on the OCP and to inform potential changes to the OCP and other policies, plans or practices. The indicator framework will not be included in the OCP Bylaw; this approach makes it easier to update and adapt the framework to better reflect new District of Saanich work/data and respond to emerging trends.

The proposed OCP indicators were selected because they have a strong intersection with land use management and development and provide a high-level snapshot of progress towards the OCP foundations and focus areas. These indicators were also selected using a One Planet Living lens to identify which of its ten principles the indicator is tracking progress towards.

Of note, there are gaps in the list of indicators selected to monitor the OCP because several significant master plan initiatives are currently mid-process (e.g. Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy, and Economic Development Strategy). As these master plans are completed, the indicators framework will be updated to reflect this work.

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Staff are now moving forward with Phase 2 public and stakeholder engagement on the Draft Plan. As outlined in the project Public Engagement Strategy, the objectives for this phase of work are:

1. To inform the public/stakeholders about progress and draft plan review; and

2. To consult the public/stakeholders on the Draft Plan.

In an effort to increase the diversity of people who provide input, a wide range of activities, formats, and time options and other supporting activities will be offered to facilitate participation and support equity. This includes a mix of in-person and online engagement. Activities include:

- Open houses (in person and virtual);
- Online sessions (mix of formats including a youth workshop, general public workshop, and online interactive webinars hosted on the project website for viewing anytime);
- Survey (online with print option);
- Targeted in-person stakeholder workshops;
- Stakeholder meetings; and
- Council Advisory Committees.

To support this engagement, Modus Planning, Design & Engagement has been hired with a focus on providing effective online engagement and targeting a broad range of people, abilities and ages. In addition, in-person events are hosted at accessible District of Saanich venues and Staff are exploring offering child-minding services for open houses.

The release of the Draft Plan and engagement opportunities will be promoted in a broad range of formats and platforms. This includes social media, the project webpage (www.saanich.ca/ocp), newspaper ads, project notification lists, and targeted outreach to stakeholder groups including community associations. As part of this promotion, a short video providing project background will be released and shared through social media and on the project website.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council allocated \$80,000 to fund the Strategic OCP Update. This allocation of budget is consistent with the resources needed to complete the scope of work identified in the Terms of Reference. The project remains on budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The OCP is one of the fundamental guiding documents for Council's Strategic Plan. An updated OCP, its vision, and guiding sustainability framework will be important to informing Council's priorities in the Strategic Plan.

CONCLUSION

The one-year Strategic OCP Update is based on a focused scope and streamlined engagement activities as directed by Council. Phase 1 of the project, focusing on background analysis and Draft Plan development, has been completed and the project is now in Phase 2. The Draft Plan and Phase 2 Engagement Plan are provided to Council for information.

As part of Phase 2, Staff will begin undertaking public consultation on the Draft Plan and Preliminary Indicators Framework. Staff will analyze and incorporate feedback into a Final Draft Plan and updated Indicators Framework. The Final Draft Plan along with a Phase 2 Engagement Report, Indicators Framework, and recommendations for alignment between the OCP and detailed plans will be brought back to Committee of the Whole for consideration in Fall 2023.

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AW/jsp

Attachments: Attachment A: DRAFT - Official Community Plan (General Plan)
Attachment B: DRAFT – OCP Indicators Framework

ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.



Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer