

# Sustainable Saanich | Strategic Update

## Official Community Plan

### Project Q&A – July 19, 2022

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#### What is the Official Community Plan?

##### *About the OCP*

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the primary document that guides growth and change in Saanich. It establishes a long-term vision for a livable community based on shared values and sustainability. It also provides an overarching framework for other District plans, policies, and initiatives, including the [2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#), which shares the same vision statement as the OCP (Figure 1). The OCP is a legally binding document and decisions made within its scope are required to conform to its policy direction. It is required to be consistent with the [Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy \(RGS\)](#).

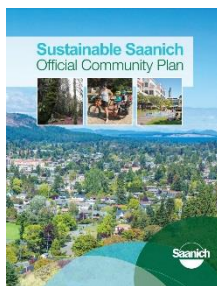


Figure 1: OCP Vision

##### *OCP Bylaw Structure*

The OCP Bylaw is composed of:

- Sustainable Saanich: The Official Community Plan (also called “General Plan”);
- Area Plans (i.e. Local Area Plans and Centre, Corridor and Village Plans); and.
- Design Guidelines.



##### *Project Focus*

The Strategic OCP Update focuses specifically on updating “Sustainable Saanich: The Official Community Plan” (General Plan). The General Plan is the dominant component of the OCP Bylaw. Other components, i.e. Area Plans and Design Guidelines, take their direction from the General Plan. Within Saanich, when we use the term “OCP,” we are typically referring to the General Plan. The Strategic OCP Update project takes this approach and refers to the General Plan as the “OCP.”

### **When was the current OCP adopted?**

The OCP was adopted in 2008. Since then, amendments have included a revised Regional Context Statement, adoption of the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan, Uptown-Douglas Plan, and Cordova Bay Local Area Plan as appendices, and the inclusion of the Garden Suite Development Permit Area. Once adopted by Council, the revised OCP will have a new publication year with the expected amendments bringing it up to date.

### **Why a Strategic OCP Update instead of a full OCP update process?**

A Strategic OCP Update approach:

- Recognizes the majority of the OCP's content is still relevant. An evaluation of the 2008 OCP document found that the long-term vision continues to be relevant and provides a strong foundation for a focused update.
- Builds on recent processes, adopted policy, and Council direction (e.g. Housing Strategy, Climate Plan, Active Transportation Plan). Significant consultation was completed as part of recent work.
- Uses District and community resources effectively. A full OCP update would require significantly more time and investment from both the District and community stakeholders/general public. With a focused approach, several other policy priorities can continue moving forward, for example, implementing the Housing Strategy and starting the Centre, Corridor, and Village planning.
- Enables the team to make priority updates in a short timeframe. The Strategic Update has a one-year timeline, while a full update would have taken much longer to complete.

### **What is the scope of the Strategic OCP Update?**

There are five work priorities included in the Strategic OCP Update. For more details see the [Project Terms of Reference](#).

New policy areas - Current consultation focus (Phase 1)

1. Update the land use framework to address emerging policy priorities (i.e. corridors, missing middle/infill housing, walkable neighbourhoods).

Ongoing/administrative focus (Phase 2 consultation)

2. Update OCP to incorporate recent District work, such as the First Nations reconciliation work, Climate Plan, Housing Strategy and Active Transportation Plan, into the broader directions of the OCP.
3. Integrate new updated demographic data and statistics.
4. Refine the sustainability approach and link it with [One Planet Living](#).
5. Strengthen monitoring and implementation.

### **Will Saanich's vision in the OCP change?**

The core of the OCP's vision for a sustainable future will not change. The plan will still be based on the three pillars of environmental integrity, social well-being, and economic vibrancy (see Figure 1). [The One Planet Living](#) framework will be used to expand on the current three-pillar approach.

**What is Centre, Corridor and Village planning? How does the OCP relate to these?**

Most of Saanich's future growth is planned to occur in centres and villages, where complete walkable communities supporting employment, shops, services, recreation, and public spaces are planned. Growth is also planned along major transit corridors which link these centres and villages together with each other, and to regional destinations and neighbourhoods. The OCP sets broader policy directions for Saanich as a whole, while Centre, Corridor and Village (CCV) plans will contain detailed land use plans for these high-growth areas.

CCV plans will provide parcel-level land use guidance including building heights, densities, and forms, strengthen the connection to transit and active transportation (e.g. walking, biking, rolling), and assess the demand for future parks and other amenity needs based on anticipated growth. Examples of recent CCV plans are the [Uptown-Douglas Plan](#) and the [Shelbourne Valley Action Plan](#). Planning for the McKenzie-Quadra corridors is anticipated to begin in Fall 2022.

The March 8, 2022, [Council Report](#) (Item 4) provides more information on the CCV work plan.

**What is the relationship between the OCP, CCV, and Local Area Plans?**

Historically Saanich has completed detailed area-based planning at the broader neighbourhood level in the form of [Local Area Plans](#). Moving forward, Council has directed staff to focus on high-growth areas of Saanich through the CCV plans described above. While some Local Area Plans were recently updated, e.g. [Cordova Bay](#) and [Cadboro Bay](#) (in-process), many of these Local Area Plans are older. With the current focus on CCV planning, direction will be coming through the Strategic OCP Update process on how the older Local Area Plans will be integrated moving forward.

**What is the “missing middle” housing program? How does the OCP relate to it?**

“Missing middle” housing is a range of housing forms between single detached and apartment that are “missing” due to the practice of exclusionary zoning that was adopted within most Canadian urban areas over the past 100 years or more. The Housing Strategy identifies a “missing middle” infill housing study as a priority to encourage a broader range of housing types in neighbourhoods. The study will work to develop infill policies and implementation tools such as bylaw amendments as part of the District's strategy to improve housing diversity and supply and build walkable, complete and vibrant neighbourhoods.

As part of the OCP update, amendments will be made to the OCP to provide broad policy direction on criteria for residential infill in neighbourhood areas on which the “missing middle” study will build. Future amendments to the OCP based on the detailed analysis completed through the “missing middle” work are anticipated. The “missing middle” infill housing study will begin in Fall 2022.

**What opportunities are there to get involved in this project?**

- Participate in the [online survey](#) (hard-copy available, contact below)
- Sign-in up for [project updates](#)
- Participate in the Phase 2 consultations planned for January 2023

**Who do I contact for more information?**

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