Municipality of North Cowichan
Committee of the Whole
AGENDA

Wednesday, June 24, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
Electronically

Pages

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

   This meeting, though electronic, is open to the public and all representations to the Committee of the Whole form part of the public record.

   At this time, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, public access to Council Chambers is not permitted, however, this meeting may be viewed on the District's lived stream webcast at northcowichan.ca.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

   Recommendation:
   That the Committee of the Whole agenda be adopted as circulated [or as amended].

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**   3 - 5

   Recommendation:
   That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole held June 9, 2020 be adopted.

4. **PUBLIC INPUT**

   The Chair to acknowledge receipt of submissions circulated to the Committee of the Whole prior to the meeting to Agenda@northcowichan.ca and state the agenda item the public input is in relation to on this agenda.

5. **WORKSHOP**

   Purpose: Official Community Engagement Plan and "Gap Analysis" session.

   5.1   **Presentation from MODUS Planning Design & Engagement**   6 - 18

         Purpose: Rob Barrs, Principal, and Suzy Lunn, Senior Planner, from MODUS Planning Design & Engagement, will be providing a presentation to Council on North Cowichan's Official Community Plan (OCP) Gap Analysis and Engagement Plan

   5.2   **Official Community Plan (OCP) Update - Gap Analysis**   19 - 130

         Purpose: To present the Official Community Plan (OCP) Gap Analysis report for review and comment.

Recommendation:
That the Committee of the Whole accept the OCP Policy Gap Analysis report for review and comment.

5.3   OCP Volunteers Membership Appointment

Purpose: To provide an update on the membership of the two OCP Volunteer Groups (the OCP Advisory Committee and the Ambassador Teams) and to discuss options for appointment or replacement members.

Recommendation:
That it be recommended to Council:

That staff initiate call for replacement volunteers to participate on the OCP Advisory Committee or as an OCP Ambassador on either of the Quamichan, Berkey's Corner, and South End Centre teams.

5.4   OCP Update – Engagement Plan

Purpose: To present the OCP Update Engagement Plan for review and comment.

Recommendation:
That the Committee of the Whole receive the draft OCP Engagement Plan for its review and comment.

6.   NEW BUSINESS

7.   QUESTION PERIOD

A 10-minute recess to be provided to give the public an opportunity to submit their questions by email to QP@northcowichan.ca regarding the business discussed at this meeting. Questions will be read out in the order they are received.

8.   ADJOURNMENT

Recommendation:
That the meeting be adjourned at _____ a.m./p.m.

Municipality of North Cowichan
Committee of the Whole
MINUTES

June 9, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present	Mayor Al Siebring
	Councillor Rob Douglas
	Councillor Christopher Justice
	Councillor Tek Manhas
	Councillor Rosalie Sawrie
	Councillor Debra Toporowski
Members Absent	Councillor Kate Marsh
Staff Present	Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
	Mark Frame, General Manager, Financial and Protective Services
	Ernie Mansueti, General Manager, Community Services
	Sarah Nixon, General Manager, Corporate Services
	David Conway, Director of Engineering
	Jason Birch, Chief Information Officer
	Megan Jordan, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
	Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator
	Tricia Mayea, Deputy Corporate Officer

1.   CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2.   APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Council added a late item (Strategic Plan Discussion) to the meeting under Item 5.3
IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That the June 9, 2020 Committee of the Whole agenda be adopted as amended.   **CARRIED**

3.   ADOPTION OF MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole held February 29, 2020, be adopted as amended, to include Councillor Sawrie as being present;

And That the minutes of the Committee of the Whole held March 4, 2020, and March 12, 2020 be adopted, as presented.   **CARRIED**

4.   PUBLIC INPUT

Council received no submissions via email prior to the meeting regarding agenda items.

5.   **BUSINESS**

5.1   2021 - 2025 Budget Direction

The General Manager, Financial and Protective Services provided a presentation that outlined three options for Council to consider as it relates to providing preliminary direction to staff in preparing the 2021 – 2025 budget, with emphasis on returning to sustainable tax levels following COVID-19 pandemic budget impacts. The presentation included strategies to reduce the impact of tax funded capital, operating risks and opportunities.

Council noted that the budget process for 2021 will need to be flexible considering the unknown future economic impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that a second wave of the virus could result in a further economic downturn by the end of the year.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That staff be directed to prepare the 2021-2025 budget based on the 'Recovery Budget' option outlined in the General Manager, Financial and Protective Services' 2020 - 2025 Budget Direction PowerPoint Presentation dated June 9, 2020.
                                                                                                CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That staff, in preparing the 2021 Capital and Operating Budget, will include consideration of a recovery plan that is oriented to:

1. Developing projects, and finding resources to work on, improving our natural assets and green infrastructure and achieving our climate related mitigation, adaptation resiliency goals; and which

2. Provide both short and longer term employment opportunities for those sectors of society that have been particularly impacted by the pandemic shut down to support the local Cowichan economy; and

3. That is "agile" in the sense of anticipating possible second waves of infection and economic shutdown, and which recognises the uncertainty of the immediate future.   **CARRIED**

5.2   Committee of the Whole Meeting Times

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of daytime Committee of the Whole meetings versus evening Committee of the Whole meetings.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That staff be directed to survey Council for preferred days and times for Committee of the Whole meetings and to report back to the next Council meeting with the survey results and any operational implications of those results.   **CARRIED**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for June 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. be cancelled and rescheduled subject to the availability of the consultants who were scheduled to present at the June 17, 2020 meeting.   **CARRIED**

5.3   Strategic Plan Discussion

It was noted that a Q2 2020 progress report on Council's Strategic Plan will be provided to Council at the June 17, 2020 Regular Council meeting so discussion on this item was postponed until that time.

6.   NEW BUSINESS

7.   QUESTION PERIOD

The Mayor called for a recess at 7:40 p.m. to allow viewers to submit questions via email on the matters discussed during the meeting. No questions had been submitted when the meeting reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

8.   ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:
That the meeting be adjourned at 7:50 p.m.   **CARRIED**

_____   _____
Certified by Corporate Officer   Signed by Mayor

3

NORTH COWICHAN OCP GAP ANALYSIS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

thinkforward
North Cowichan Community Plan

Rob Barrs, Principal
Suzy Lunn, Senior Planner
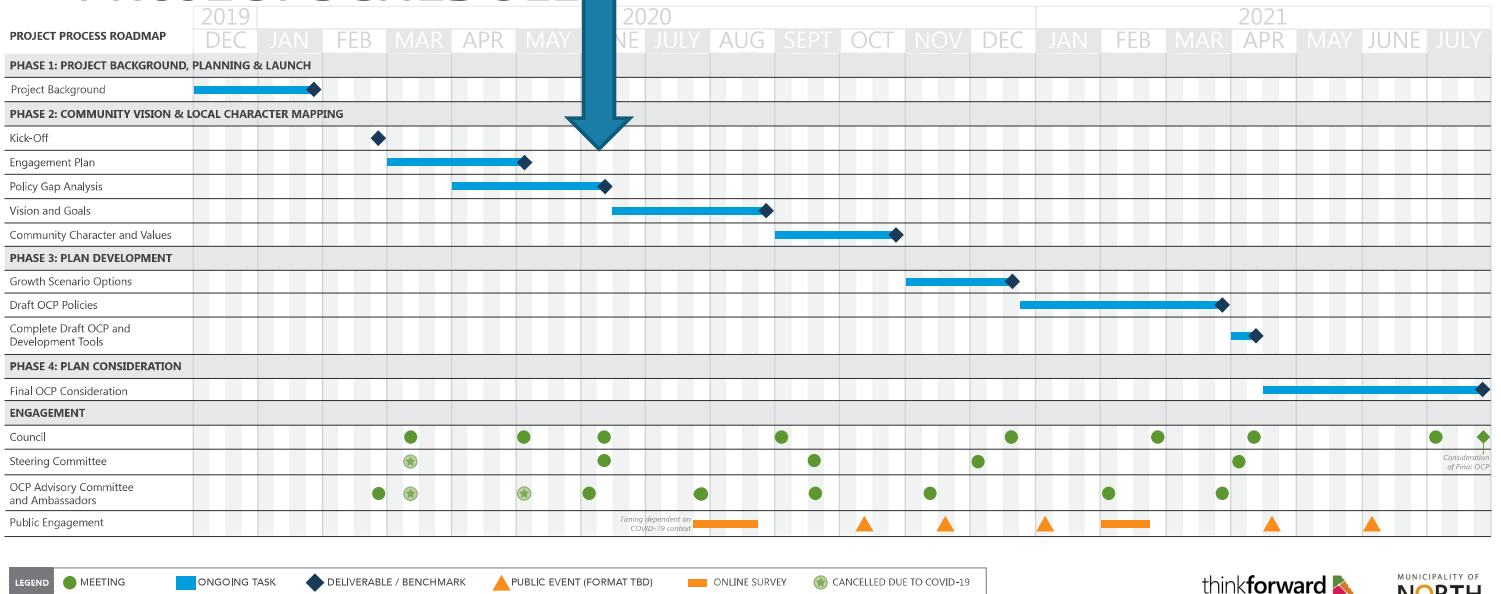MODUS Planning Design & Engagement

MODUS

MEETING AGENDA FOR JUNE 24, 2020

1. Project Schedule Update (10 mins)
2. Gap Analysis (50 mins)
3. Engagement Plan Feedback (20 mins)
4. Discussion (60 mins)

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PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT PROCESS ROADMAP	2019 DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	2020 JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	2021 JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY
PHASE 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND, PLANNING & LAUNCH																				
Project Background	████		◆																	
PHASE 2: COMMUNITY VISION & LOCAL CHARACTER MAPPING																				
Kick-Off			◆																	
Engagement Plan			███	███	◆															
Policy Gap Analysis				██	████	◆														
Vision and Goals					███	████	◆													
Community Character and Values						███	████	◆												
PHASE 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT																				
Growth Scenario Options									████	████	◆									
Draft OCP Policies											████	████	◆							
Complete Draft OCP and Development Tools														◆						
PHASE 4: PLAN CONSIDERATION																				
Final OCP Consideration																████	████	████	████	◆
ENGAGEMENT																				
Council			●		●	●			●			●			●		●		●	◆
Steering Committee			✱			●			●		●					●			*Consideration of Final OCP*	
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors		●	✱		✱	●		●		●	●		●		●					
Public Engagement						*Timing dependent on COVID-19 context*	▬▬▬		▲	▲		▲	▬▬		▲		▲			

LEGEND   ● MEETING   ▬ ONGOING TASK   ◆ DELIVERABLE / BENCHMARK   ▲ PUBLIC EVENT (FORMAT TBD)   ▬▬ ONLINE SURVEY   ✱ CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

thinkforward
North Cowichan Community Plan

MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH cowichan

MODUS

GAP ANALYSIS REPORT OUTLINE

1. Plan Organization Structure and Presentation

2. Analysis of Section 1 | Plan Overview

3. Analysis of Section 2 | Goals, Objectives and Policies

4. Analysis of Section 3 | Making the Plan Work

5. Analysis of Appendices

North Cowichan
Official Community Plan (OCP)

MODUS
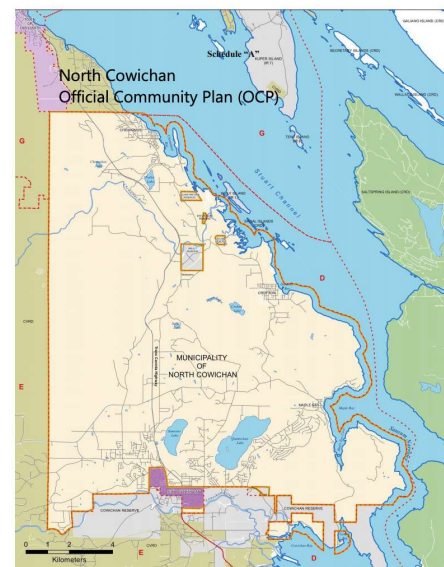
GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Recommendations to Consider

- OCP should act as umbrella document
- Create a more coherent framework
- Clarify the big picture
- Present big moves early on
- Document design and wayfinding
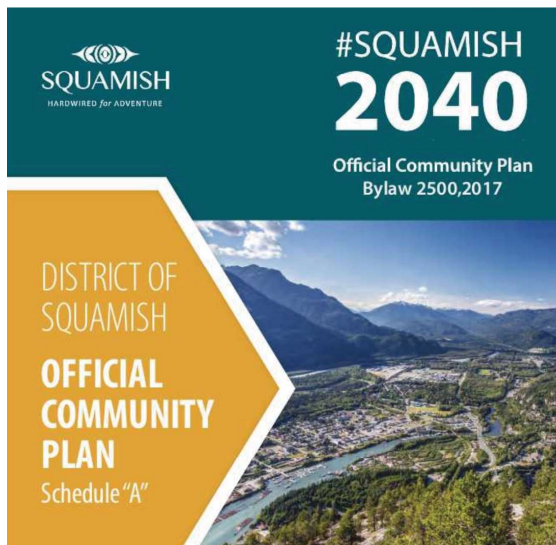- Compelling and readable writing

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SECTION 1: PLAN OVERVIEW

Recommendations to Consider:

- Create vision, update principles and add goals to this section
- Reorganize/ reframe assets and challenges section
- Add regional and historical context and demographic and projections
- Summary of the engagement process

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VISION STATEMENT EXAMPLE

In 2040, Squamish is a vibrant, inclusive, connected coastal mountain community with a big heart and a small town spirit. At nature's doorstep, Squamish is a leader and steward, sustaining ecological and human health while supporting resilient neighbourhoods and a thriving, diverse economy for all.

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SECTION 2: OCP GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES (AND THEMATIC OBJECTIVES)

Thematic Objectives:

- Revising our approach to growth management
- Respect individual character
- Climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience
- Strengthen natural environment
- Consider employment and economic changes

OCP Goals

- Build Strong Communities
- Preserve our Rural Character
- Adjust to Climate Change
- Guard our Environment
- Encourage Economic Activities

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GROWTH MANAGEMENT
OCP GOAL: BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

Recommendations to Consider:

- Clarify community values related to growth
- Create a clear structure plan
- Update urban containment boundary
- Integrate local area plans
- Modify growth management policies
- Create growth management options
- Increase options for density
- Strengthen affordable housing policies, including purpose built rental
- Track housing data

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CVRD TRANSECT DIAGRAM

remember: this is not a plan.

Human activity and settlements in the Cowichan Valley Regional District have evolved over time into a range of different settlement patterns.

Within and across seven distinct categories, the "transect" represents a theoretical range of development intensity (from rural to urban). This CVRD-context-specific adaptation has been created to reflect and contextualize the different landform types and settlement patterns found throughout our vast region.

The illustration itself isn't meant to be an accurate map or plan of the region. Rather, its purpose is to: communicate patterns and relationships that exist within the region; and as a way to plant the seeds of a common language for most effectively managing further growth and development.

The next several slides describe each "slice" of the transect in further detail.

DRAFT v1

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EXISTING LAND USE CONCEPT

LEGEND

North Cowichan Land Uses
- Urban Containment Boundary
- Rural Cluster
- Industrial & Commercial Areas
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Municipal Forest Reserve
- Managed by Forestry Department

Cowichan Valley Regional District Transect
- Urban
- Village
- Suburban
- Rural
- Natural
- Special

0 1 2 3 4 km
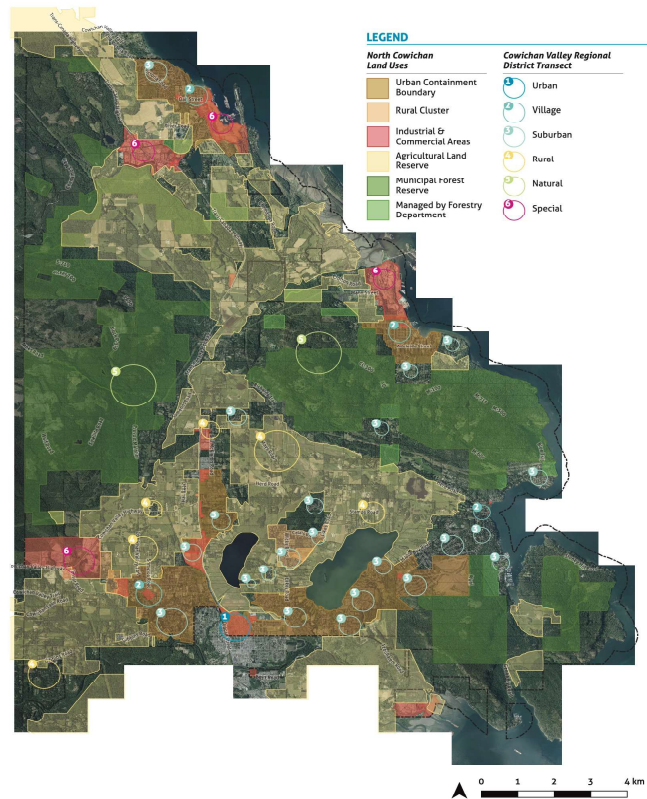
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INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER
OCP GOAL: BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES AND PRESERVE OUR RURAL SETTING

Recommendations to consider:

- Define community character and integrate in with other related objective and sections

- Create local area plans

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CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE
OCP GOAL: ADJUST TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Recommendations to Consider:

- Incorporate this lens into all sections of the OCP
- Mainstream climate action
- Link to Climate Action and Energy Plan
- Strengthen regional collaboration

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
OCP GOAL: GUARD OUR ENVIRONMENT
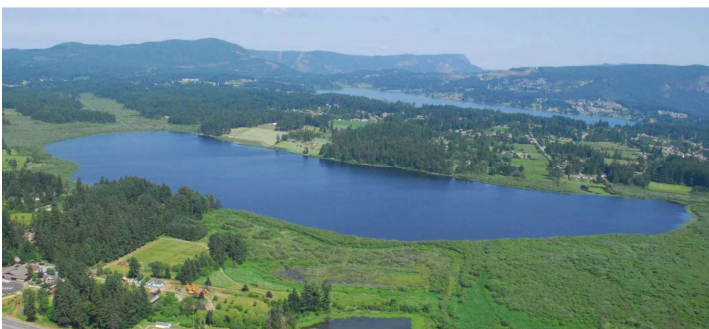
Recommendations to Consider:

- Revise approach to growth management considering environmental and social values
- Thorough consideration of urban nature
- Refine designation wording
- Incorporate community values
- Include objective on culture and heritage

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EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY
OCP GOAL: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Recommendations to Consider:

- Strengthen partnerships with First Nations
- Expand opportunities for green technology
- Business attraction and expansion
- Re-think for post-COVID era

MAKING THE PLAN WORK

Recommendations to Consider:

- Include land use designations definitions in this section
- Select indicators that have data readily available on an ongoing basis
- Set meaningful, measurable target
- Include the plan structure and relationship to local plans here.

APPENDICES

Recommendations to Consider:

- Update background doc's and maps
- Development Permit Areas (Guidelines review next phase)
  - Update DPA 1 (Form and Character)
  - Consider reorganizing DPA 2 (Marine Waterfront)
  - Update mapping
  - Update language, legislation and best management practice
- Consider deleting Land Use and Development Application Objectives section

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OCP VOLUNTEERS INPUT FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Issues:

- agriculture key to rural character and economy (food security)
- growth - different communities have different ideas unique "grow own way"
- outside forces drive growth (city folk/refugees)
- services/roads for populations
- lack of affordable housing
- road capacity study/maple bay road
- safety security/crime
- water, flood and groundwater
- seniors housing/aging in place
- urban sprawl and high density

Opportunities:

- create a unified view of District
- alternative and active transportation
- reconciliation and treaty making
- railroad corridor as connector
- renewable energy
- how to plan/ encourage for diverse population

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OCP VOLUNTEERS INPUT (JUNE 5&11, 2020)

- Need to understand the term growth management. Is our objective to encourage, manage or discourage growth?
- What is the rate of growth we are predicting? Finding the right pace is important otherwise the community gets overwhelmed.
- OCP needs to align with CAEP direction and modelling data
- OCP should set up clear structure for Local Area Plans
- Need to be mindful of tensions/ conflict of competing interests moving forward in process
- Agriculture Plan is outdated and should updated. Agriculture part of many different objectives/ policies
- Thoughtful approach to housing should be considered including diversity, affordability and accessibility and age-friendly
- Arts, music, entertainment and culture should be included in the updated OCP
- Need to focus on reconciliation with local First Nations

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COUNCIL SURVEY RESPONSES

- Council survey open from May 25 to June 10, 2020
- Five Councilors responded

Principles Comments

- Reconciliation and intergovernmental relationships
- Focus on social and environmental issues
- 'Climate change responsive' as a lens
- Focus should not be on economic growth, rather social and economic equality, improving wellbeing, creating meaningful work etc.
- Smart growth principle should have direct link to UCB's
- Three pillars of sustainability (social, environmental, economic)

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COUNCIL SURVEY RESPONSES

Assets and Challenges
- Poverty reduction, mental health and addiction
- Managing aging infrastructure
- Natural asset management and green infrastructure

Goals Comments
- Growth management goals to avoid sprawl and concentrate growth are clear; however, UCB not aligned with these goals, the CAEP and Cowichan Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Need to encourage mixed-use compact development
- Community character: need design guidelines to provide clear direction and principles to preserve rural character, forest and agricultural land
- CAEP and OCP need to be aligned
- Align Strategic Plan priorities (i.e. environment and climate) with OCP
- Stronger environmental protections
- Move from traditional resource-based economy to green technology and jobs
- Build on co-op models of business
- Focus on agriculture

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

- Digital Engagement Proposal

    May 6, 2020 Council Motion

    That Council approve the interim digital engagement activities proposed and direct staff to proceed with public engagement on the Official Community Plan Update, subject to consultation and engagement with the Official Community Plan Advisory Committee and Ambassadors.

- OCP Volunteers Feedback on the Engagement Plan, including the Digital Engagement Proposal

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Digital Engagement (physically distanced)

    Website

    Social Media

    Placespeak- online surveys

    Paper surveys (dropped at local spots/ with neighbours)

    Community Photo Activity

In person events (when appropriate)

    Open houses

    Workshops

    Attending local events/ meetings
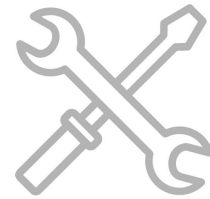
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OCP VOLUNTEERS INPUT AUDIENCE LIST

- Community Futures
- Mental Health Substance Use (MHSU)
- Development Community
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
- Earth Guardians
- Quamichan Watershed Stewardship Society
- Chemainus Festivals and Murals Society
- Chemainus Residents Association
- Chemainus Valley Cultural Arts Society
- Chemainus & District Chamber of Commerce
- Chemainus B & A
- Families with young children

- School Board and local Parent's Groups
- RC Legion #191
- Chemainus Rotary
- Chemainus Shout Out (part of Facebook)
- Harvest House (food bank)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Marine
- Waterfront properties
- School District #79
- Youth
- University and Highschool Students
- Reach out to teachers, principals
- PACs
- Social Planning Cowichan
- Cowichan Agriculture Society
- Farmers Institute
- 'Seldom heard from' groups

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OCP VOLUNTEERS INPUT

- General support for Engagement Plan, including digital engagement proposal
    - Important to consider how certain populations will be able to access online engagement
    - Need to include other tools such as paper surveys, phone calls etc.
    - Taylor surveys/ questions to school age children
    - Consider recruiting ambassadors that can reach out to the 'seldom heard from' groups (i.e. appoint a youth ambassador)
- Question regarding PlaceSpeak (useability etc.)
- Question regarding PlaceSpeak for spatial discussions
- Suggestion to include a forum to engage with experts
- Glossary of planning concepts would be important
    - Backgrounders will be important
- Suggestion to integrate municipal forestry reserve project into OCP process
- Respectful government to government engagement with First Nations is important

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QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

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Report

Date	June 17, 2020	File: 6480-30 2019.01
		Prospero No: SPP00040
To	Committee of the Whole	
From	Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator	Endorsed:
Subject	Official Community Plan (OCP) Update – Gap Analysis	

Purpose

To present the Official Community Plan (OCP) Gap Analysis report for review and comment.

Background

The OCP Gap Analysis was identified as one of four deliverables for Phase II of the OCP Update project.

Discussion

The intention of the Gap Analysis is to:

- refine the focus of the overall project based on policy areas that are performing poorly;
- prioritize and identify priority focus areas;
- anticipate needed internal resources;
- refine OCP work plans, including a more nuanced approach to the "Community Character & Values".

Staff believe that this draft document has achieved these goals and has not identified any additional internal resource needs at this time.

MODUS and several sub-consultants, including environmental experts, and sustainable economic and real estate development experts, prepared the Gap Analysis. The Gap Analysis primarily assesses the 2011 OCP against its own metrics, as well as the Council Strategic Plan and the Thematic Objectives of the OCP Update.

An overview of the Gap Analysis was presented to the OCP Advisory Committee and the Community Ambassador Teams. Their comments will be summarized and presented at the meeting. In addition, the Project Steering Committee is providing comment on the Gap Analysis, which will also be summarized.

Staff recommends that the Gap Analysis be received for information at this time, as feedback received during this meeting (workshop) and from the Council survey will be used to finalize the document. In addition to the survey data, the final Gap Analysis document will reflect all of the input presented at and received during the meeting for the acceptance by the Director of Planning and Building (Project Director) with the anticipated public launch of the OCP commencing in July.

Recommendation

That the Committee of the Whole accept the OCP Policy Gap Analysis report for review and comment.

Attachments: OCP Policy Gap Analysis

GAP ANALYSIS

MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN, OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Prepared by: MODUS Planning, Design & Engagement Inc.

Version: 2 (DRAFT)

Date: June 16, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan committed to *"rewrite the Official Community Plan (OCP), forming the basis for local area plans throughout the community."* Re-writing the OCP is an ambitious process: it involves confirming the community's 20-year vision, undertaking significant technical planning work, and engaging with the community and key stakeholders.

The goal is to undertake a community-driven project to review and update the current North Cowichan Official Community Plan in a way that better addresses local area planning and modernizes the OCP in the face of policy, demographic, environmental and technological change.

The primary project outcome is a comprehensively revised North Cowichan Official Community Plan that reflects local community values and expectations related to growth and development in North Cowichan that is technically sound and user friendly.

One of the first major tasks of the project is to conduct a gap analysis of the current OCP to understand where there might be gaps between the desired intent and existing policies of the OCP and how the document can be improved. In writing this report, the 2015 OCP Baseline Monitoring Report provided context for trying to understand whether progress has been made since 2011.

We also reviewed a number of other recently adopted OCPs as best practice examples including: the City of New Westminster's OCP, the District of Squamish OCP and the City of Abbotsford OCP.

We have framed the gap analysis around the current structure of the OCP document and the thematic objectives that North Cowichan identified for the update. This gap analysis report will provide the technical background knowledge to move forward in developing the vision, goals and policies for the OCP. This analysis was conducted by MODUS team members and our subject matter experts subconsultants, Diamond Head Consulting, Thrive Consulting, Sustainability Ventures and City Squared Consulting. We conducted a survey with North Cowichan staff in May 2020 to understand their perspective on the current OCP and what could be improved. Ten people from Planning, Parks and Recreation, Communications and Engagement, Environment Departments responded, and we have included some of their thoughts in the document. While we offer initial recommendations based on our technical review of the current OCP, we look to North Cowichan Council, OCP volunteers and community members to provide further feedback throughout the process.

Moving forward we will include Council and OCP volunteer feedback that we receive from the survey and upcoming meetings. This document and ultimately the updated OCP will be shaped by community engagement that we will seek throughout the process.

The main recommendation is to streamline the OCP by updating with plain, accessible language and improving the layout to create a user-friendly document. The OCP should be an umbrella document that guides the community in their long-term vision while leaving the procedural details to other documents or bylaws.

Local Government Act

The Province of British Columbia enacted the *Local Government Act* to govern the actions of local government including the planning, zoning and the management of development. See Appendix A for more information on the *Local Government Act* and the sections relating to Official Community Plans.

Council Strategic Plan

Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan provides the direction for the OCP update. Council has identified six strategic priorities which provide sound context for the update:

- Engagement;
- Housing;
- Environment;
- Economy;
- Community; and
- Service (foundational priority).

Figure 1: Council Strategic Priorities (2019-2022)

The Strategic Plan identifies a number of trends and issues which are helpful in setting the stage for the gap analysis.

1.1.1 POSITIVE TRENDS

- New **recreational facilities**;
- Growing **culture and diversity**;
- **Focusing development** within urban containment boundary and greater collaboration with developers;
- Increased focus on the **environment, tourism, agriculture, arts and culture**;
- **Revitalization** of core communities;
- Increased **retail** opportunities;
- Enhanced community and Indigenous **consultation**;
- Growing **public participation** in local governance; and
- Use of **local expertise** for work within the community.

1.1.2 CHALLENGING TRENDS

- Loss of high-paying **natural resource jobs**;
- **Urban sprawl**;
- Inconsistent application of **urban containment boundary**;
- **Environmental degradation**;
- Increasing **income disparity**;
- **Opioid crisis**;
- Challenge of **communicating Council's vision** to the community; and
- Lack of **affordable housing**.

1.1.3 KEY FUTURE ISSUES

- Responding to all facets of **climate change**;
- Limiting **environmental degradation**;
- Cleaning-up **industrial brownfield sites**;
- Enhancing **community planning**;
- Enhancing **asset management**;
- **Crime**;
- Attracting and retaining **skilled workers**;
- North Cowichan's popularity as a **retirement destination**;
- Homelessness, and capacity of homeowners to pay **property taxes**;
- Potential loss of **industrial tax base**; and
- **Increasing costs** for local governments.

Thematic Objectives for the OCP Update

North Cowichan has provided thematic and procedural objectives for the Official Community Plan (OCP) update. The procedural objectives are in Appendix B. The most relevant procedural objective for this report is to create an accessible plan that uses plain language and avoids technical jargon.

The thematic objectives, along with Council's strategic priorities provide an excellent framework to update the OCP, though through the process more thematic objectives may be identified. We have used the five thematic objectives to frame the analysis of the current OCP goals:

1. **Revising our Approach to Growth Management**
   - Environmental and social values along with market, technical and demographic information, drive the establishment of growth management policy.
   - Update the UCB so that it more clearly reflects a long-term vision for North Cowichan.

2. **Respect Individual Community Character**
   - Project deliverables recognize and respect the unique character of the various communities across North Cowichan.
   - Through engagement with the Community Ambassador Teams, execute the project with respect of local knowledge, culture and values.

3. **Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation, and Resilience**
   - Project outcomes respond to the needs of the community in the context of a changing climate.
   - Final product reflects the Climate Action and Energy Plan and updated-re-modelled projections.

4. **Strengthen Natural Environment**
   - Environmental policies will seek to protect natural areas that are environmentally sensitive as well as natural areas identified by the community as having value.
   - The value of green infrastructure (e.g. bio swales, wetlands, storm detention) is recognized and enhanced through policy outcomes.
   - Target plan policies towards protecting and improving waterways as well as surface and ground water quantity and quality.

5. **Consider Employment and Economic Changes**
   - Acknowledge the need for ongoing employment in the community.
   - Develop plan and policy work that considers and adapts to new and emerging directions of the economy at the regional, municipal and community level.

2 PLAN ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

In this section we comment on the overall organization, structure and presentation on the OCP based on the procedural objective to create an accessible Plan that uses plain language and avoids technical jargon. We reviewed the entire document for ease of navigation and user experience and use of high-quality graphic design, diagrams and images.

Recommendations to Consider

CREATE A MORE COHERENT FRAMEWORK

The updated Plan could benefit from a more coherent and user-friendly framework. A recommended high-level document structure includes:

- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents
- Vision, Principles and Goals
- Project Overview and Context, including historical and regional context, the planning process, demographics and projections, and local challenges and opportunities.
- Land Use Framework, including the high-level framework (structure plan, land use map), land use policy, and growth management. This is foundational to the Plan and all other sections and should be given more prominence in the Plan.
- Objectives and policies for key topics with clearly defined targets where warranted.
- Implementation
  - Appendices, including maps, relevant Development Permit Areas, and Local Area Plans.

CLARIFY THE "BIG PICTURE" OF THE OCP

The 2011 Official Community Plan lacks some of the fundamentals of an OCP, and isn't clear on the "big picture" and "big moves" of the OCP. Key recommendations include:

- **Clarify the vision:** The 2011 OCP does not include a long-term vision for North Cowichan. This is fundamental to the OCP, and should be clarified and included early in the OCP. Include the Plan principles and goals with the Vision, as they communicate specifics of where the Municipality wants to go, and how it wants to get there.
- **Clarify the big moves:** The 2011 OCP has several fundamental ideas and big moves that are not clearly articulated and communicated early in the Plan. The updated Plan should clarify and communicate these big moves early in the Plan.
- **Summarize up-front:** The updated Plan should have an executive summary of the long-term vision and big moves at the start of the Plan in order to clearly communicate the intent of the Plan.

As an example, the Bell-McKinnon Plan includes, as an executive summary, the 50-year vision, key directions, and defining policy of the Plan. In the second chapter, "Planning and Design Foundations", it includes the vision, goals, planning principles, and urban design principles. This lays a solid foundation for the Plan – and communicates that foundation, including the long-term vision for the area, how to get there, and the most important policy in the Plan.

DOCUMENT DESIGN & WAYFINDING

Redesign the document to include best practices in document design. Key recommendations include:

- **Design an attractive document within the brand guidelines:** Use the Municipality's brand throughout the document, including the Municipality's logo, colours, and fonts, in order to identify the OCP as visually "belonging" to the Municipality's brand. Include ample whitespace and graphic elements, including diagrams, photos, and icons, to create a more visually appealing document. InDesign allows the best and most creative layout, but Microsoft Word can be used to enable easier amendments if necessary.
- **Design for ease of use:** Consider using colour-coded sections (headers, tables, call-out boxes) to easily visually identify the section of the document. Incorporate "wayfinding" on each page, with the correct section, page number, document title, and other details in the header, footer, or sidebar. Consider incorporating a full-bleed colour header, footer, or sidebar to help easily visually identify the sections, including when the document is printed. Link within the document where possible, including the table of contents, and definitions (where provided).
- **Design for readability:** Use a readable font consistent with the Municipality's brand guidelines, and simple and consistent styles for all levels of headers. Reducing the length of lines and increasing space between paragraphs and sections can increase readability. Reduce the use of bold text, and only use bold text for headers and for emphasis text.
- **Design for accessibility:** Consider completing an analysis to ensure colours and fonts used are suitable for people who are colour-blind and/ or visually impaired and have sufficient contrast to ensure accessibility. Ensure 'voice dictation' software will be able to translate the final document.
- **Ensure consistency:** Ensure consistency in formatting, including formatting and numbering of policies and page numbers.

COMPELLING AND READABLE WRITING

The updated OCP should focus on compelling and readable writing, including the following recommendations:

- **Write for "skim-ability":** Many readers will simply skim the OCP, rather than reading in-depth. Write to get the high-level points across to these readers through using the headers to summarize key pieces of information, particularly in the context and background sections.
- **Write for all readers:** The 2011 OCP frequently has long sentences, uses complex language, and uses jargon. The update should include editing to use plain language and get to a lower reading "grade" level. The definitions should be easily linked to from the OCP, and use clear and plain language.
- **Write to be compelling:** The OCP – and, in particular, the long-term vision – should be inspirational. The update should focus on being locally focused, visionary, and compelling.

STAFF SURVEY COMMENTS

- **Do you find the format of the OCP easy to use?**
  - Of the 9 respondents , 3 agree, 2 neutral, 4 disagree

- **Do you find the OCP visually appealing and accessible?**
  - Of the 10 respondents, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 1 strongly disagree

- **What do you like or do not like about the format (including visual appeal, usability, and accessibility) of the OCP?**
- Things people like:
  - Numbering system is easy to find sub-topics
  - General brevity of OCP

- Things people did not like:
  - Too many visual elements, too busy, too text-heavy
  - Not scannable, difficult to navigate and find information
  - In digital version, too much scrolling
  - Clearer hierarchy and differentiation of categories
    - One idea was to have each principle followed by relevant goals, objective and policies
  - Maps not legible

3 ANALYSIS OF SECTION 1: PLAN OVERVIEW

This section provides an analysis of Section 1: Plan Overview in the current OCP (page 6-14).

Vision

The current OCP does not have a vision statement. In the next stage of the process we will engage the community to create a 20-year vision for the OCP. The vision sets the foundation for the Plan. A clear, shared vision defines and brings meaning to what's important for the future of North Cowichan. It guides the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan to inform local decision making. The vision should speak to the future economic, social, and environmental well-being of the community.

Principles

Guiding principles reflect the shared values of the community of North Cowichan. Principles give better assurance that the decisions we make and actions we take are true to those principles.

The five principles in the current Official Community Plan include:

- Sustainability;
- Economic opportunity;
- Smart growth;
- Healthy and safe communities; and
- Community engagement.

While these principles generally align with Council's strategic priorities and the thematic objectives, it will be important to engage the community as these are the foundational principles that will guide plan

implementation. Many Official Community plans include their goals in this section so they provide overarching direction for the entire Plan and include the objectives and policies in separate sections.

Assets and Challenges

This section explains North Cowichan's unique context of assets, opportunities and challenges. Some of these have roots in particular historical and geographical background; others arise from events and circumstances that affect more than just this municipality. The elements that are especially relevant to the formulation of an OCP are summarized in this section. Each present both challenges and opportunities for planning the way forward. Together they provide the context for the detailed discussion of the goals, strategies and policies set out in Sections II and III.

The assets and challenges include:

- Oceanfront municipality;
- Rural land use;
- Municipal forests;
- Coastal Douglas fir zone;
- Water and watersheds;
- Climate change;
- Economy;
- Community core vitality;
- Diversity of communities;
- Getting around;
- Population;
- Social development;
- Affordable housing;
- Food security;
- Coast Salish First Nations; and
- Regional approach.

While this section has some useful information some of it is now dated. Much of this information is repeated in other sections and would be better in a different format.

Staff Survey Comments

- Add heritage preservation to this list.

Recommendations to Consider

The updated *Plan Overview* section should:

- Engage the community to create a **vision** and to update the **principle**s and **goals;**
- Move **goals** to this section;
- **Clarify the big moves** or strategic directions early in the Plan;
- **Reorganize the assets and challenges section**, and reframe as key issues to address in planning for the future;
- Include historical and regional context;
- Include a summary of the **OCP engagement process**;
- Include an overview of the **Plan structure**;
- Include **additional demographics, population and dwelling projections** building on the North Cowichan Profile snapshot; and
- Include a new section on relationships with "Coast Salish First Nations".

4 ANALYSIS OF SECTION 2: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Section 2 (pages 14-98) details the Municipality's five key planning goals, the challenges and risks in pursuing those goals, and the objectives and policies to achieve those goals. We have organized this section of the Gap Analysis around the thematic objectives and their connection to existing goals, objectives and policies. Through the OCP process more thematic objectives may be identified such as 'social resilience and well-being'.

The current format is as follows:

- **Goals:** We suggest moving the 'goals' to the beginning of the Plan to provide over-arching direction. Some goals have multiple component. For example, the goal "Preserve Our Rural Setting" has five components: agriculture; forestry; mining and gravel extraction; landscapes, seascapes and vistas; and rural housing and services. It may make sense to re-organize some of these components.
- **Objectives:** For each component of a goal, key objectives have been set. These reflect what outcomes the Municipality wants to achieve as a way of meeting each goal. The OCP commits the Municipality to measure progress in achieving each objective using the indicators listed. The 2015 OCP Baseline Monitoring Report provided some information on the performance measures. We suggest North Cowichan staff identify a few key targets that they can monitor over time.
- **Policies:** In support of each objective, a set of policies outlines the Municipality's position, or actions it will take in a particular situation, or the factors that will influence its decision-making.

While this is a common and generally a workable format, some re-organizing and consolidating of the objectives and policies will be helpful. This needs to be done in conjunction with advice and input from staff, Council and the community.

4.1 Thematic Objective: Revising our Approach to Growth Management

Current OCP Goal: Build Strong Communities

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses how the current OCP deals with growth management.

This part of the gap analysis examines how North Cowichan's current OCP addresses the issue of managing growth and patterns of development within the community. This includes the following sub-topics:

- Principles related to growth management;
- Policies about governing where development occurs and the density and mix of land uses; and
- Urban Containment (growth) Boundaries.

It also reviews the 2015 Performance Assessment and makes recommendations for improvements to the OCP.

What do we mean by growth?

Many communities in BC, including North Cowichan, are experiencing population growth that results from immigration to Canada and migration from other Canadian communities/regions. As with most BC communities, North Cowichan is not seeing any natural increase (more births than deaths). This growth in population results in increased demand for housing and services and the need for employment for these people. Increased demand for residential development also arises from a change in household size (households are getting smaller so more units are required for the same population) as well as demand for recreational and commercial properties.

When we use the term "growth" we are usually referring to a combination of increased population and the increased development (residential and employment-related) that accompanies it. However, when discussing OCP policy and growth management, it is worth differentiating the type of growth we are talking about. We are not typically trying to control/manage population growth – that is seen as a just a fact that we need to deal with. Rather, we are trying to manage the impacts of increased development.

North Cowichan is expected to see its population increase from 29,913 to 38,612 by 2050 an increase of 8,699 people - 22%. Housing units are projected to increase from 12,800 in 2017 to 16,300 in 2051, and jobs from 11,310 to 14,578 over the same time period.[1]

What is Growth Management?

Growth management is the practice of planning for and controlling the location, density and type of land use and development in a community. The idea is that by managing where growth occurs, we can

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[1] Population, Housing & Employment Projections for the Cowichan Valley Regional District's Modernized Official Community Plan. Rennie. March 2019. https://www.cvrd.bc.ca/DocumentCenter/View/94223/Long-Range-Projections-of-Population-Housing-and-Employment

increase the public benefits arising from growth and also mitigate the negative impacts of growth on health and the environment.

Depending on how it is shaped and managed, growth can have positive or negative impacts on things the community values. Growth has typically been seen as positive for economic development and the accompanying social benefits (more jobs, amenities, local taxes etc.) and as negative for the environment. However, over the last decade or so, several studies have indicated how certain types/patterns of growth can have a negative impact on the fiscal health of a community if not managed properly. Additionally, growth can actually lead to positive environmental outcomes if used to leverage restoration/protection of environmental resources.

Due to the potentially large positive and negative outcomes resulting from growth, OCPs typically place a lot of emphasis on how growth is managed. Successfully managing growth depends on setting clear objectives and using policy to strategically manage the type, mix, density and location of growth that occurs and the requirements/amenities/benefits that accompany it. Growth management is challenging because the community may have very different priorities and different sets of values when it comes to the perceived costs and benefits of growth.

How Important is Growth Management to the OCP?

Growth management is one of the fundamental topics of an OCP, and is highly related to the planning and outcomes for a number of other topics, including housing, social development, mobility, community diversity, climate change, community core vitality, economic development, maintaining rural areas, and more.

The 2011 North Cowichan OCP has several principles, including "smart growth":

> *Adopting the principle of "smart growth"1 means encouraging vibrant communities by planning for development including redevelopment, infill, mixed use and more compact communities. It aims to enhance quality of life, preserve the natural environment and, over time, save money.*

To support this principle, the OCP lists, as one of 5 major goals, to "build strong communities". Within this goal, the OCP organizes objectives and policies within several subsections as shown below. The ones in **bold** apply most directly to growth management and have been looked at in greater detail for this Gap Analysis.

- **Growth Management**
- **Housing**
- Public Realm
- Safe & Healthy Community

- **Strong Neighbourhoods & Communities**
- **Transportation**
- Infrastructure
- **Parks & Recreation**

Growth Management

Although growth management touches many topics and objectives within the OCP, 'growth management' is, of course, the section of the OCP that directly applies to this thematic objective. This section includes policies about creating an urban containment boundary and focusing new development within growth centres.

Housing

The housing sub-section includes policies about affordable housing, including maintaining existing affordable housing, support for creating new affordable housing, and partnering to create non-market housing. This section also includes policy about respecting the character of residential neighbourhoods and encouraging housing diversity. These policies can impact where and what type of development is financially and politically feasible (Note: Community Character is another section of this Gap Analysis).

Strong Neighbourhoods & Communities

This section includes policy on developing local area plans for individual neighbourhoods/communities, with priority for areas within identified growth centres, as well as policy on increasing municipal engagement with neighbourhoods.

Transportation

Although not directly related to growth management, transportation is an important complement to land use planning and growth management and should be planned in tandem.

Parks & Recreation

This section includes policies to support increased growth in Chemainus, Crofton, and the South End through the development of parks and recreational facilities in these areas.

WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SINCE 2011?

The number of new units of each type built since 2009 shows a remarkably consistent pattern of development in North Cowichan over the last ten years. On average:

- 103 SF units per year (66% of total)
- 18 semi-detached/duplexes per year (11% of total)
- 10 row/town houses (7% of total); and
- 25 apartments (16% of total).

Apartment construction is the only type of construction that has changed considerably over the ten year period. From 2009 to 2014, an average of 6 apartment units were built each year. From 2015 to 2019, an average of 43 apartments units were built each year with 126 completed in 2018 and 92 in 2019. (Exhibit 11 in the Appendices).

As of 2016, there were 12,770 households in North Cowichan, with 3,210 renter households and 9,560 owner households. Based on the inventory of purpose-built rental units, we know there are 1,874 households renting units from the strata market. While the strata market plays a valuable role in providing housing for renter households, purpose-built units provide greater security to tenants with long term secured tenure and stable rents.

The Municipality has created several Local Area Plans, which follows policy in the 2011 OCP. This includes the Bell-McKinnon Local Area Plan (2018), University Village Local Area Plan (2015), and Crofton Local Area Plan (2015). In addition, the Kingsview Comprehensive Development Plan (2016) was created, covering a large portion of undeveloped area in the Urban Containment Boundary.
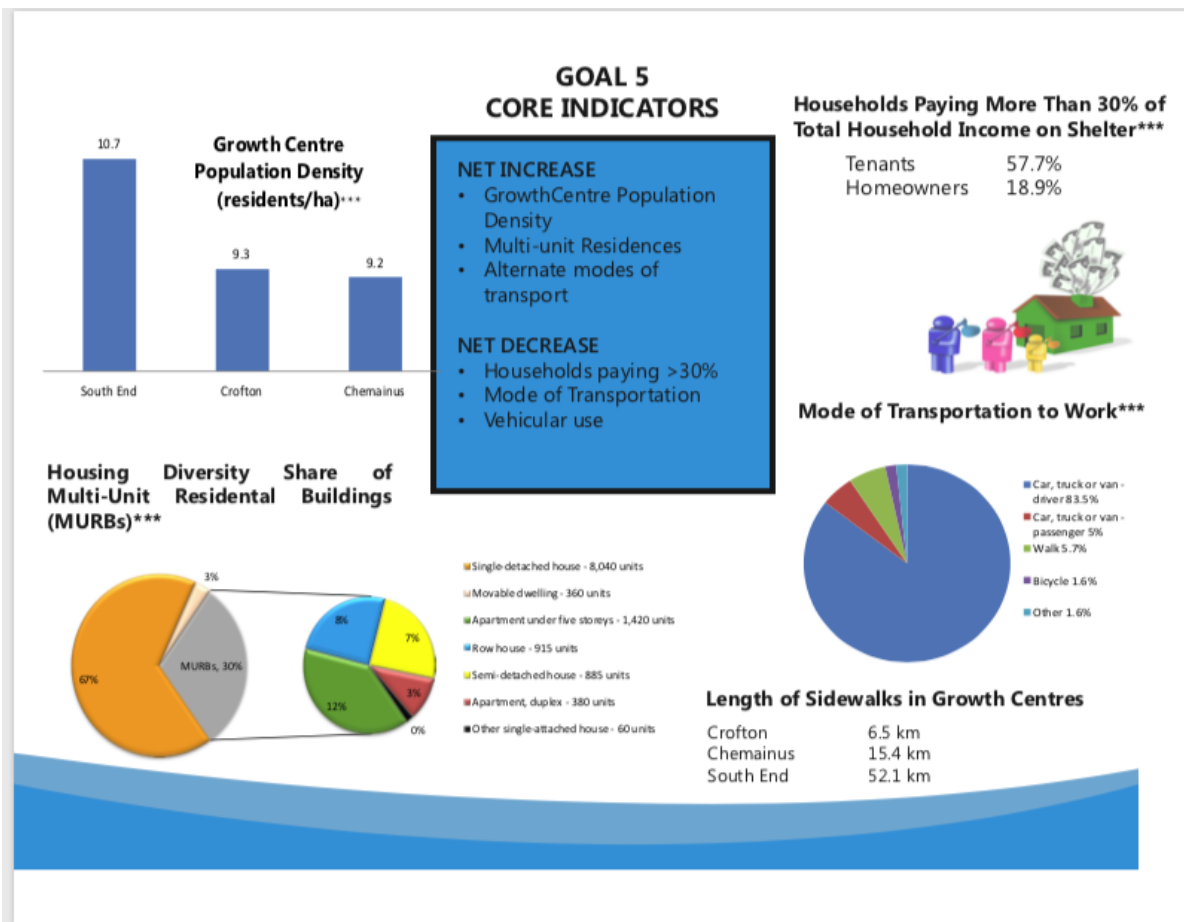
Figure 2: 2015 Baseline Monitoring Report

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THIS THEMATIC OBJECTIVE?

There are a number of challenges in addressing growth management in North Cowichan:

Concentrating growth to create complete, walkable communities: Concentrating growth can contribute to the creation walkable, diverse, and mixed-use communities. Until vehicles are fully electrified it can also reduce GHG emissions associated with transportation. Several of the older villages such as Chemainus, Crofton and Maple Bay have compact and well-defined centres. However, recent development is more car-oriented, disconnected (from an active transportation perspective), and is spread across North Cowichan with low density and poor walkability. This recent growth is not connected to a well understood, logical framework that can guide where and how growth occurs.

Protecting agricultural areas and the Municipal Forest: Concentrating growth in specific areas also helps to protect agricultural areas and the Municipal Forest from development that is unwanted. This has often been a challenge across British Columbia due to growth pressures and resource lands often seen as a development land bank. However, North Cowichan appears to have been largely successful in protecting its resource lands due to land preservation policies and the value placed on the Municipal Forest and agricultural land.

Supporting commercial: While commercial nodes are wanted in some residential areas in order to increase walkability and livability, and decrease transportation distance travelled, it is often difficult to make these financially feasible to develop or operate. As an example, Maple Bay Heights has a commercial area designated but this site has not been developed for commercial uses. On-line shopping and the Covid-19 pandemic have made the viability of small commercial nodes even more tenuous. However, North Cowichan should look for opportunities to create/support "third spaces" (where people can informally meet and gather) whether or not these are associated with commercial activity.

Housing diversity and affordability: Creating housing affordability and choice are challenges for municipalities across British Columbia including North Cowichan. Land and housing prices have been driven by several factors including immigration, demand for recreational, speculative investment, lack of supply, and new forms of short-term rental (AirBnB etc.). Housing choice and diversity is hampered by the perception and sometimes the reality that higher density forms of housing are less desirable and less profitable for developers.

Lack of purpose-built rental housing - The bulk of the purpose-built rental unit supply was built prior to 1979 (65%). There is also limited supply of purpose-built rental bachelor units (5% of all units) and 3 bedroom units (7% of all units). There was historically low vacancy in 2019 across all rental unit types, particularly in bachelor units (0% vacancy).

Lack of Build Out Estimates for Local Area Plans - A review of the Bell McKinnon, University Village and other local area plans shows that there are no residential supply or unit capacity estimates in the plans. In addition, estimated growth or absorption by community has not yet been determined. This makes it difficult to forecast build-out, which can make infrastructure, servicing and community development initiatives difficult. Directions to adopt build-out scenarios for each of the local area plans is recommended for the 2020 OCP.

Other challenges are expected to come to light during consultation with staff, Council and the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER

Clarify community values and objectives related to growth: Environmental, economic, social and cultural values along with market, technical and demographic information, must all be considered during the development of North Cowichan's growth management policy. As growth management is related to so many of North Cowichan's other goals, it is important to help the community clarify its values and objectives and understand the range of options for how future growth can be accommodated.

Create a comprehensive and clear structure plan: While the existing Urban Containment Boundary and Land Use Designation Map is a good start, North Cowichan lacks a clear land use framework with which to make consistent land use and development decisions. Some of the current development pattern therefore lacks a clear structure and clear transitions between areas. The OCP would benefit from more clarity through a Structure Plan and land use framework with a simplified and refined set of land use designations. This could potentially be based on a 'development transect', such as the one MODUS created for the Cowichan Valley Regional District (see Figure 3), which includes the categories resource and natural, rural and agricultural, suburban, village, urban, and special district. This framework clarifies the defining character of each area, the desired the land uses and the implementing zones in each. The

diagram shown as Figure 4 is a first attempt at classifying the land use/development types in North Cowichan and will be refined through the process

Review the Urban Containment Boundary: Through the OCP update process, the long-term vision and principles of the OCP, and the objectives and policy of the other sections will be updated. The Urban Containment Boundary, and proposed Structure Plan and land use framework will all need to be reviewed so that they more clearly reflect these updated vision and values of the OCP. This will likely mean the concentration of growth into mixed-use hubs in order to improve walkability and reduce impacts on the environment and resource lands.

Integrate Local Area Plans into OCP: The existing Local Area Plans (for Bell-McKinnon, University Village, and Crofton) could be integrated into the OCP (as Schedules), including the Urban Containment Boundary, and proposed Structure Plan and land use framework. Policies should be reviewed for consistency and redundancy.

Modify Growth Management Policies to create greater clarity of intent: Several policies in the "Build Strong Communities" section should be re-worded for greater clarity so that all users (community members, landowners/developers, Council and staff) have a clear idea of what the intent is and where development of different types is and is not permitted.

For example, Policy 2.5.1.1 currently states: "The Municipality will manage growth through the establishment of a firm urban containment boundary." This should be revised to "Urban development will not be supported outside of the urban containment boundary."

Development of Growth Management Options: Once the new OCP vision and goals have been identified, the consulting team will create a number of alternative growth management options. These options will build upon the options created and modelled as part of the Climate Action and Energy Plan. They will show alternative locations for future growth of the community. Each of the options will be evaluated against community objectives to understand the pros and cons. These options (and accompanying evaluation) should form an important part of the community consultation process.

Increase opportunities for higher density development: While North Cowichan has seen a recent uptick in the number of apartment dwellings built, the OCP should encourage additional forms of higher density development across a range of unit types to ensure a diversity of housing for a range of life stages and incomes.

Develop build-out scenarios for local area plans: To better manage growth and coordinate infrastructure and community amenities delivery, North Cowichan should estimate the unit capacity in each LAP and Comprehensive Plan to better understand the potential impacts on infrastructure as well as availability to increase supply of housing if needed.

Strengthen Affordable Housing Policies: Affordable housing policies should be strengthened in the OCP update, with particular attention paid to the economics of developing these projects. Affordable housing projects are very costly to build - and the high cost must be offset by a significant share of private sector units in the building, or land and equity subsidies. The first step is defining rents or prices which constitute affordable housing. This gives clarity to developers or non-profit organizations about the investment required to undertake these projects. It is also recommended that the municipality engage a partner to test a potential affordable housing project on a select site in the municipality to understand

the zoning and financial requirements of a standard project. Further clarity should come from the CVRD Housing Needs Analysis work currently underway.

Explore further development of Purpose-Built Rental Housing: Policies which support the development of purpose-built rental projects are recommended for the updated OCP. This could include directions to study the density and zoning necessary to make these projects financially viable. Since there has been a recent increase in the development of purpose-built rental units (2017 to 2019), an analysis of these projects and the underlying success factors is recommended.

Tracking Housing Data: Separating out secondary suites and purpose-built apartment/townhouse projects in building permit data is recommended, as each unit types requires different policies to support development.
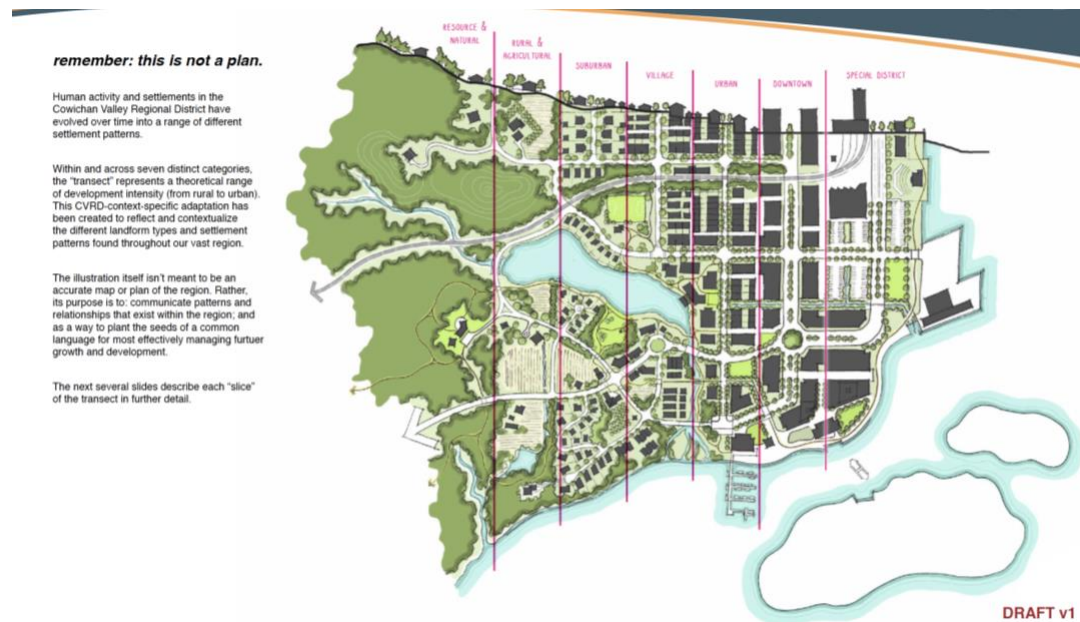

Figure 3: Cowichan Valley Regional District Transect Diagram (MODUS, 2020)
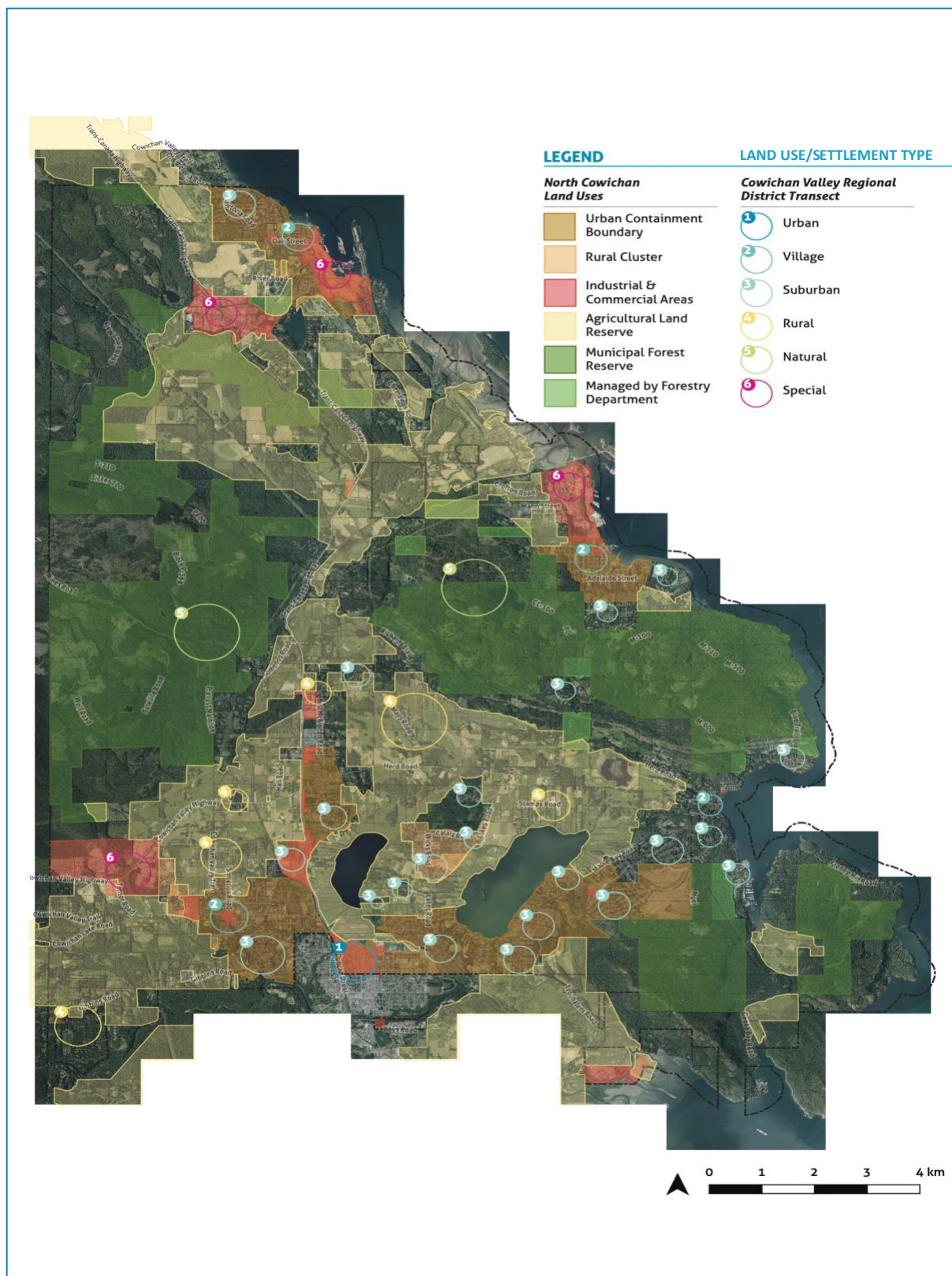
Figure 4: North Cowichan Preliminary Land use Concept (existing)

What's working well

- UCB Boundary, limitation of services extension.
- It seems all aspects were considered in the topic headings.
- The Growth Centre clearly define where growth is encouraged.
- The OCP is also clear that growth is discouraged in rural designated areas outside of Growth Centres.

What are the challenges regarding growth management in the Official Community Plan?

- Pressure on Rural Areas to increase residential development through inherent property rights / zoning, housing option limitations, land costs - multi generational family land purchases.
- Affordable housing will be a challenge, changing the Urban Containment Boundaries will be necessary and I am particularly interested to see how costly infrastructure will be to maintain over the years and if we should be asking for more or less through subdivisions.
- The OCP does not provide much guidance of the type and density of development that is appropriate in Growth Centres. It largely deals with Growth Centres as a homogenous designation and does recognize that growth should be managed differently within Growth Centres.
- The Growth Centre (urban containment boundary) has been controversial in some parts of the community and some believe it was established without due process and is excessively permissive.
- Land use policies for rural lands could be improved, particularly with respect to existing zoning and established urban and suburban uses in rural areas.

Do you have suggestions for specific changes to improve the Official Community Plan regarding growth management?

- Clear up ambiguous / contradictory policy around increasing residential density in rural areas. Staff are left to sift through the policy and explain our rationale on a proposed land use change with myriad policy for and against density increases. We have been criticized for cherry picking policy by Council to support or deny a zoning amendment application on this basis.
- Incentivise affordable housing to meet projected demand.
- Review the UCB and see if the boundaries still all make sense for higher density.
- Have a way to keep track of new roads, parks, trails etc. and how taxing that will be on the budget, maintenance, and staffing over a projected time. Implement analysis and reporting of this information at the subdivision stage.
- The "rural cluster" designation needs to be reconsidered. While the designation exists, there are almost no policies in the Plan that pertain to it.
- There should be different land use designations within Growth Centres that speak to appropriate land uses and densities.

4.2   Thematic Objective: Respect Individual Community Character

Current OCP Goal: Build Strong Communities

INTRODUCTION

This thematic objective recognizes the unique character of the various communities across North Cowichan and the importance of local knowledge, culture and values. Please see Appendix C for more information on this section.

2011 North Cowichan OCP describes its "diversity of communities" as both an asset and a challenge:

> *While all residents of North Cowichan share many common values, the municipality's communities each have their own distinct character and history, and their own views as to how best to manage their growth and economic development. The size of North Cowichan and the diverse character of its individual communities thus pose numerous planning challenges. Future development will benefit from community- and neighbourhood- prepared plans with meaningful public input.*

The OCP builds upon this assessment and lists as one of 5 major goals to "build strong communities". Within this goal, the OCP organizes objectives and policies within several components shown below. The ones in bold apply most directly to community character and have been looked at in greater detail for this Gap Analysis.

- Growth Management
- Housing
- **Public Realm**
- **Safe & Healthy Community**

- **Strong Neighbourhoods & Communities**
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- **Parks & Recreation**

Public Realm

This sub-section contains policies that are intended make the public realm inviting, safe, and comfortable. It discusses the need for public spaces to be well-placed and designed with care to promote community pride and reduce problems of crime and vandalism. The policy commitment is to develop and enhance public use areas and conserve heritage and environmental values.

Safe & Healthy Community

This sub-section contains policies that address the wellbeing of residents. It strives to make progress on social connectedness, an engaged population, and providing a rich diversity of services and programmatic offerings. The policy commitment is to use municipal resources to develop safe and healthy communities, cooperate and collaborate with agencies providing community services, and ensure a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for community residents.

Strong Neighbourhoods & Communities

This component contains policies that respond to the distinct character of North Cowichan's various neighbourhoods and communities. It recognizes that the diversity of these communities is an asset and

aspires to support residents in helping them strengthen and enhance their neighbourhoods. The policy commitment is to support community and neighbourhood planning.

Parks & Recreation

This sub- section contains policies that considers parks and recreation facilities essential to healthy communities and aspires to make them accessible to all residents. It addresses the benefits parks, trails, and open space can have for the community, not only to promote health and fitness, social interaction, and community pride, but also as economic drivers (i.e. making North Cowichan more attractive to new residents and tourists). The policy commitment was to provide diverse and barrier free recreational opportunities for all ages, and integrate parkland acquisition, natural areas protection, and trail development plans.

CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THIS THEMATIC OBJECTIVE

There are three main challenges when addressing community character that are common to many municipalities across BC:

Vague terminology: Community character is a vague term that can mean different things to different people within the same neighbourhood. Without a strong definition of what constitutes community character, it can often be used as a way to oppose any and all new development within an area or to exclude certain tenures or types of housing.

Reliant on other documents: Many elements that help define community character are found in engineering standards that aren't typically updated to reflect the goals and objectives of OCPs and Local Area Plans.

Overlapping layers of regulation from OCPs, Local Area Plans, Comprehensive Development Plans, Revitalization Plans, and other documents that differ from one neighbourhood to the next can create an onerous and inconsistent application of regulation thereby dissuading investment and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER

Integrate "Community Character" objectives: There's a clear need for integration of "Community Character" objectives with those related to growth management, climate adaptation, and strengthening the natural environment. Identifying synergies between objectives over the course of the OCP update could be key to developing buy-in from community members.

Create a framework for Local Area Plans: A framework for Local Area Plans (LAP) should include what should be included in a LAP and which areas should be prioritized for LAPs.

Define "community character": Incorporate strong and clear definition of what community character is and its constituting elements.

STAFF SURVEY COMMENTS

- Do you think the Official Community Plan is clear in its vision for respecting individual community character?
  - Plan is followed by staff
  - Staff have flexibility within OCP

- What are the challenges regarding respecting individual community character in the Official Community Plan?
  - Haven't preserved heritage areas or trees
  - Lack of preservation efforts in Maple Bay

- Do you have suggestions for specific changes to improve the Official Community Plan to help us better respect individual community character?
  - Create Heritage Registry
  - Create a tree bylaw
  - Create a better community in Maple Bay as it is limited in it's downtown core and usability
  - Hire an Archaeologist as staff to help identify a richer history of our community character

4.3 Current OCP Goal: Preserve our Rural Setting

This goal is closely linked to the thematic objectives of **Respecting Community Character and Growth Management**. Growth management is key to preserving rural settings for deciding where appropriate growth and density should occur in North Cowichan.

Residents of North Cowichan greatly value its rural environment, a setting that includes a mix of scenic mountains, forests, farms, rivers, lakes and oceanfront, accessed by narrow, bucolic roads and trails. Traditionally, this rural setting was the economic driver for the municipality, through agriculture, forestry, mining and fisheries. Today it continues to be economically important, as well as an important factor in our quality of life, providing a source of food, recreation options, and outdoor pleasure. This section includes subsections on agriculture, forestry, mining and gravel extraction, landscapes, seascapes and vistas, and housing and services in rural areas. The Municipality will achieve this goal by continuing to implement policies that reduce development pressures on rural landscapes, focusing development to the growth centres, and that support the working landscape while protecting sensitive ecosystems.

PROGRESS MADE SINCE 2011

To monitor progress related to this goal, the indicators include percentage of land in the Municipal Forest Reserve (MFR); designated as Conservation Management Land (CML); zoned for agricultural use including ALR lands; and designated as urban (within the three growth centres). Additional indicators include: farm size, gross forestry revenues from the MFR and land that is being actively farmed as a percentage of North Cowichan land that is zoned for agricultural use, both ALR and non-ALR land.

Forest revenues are dependent on a number of variables; the demand for logs, timber prices and the overall economy. This metric provides an indication of the health of the Municipal forestry program as well as that of the coastal forestry industry.

Monitoring the number of farms by size together with farm sales in Goal 4 will provide an indication of the diversity and health of this industry. The figure below is from the 2015 Baseline Monitoring report; however, according to staff new indicators and better data is needed for the updated OCP to better capture key information.
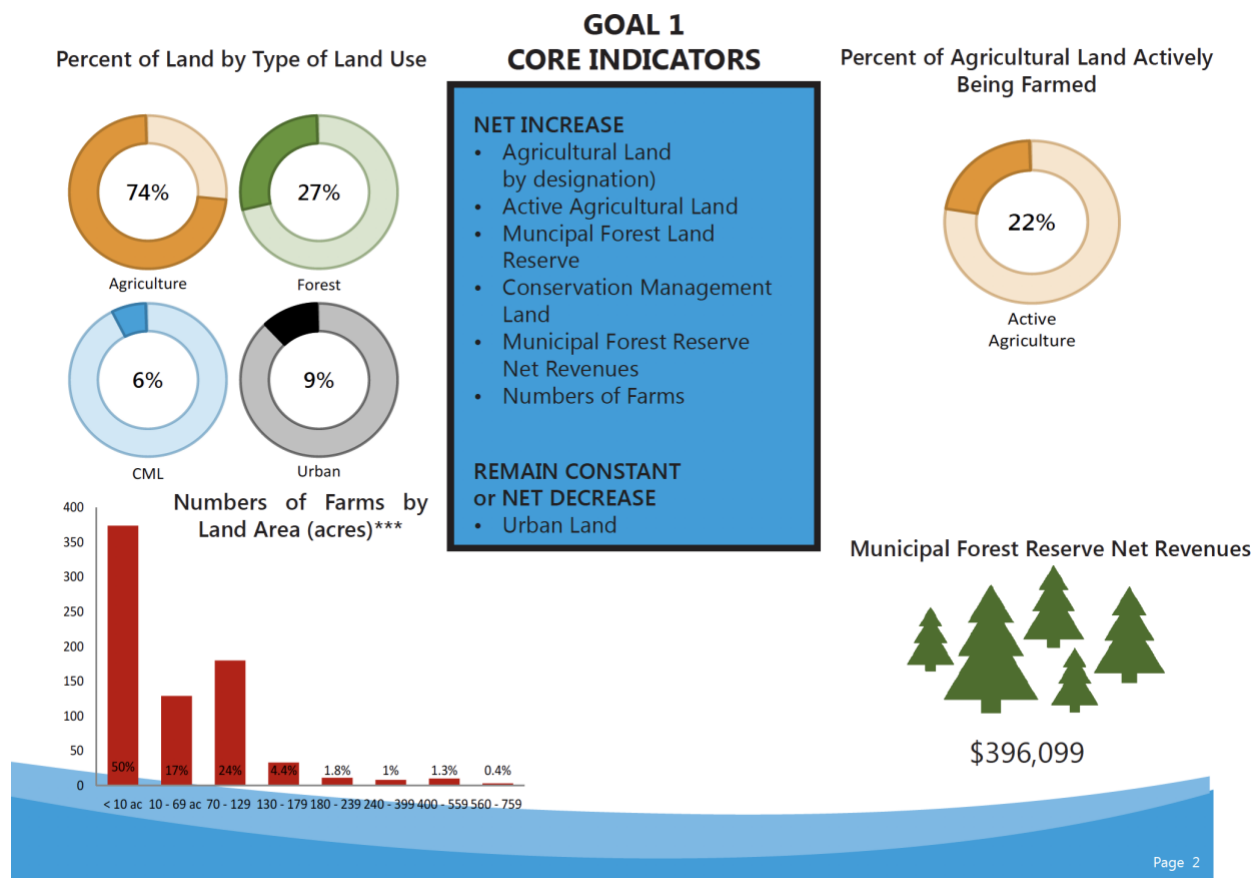
47

Percent of Land by Type of Land Use

74% Agriculture

27% Forest

6% CML

9% Urban

GOAL 1 CORE INDICATORS

NET INCREASE
- Agricultural Land by designation)
- Active Agricultural Land
- Muncipal Forest Land Reserve
- Conservation Management Land
- Municipal Forest Reserve Net Revenues
- Numbers of Farms

REMAIN CONSTANT or NET DECREASE
- Urban Land

Percent of Agricultural Land Actively Being Farmed

22% Active Agriculture

Numbers of Farms by Land Area (acres)***

50% < 10 ac
17% 10 - 69 ac
24% 70 - 129
4.4% 130 - 179
1.8% 180 - 239
1% 240 - 399
1.3% 400 - 559
0.4% 560 - 759

Municipal Forest Reserve Net Revenues

$396,099

Page 2

Figure 5: 2015 Baseline Monitoring Report

CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THIS THEMATIC OBJECTIVE/ GOAL

There is a lot of land in North Cowichan where agriculture could occur but much of it is not being actively farmed. There are many reasons for this, for example, the land might be marginal (wet late in the season or too rocky), the economics of farming may be prohibitive for young farmers to get started, the land owner may be choosing a rural lifestyle over active farming, or the land owner is aging and there is no one to take over the farm. Increasing the amount of land that is actively farmed will only improve the region's food security.

The community character study done in conjunction with the 2011 OCP was clear that North Cowichan residents value the rural feel of the entire community. However, current OCP policies refer only to preservation of rural features (e.g. farms) but not rural feel/appearance of the rest of the community. In the update, we may wish to include policies to preserve rural character in residential areas and growth centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER

Re-group and reorganize this section: This section could be reorganized in order to create a simplified and more useable OCP. The *agriculture* section could be in the *economy* section; *forestry, mining, and gravel extraction* should have its own section, the *landscapes, seascapes, and vistas* section could be in

ANALYSIS OF SECTION 2: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES | 4

the *natural environment* section; and the *housing and services in rural areas* section should be in the *housing* and *safe communities* sections.

4.4 Thematic Objective: Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation, and Resilience

Current OCP Goal: Adjust To Climate Change

INTRODUCTION

The section recognizes the challenges that climate change is posing in the community as well as one opportunity that it represents:

> *The immediate effects of climate change most likely to be felt in the municipality include wetter winters, with rain falling less frequently but in more intense events, and thus posing the potential for persistent inundation and episodic flooding; and drier summers, which could raise the risk of water shortages, environmental stress, biodiversity loss and increased potential for severe forest fires. A milder climate might also increase the potential for new organisms and diseases to appear, yet also increase the potential for accommodating longer growing seasons and the introduction of new crops to the area.*

The stated objective for *adjusting to climate change* is: Engage all sectors of the community in responding to the effects of climate change and the need to substantially reduce the use of fossil fuel; and adjust municipal policy and programs to adapt to actual and anticipated changing climate conditions.

The section has three policy direction/commitments: *Engage in climate change action planning*, *Reduce the carbon footprint of municipal operations*, and *Reduce the carbon footprints in the development process*.

The section states that progress in this area will be measured using the following performance measures (i.e., indicators):

- Completion of a Climate Change Action Plan;
- Monitoring of the Climate Change Action Plan implementation;
- Success in achieving targets established by the Climate Change Action Plan;
- Number of green infrastructure projects (new or redevelopment) approved; and
- Number and type of climate change adaptation measures undertaken in municipal operations.

The framing in this section overall from 2011 is quite progressive with its focus on leveraging the local economic opportunities inherent in GHG emissions reductions and adaptation and focusing on green infrastructure solutions. There could be more congruency between the policy commitments and the performance measures.

PROGRESS SINCE 2011

Progress on the OCP's goal to *adjust to climate change* can be tracked using the five indicators identified in that section as well as other indicators and targets in related documents/plans /policies.

The Climate Action and Energy Plan (CAEP) (2013)

This meets the stated OCP performance measure of: *Completion of a Climate Change Action Plan.*

The CAEP inventories the community's existing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and identifies future trends in energy and GHG emissions based on population, land-use, technology and other factors. It also identifies opportunities to reduce energy consumption and emissions through policy and other municipal mechanisms. The plan includes analysis of the social, environmental and economic impacts of the strategies and its development incorporated wide participation from the community. The plan is a response to local, regional and global concerns about human-caused climate change and its current and potential effects. Its recommended actions seek to reduce GHG emissions and alter how energy is produced and used while advocating the adaptation measures needed to lessen climate change impacts in the community – impacts that are projected to occur despite preventative measures that could presently be initiated. Both approaches are necessary to avoid increasing risk of negative local climate impacts.

Specific goals of the CAEP are to:

- Reduce GHG emissions in accordance with the OCP;
- Identify carbon sequestration opportunities;
- Develop adaptation measures; and
- Educate and engage the public.

It includes the following targets:

Community:

- Reduce GHG emissions by 33% by 2025, based on 2007 levels;
- Reduce GHG emissions by 80% by 2050, based on 2007 levels;
- Be carbon neutral as soon as possible; and
- Sequester more carbon than we produce.

Corporate:

- Being carbon neutral in respect to operations by 2012;
- Measuring and reporting on the community's GHG emissions profiles; and
- Creating complete, compact, more energy efficient rural and urban communities.

It further identifies (in addition to those identified in the 2011 OCP section 'adjust to climate change') some of the climate pattern changes expected In the Cowichan region as:

- More frequent extreme wet and dry weather events;
- Severe winter storms;
- Warmer and wetter winters;
- Hotter, drier summers;
- Forest fires will increase;

- Longer dry seasons and increased drought;
- Increase in coastal storm surges; and
- Rising sea levels (an estimated minimum of 80 cm over the next century).

The CAEP contains the following recommended actions:

Recommended Mitigation Actions	Description
1. Create a Transportation Planning Program with Dedicated Staff	Create a staff position that oversees transportation planning in North Cowichan.
1a. Implement a Smarter Travel Choices Program	A comprehensive program for transportation behaviour change.
1b. Establish a Taxi-bus Rural Public Transit System	Low-cost and effective transit system for low-density areas.
1c. Increase Community Biodiesel Purchases and Require Municipal Fleet Biodiesel Use	Enhance the existing biodiesel operation through procurement.
1d. Join Project Get Ready and Transition the Municipal Fleet to Electric Vehicles	Program to support electric vehicle deployment.
2. Ensure Strict Implementation of OCP Development Guidelines	Enforce Urban Containment boundaries and increase housing density.
3. Employ Municipal Energy Policy Mechanisms	Use new powers under Bill 27 to support renewable energy.
4. Implement a Community Solar Energy Program	Create a mechanism for a large scale solar energy deployment.
5. Establish a Community Energy Utility	Create a community-owned subsidiary with a mandate to reduce energy consumption and generate renewable energy.
6. Reduce Municipal Building Energy Use	Increase the energy efficiency of Municipal buildings.
7. Create an Agricultural Development Centre	Establish an entity that trains farmers, makes farmland available and produces and sells local food.
8. Increase North Cowichan's Forest Area	Establish partnerships to increase North Cowichan's tree cover.
9. Establish a Green Revolving Loan Fund	The fund will create a financing vehicle to overcome barriers to energy efficiency.

Adaptation Actions	Description
1. Establish a climate change adaptation working group.	An internal multi-departmental committee that would spearhead education, planning and advice on climate change adaptation.
2. Mainstream adaptation into existing planning, operations and decision-making processes.	Include climate change adaptation in staff reports, infrastructure planning and community planning.
3. Identify high priority risks and opportunities to define and prioritize actions.	Undertake further research on high priority areas of ecosystem restoration, aquifer vulnerability, hazard maps, coastal and intertidal zones and infrastructure.
4. Engage stakeholders and citizens.	Involve stakeholders and citizens in developing adaptation on options and in reporting and outreach.
5. Establish and maintain partnerships and networks.	Request that CVRD and CRD create a regional roundtable on climate change adaptation. Establish partnerships with Vancouver Island University, Vancouver Island Health Authority and others.
6. Identify funding opportunities and strategies.	Pursue pilot funding from Natural Resources Canada for adaptation efforts.
7. Commit to monitoring, reporting and revision of strategies.	Use new powers under Bill 27 to support renewable energy.

The CAEP Implementation and Monitoring Framework (2014)

This framework helps to meet the stated 2011 OCP performance measures of: *Monitoring of the Climate Change Action Plan implementation* and *Success in achieving targets established by the Climate Change Action Plan*.

The Climate Action and Energy Plan (CAEP) Implementation and Monitoring Framework was adopted by council in 2014. The Framework was developed by staff together with the Environmental Advisory Committee and builds upon the recommended actions in the CAEP to develop a comprehensive, robust and easier to read document.

The Framework provides a summary of the actions and initiatives required, broad time frames for their delivery and the associated delivery mechanisms to ensure successful implementation of the CAEP. It notes that in some instances new structures and partnerships will need to be established. The framework therefore provides an overview of the action required to deliver the CAEP, the lead and support department(s) responsible for undertaking the action or initiative, and where known, a broad indication of time frames, costs and possible funding mechanisms.

The I & M framework proposes a series of actions under the following headings: transportation, land use, energy, agriculture, financing, forestry, adaptation. Some have monitoring metrics, other's do not. It is not apparent whether this Framework has been reported on annually or otherwise since it's completion in 2014. There is some overlap and some divergence between the actions described in the CAEP and in this framework.

The CAEP Reserve Fund (2014)

Also established in 2014, the CAEP reserve fund provides funding for climate action and corporate energy projects. This meets an action in the I & M Framework to 'Establish a Green Revolving Loan Fund'.

It is facilitated by a 0.5% tax which is put into a reserve fund annually (i.e. the CAEP Reserve Fund). Energy savings realized from projects that were enabled by expenditures from the fund are also put back into the fund. Money from the fund can then be used to offset the costs of future climate action or corporate energy projects which will help to ensure sustainable funding sources into the future and reduce the Municipality's capital budgets. The fund enables outside organizations to receive funding for projects that action the CAEP.

Further information/analysis would be required to assess how successful this has been in supporting the stated performance measures in the OCP section and the stated metric in the I&M framework ('Amount of loans and grants provided'). For example, how much money is currently in the fund? How has it been utilized to date for projects? Have outside organizations successfully accessed it to support and implement climate action projects?

OCP Baseline Monitoring Report (2015)

This report outlines 3 indicators for the 'Adjust to Climate Change' Goal. They are all mitigation indicators, there are no adaptation indicators, which could have included those stated in the OCP in 2011 as a starting point: i.e. *Number of green infrastructure projects (new or redevelopment) approved*, *Number and type of climate change adaptation measures undertaken in municipal operations*.
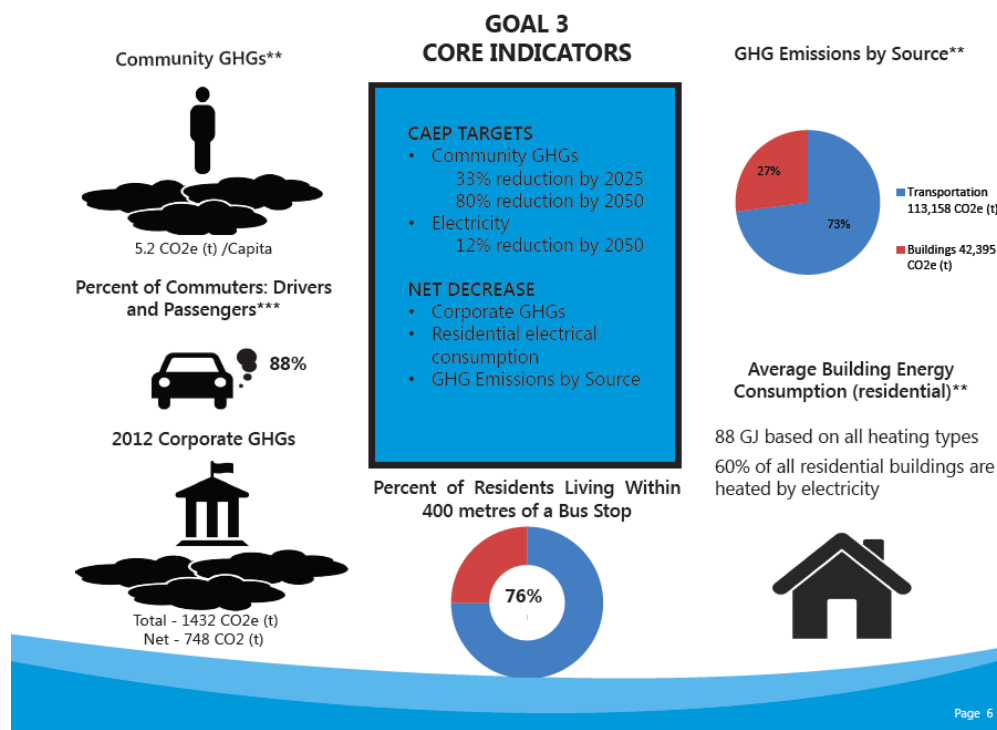

Figure 6: 2015 Baseline Monitoring Report

FCM Grant to Update Energy Modelling/Projections (2018)

North Cowichan received a grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to update the emissions modelling used in the 2013 Climate Action and Energy Plan (CAEP). The $78,800 grant comes from the Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program, funded by the Government of Canada. The grant was used to:

- Update the original greenhouse gas modeling to address changes in land use and development patterns, respond to technological advancements, and provide more functional and user-friendly tools for monitoring.
- Obtain a progress update on the Municipality's emissions reductions goals in order to determine if the goals in the CAEP are attainable.
- Reschedule and re-evaluate existing projects and determine if there are any new projects that should be implemented.
- Develop an Implementation and Monitoring Framework that identifies quantifiable outcomes, timelines, and objectives to ensure progress towards emission reduction targets.

Regional Collaboration Framework, Cowichan 2050 (2018)

The regional district to which the community belongs has made progress in prioritizing climate adaptation as a region, as outlined in the regional collaboration framework.

This includes the regional aspiration of resilience and offers a way forward for local governments in the Cowichan region to establish clear and measurable indicators of progress around regional livability, sustainability, and resilience.

The regional aspiration is as follows:

RESILIENCE: Strengthen our adaptive capacity

Our region is already dealing with chronic stresses such as rising unaffordability, economic volatility, and water supply issues. In the coming years, we anticipate seeing these stresses increase and experiencing new stresses such as an aging population and sea level rise. As climate change accelerates, we also expect to become more exposed to sudden, acute shocks such as coastal flooding and more frequent and intense storms. In light of this diverse array of challenges, we must improve our region's overall resilience by strengthening the adaptive capacity of our communities and supporting systems. This will require us to work together as a region to identify and address our vulnerabilities proactively so we can survive and thrive no matter what stresses and shocks come our way

It notes that the two areas where regional collaboration is currently most limited are also the areas where coming changes are expected to be most significant: growth management and climate adaptation. It emphasizes that there is a critical need to re-focus efforts on regional adaptation and notes possible next steps as: undertaking a collaborative, region-wide climate vulnerability and risk assessment to better understand and link climate hazards across the region, and developing a coastal flood management strategy around sea level rise. It describes the establishment of the *Cowichan Climate Change Collaborative* in 2014 and additionally, the following existing regional collaborations in the adaptation space:

INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	LEAD	PARTNERS	PURPOSE
New Normal Phase 1	2018	CVRD	• Cowichan Watershed Board • Social Planning Cowichan • VIHA	Provides detailed projections of how climate change will affect the Cowichan and will support the next two phases of the planning process – a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment and an Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy.
Climate Adaptation in the Cowichan Valley - Social Policy Toolkit	2014-2017	Cowichan Climate Change Collaboration	• Social Planning Cowichan • Cowichan Tribes • Municipality of North Cowichan	Supports residents across the region develop neighbourhood climate change adaptation, or resilience plans.
Climate and Agriculture Strategy	2013	BC Agriculture & Food, Climate Action Initiative	• CVRD • Canada • Pacific Institute for Climate Initiatives	Identified priority impact areas for regional agriculture and outlined a preliminary adaptation strategy.

Climate Emergency Declaration (2019)

This motion officially acknowledges a climate emergency and clarifies the Municipality's intention to *"look at all applicable decisions through a climate lens, including but not limited to: rewriting our Official Community Plan* and reviewing the management of our municipal forests."

The municipality committed to hiring an Environmental Specialist and the motion directs staff to report to the council with an integrated climate action strategy within 90 days of this position being filled.

The integrated strategy will merge current climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives with climate-related policies and directions in the Council's Strategic Plan as well as "new and existing ideas and actions to implement from the remodelled Climate Action and Energy Plan that can be adapted from other jurisdictions or emerging science."

CONNECTION TO THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

North Cowichan needs to decide whether it wants this as a standalone *section* in the OCP rewrite, whether they are looking to apply a climate lens to the whole OCP update as per the Climate Emergency Declaration, or whether the focus is on the integrated climate action strategy as a standalone plan (also as per the Climate Emergency Declaration).

CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THE THEMATIC OBJECTIVE

'Adjusting to climate change' is challenging as the climate itself is always adjusting. Accordingly, the targets keep moving for both mitigation and adaptation. This need to be constantly adapting is one of the reasons the lexicon and dialogue has shifted towards resilience: with so much uncertainty, how do we build adaptive capacity and redundancy into our socio-ecological systems?

Updating the modelling: Both the energy modelling and the climate impact modelling (recently completed through a regional effort) need to be revisited/refreshed on a regular basis. The energy modelling seems to have occurred on a 5-year update but this lag makes it challenging to stay on top of implementation and monitoring of ambitious emission reduction goals and targets. Similarly, climate impacts modelling (typically done via PCIC) needs to be revisited on a frequent basis to assess things like updated SLR projections/scenarios. This iterative process of using modelling to inform planning policy and actions requires that planning and policy tools become more nimble and adaptive, more succinct and spatial.

Mainstreaming climate action: Transforming our communities and regions towards low-carbon resilience requires thinking about climate action from all angles: from how we site and design the built environment, to how we move around (e.g. private vehicles, transit and active transportation) to how we preserve and restore nature and manage natural assets, to how we create, support and sustain health and wellness systems that function well despite the increased stresses (aging populations, increasing extreme weather, etc.). Best practice is applying a climate lens to all community and local government decision making and planning: from the budgeting process to how the buildings department operates, how development permits are processed and everything in between. The Climate Emergency Declaration calls for this approach, so it is just a matter of following through via projects such as this current one to update the OCP.

Explore synergies with the growth management thematic area: Using the lens of climate and resilience when updating the Urban Containment Boundary can avoid increased density in high hazard areas given the changing climate (i.e. smart growth in smart places fosters resilience and safe neighbourhoods).

Explore synergies with the 'strengthen the natural environment' thematic area, especially the efforts underway and mentioned as priority in relation to the DPAs and natural hazards (e.g. UWI and SLR/coastal hazard).

Explore synergies with the employment and economic change thematic area. As noted, the community has taken a progressive perspective since the 2011 OCP in framing the required adjustments to climate change as economic development opportunities. Building on this framing represents a chance to enhance local economic development opportunities while concomitantly addressing the Climate Emergency.

Mainstream Climate Action: Use a mainstreaming approach, such that climate mitigation and adaptation becomes a lens through which the other OCP sections are reviewed and developed. Having a stand-alone section on adjusting to climate change may not be the most effective approach. Mainstreaming is mentioned as an action item in the 2013 CEAP plan. This is also a priority as stated in the 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration. It is difficult to ascertain how this effort is going and to reconcile the various approaches being suggested/pursued.

A short, succinct, and dynamic OCP: Work Towards Policy and Implementation Consistency The strength of the OCP will be enhanced by ensuring consistency between the OCP and implementation tools such as the zoning bylaw, DPAs (e.g. hazard specific DPAs for SLR or other major hazards of concern), LAPs, etc. Development and redevelopment approaches should be implemented with a focus on reduce existing risk, preventing creation of new risk and enhancing community resilience. Consider a set of streamlined indicators that can be effectively monitored and reported on an annual basis to support responding to the climate emergency and building resilience.

Strengthen engagement and regional collaboration: The actions and priorities around engagement and regional collaboration are paramount to strengthen the 'adjust to climate change' objective. Many of the hazards and risks associated with climate change are regional: flood (pluvial, riverine and coastal), drought, wildfire etc. typically do not respect municipal boundaries. As noted, the community should continue to collaborate regionally in the areas of risk modelling and assessment and regional climate projections. Similarly, on the mitigation side of things, enhanced regional collaboration will support improved regional transportation connections that supplant SOVs, and other economic development opportunities that support responding to the climate emergency – from local food systems to renewable energy and beyond.

General Staff Comments
There is a need to revisit ongoing and expected climate changes, perhaps with the regional projections as a starting place. Staff commented: summers will be longer and hotter, while there will be surface water shortages, these will almost exclusively affect environmental needs and agricultural use. Residential water use is almost 100% groundwater. The groundwater supply is relatively stable and not expected to change significantly even given climate change.

Staff also clarified that the early climate action planning targets were intended to inform a review and update of OCP polices, but that this never occurred. The intent was to amend OCP goals after writing the CAEP, which explains some of the inconsistences in targets/indicators across the policy documents.

Staff also noted that most of the actions from the old CAEP will be re-examined by the update and many are likely going to be found to be unlikely policies to reduce carbon emissions. For example, agriculture has been found to be one of the larger sources of CO_2 emissions in North Cowichan (~20,000-25,000 t CO2/yr). Further, the CAEP update will provide DNC with accounting software to track emissions. Management policies can then be analysed to track efficacy. This will place the District in a much better position for tracking/monitoring and reporting on successes/challenges in reducing emissions than previously.

Staff also commented that the current update to the CAEP is underway and pointed to the council report from January 20th 2020 for further information. In this council meeting, Council agreed to a 80% reduction, by 2050, of community emissions relative to their 2007 baseline. The Climate Action Plan endorsed by Council on January 15, 2020 is now the successor to the CAEP. The climate action plan (CAP) embraces six guiding strategies:

1. Encourage transition to electric vehicles and less carbon-intense transportation

2. Taking corporate leadership in lowering emissions

3. Support ecosystems and promote carbon capture

4. Making buildings more energy efficient

5. Adapting to new climate norms

6. Lowering carbon from Waste

Staff also clarified that the original CAEP was at least partially funded by BC Hydro which may have narrowed the focus on what the climate change committee/staff would have preferred to be included. This is common across BC, as most communities have focused initially on mitigation planning but are increasingly recognizing the need to integrate adaptation into their climate action planning programs and policies. Challenges remain as there are limited sources of funding to undertake adaptation planning if local authorities do not chose to fund it internally.

Staff clarified that the FCM grant that was obtained to update the energy / emissions modelling in 2018 would lead to a deliverable in 2020. The consultant working on this update is developing a new list of actions after completing the modelling – which will replacing the I&M framework developed by DNC staff in 2014. The big moves to achieve the goal of 80% CO_2 emissions reduction in 2050 relative to 2007, 94% of emissions reductions will come from:

1. Transition to Electric vehicles (personal and commercial)
2. Replace natural gas with renewable natural gas and hydrogen
3. Increase industrial energy efficiency
4. Increase carbon sequestration in forests
5. Home energy efficiency retrofits (including heat pumps)

After Council declared the climate emergency in 2019, an Environmental Specialist was hired to deliver a strategy and proposed new GHG reduction targets (for use in the 2019 CAEP modelling project) that were adopted or agreed upon by council (January 2020, as above).

Staff agreed that this section (from the 2011 OCP) should not be a section in the revised OCP, as there will be a standalone CAP. Staff agreed with the approach described in the Climate Emergency Declaration that a Climate Lens should be applied throughout the OCP sections. This could integrate both mitigation and adaptation considerations throughout the main OCP sections (e.g. growth management, natural environment, etc./ or however these end up being re-framed).

Staff Survey Comments

- Do you think the Official Community Plan is clear in its vision for climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience?
  - 1 agree, 1 neutral, 2 disagree

- What is working well regarding climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in the Official Community Plan?
  - Staff agree with stated intent, goals and objectives
  - Onsite stormwater infiltration is good
  - Excited about adopting step code

- What are the challenges regarding climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in the Official Community Plan?
  - Implementation is challenging
  - Need for stronger language in OCP, eg. requirements
  - Need for non-vehicle transportation options
  - Unsure what is the best course of action to take, expensive to hire consultants to help with this scoping
  - Targets need to be updated

- Do you have suggestions for specific changes to improve the Official Community Plan regarding climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience?
  - Need for safe, accessible non-vehicle modes of transportation, e.g. protected bike lanes to and from Duncan, traffic calming measures
  - Monitoring and measuring progress, benchmarking
  - Coastal flood protection
  - Clarify goal of "sequester more carbon than we produce" and specify actions

4.5 Thematic Objective- Strengthen Natural Environment

Current OCP Goal: Guard our Environment

INTRODUCTION

The thematic objective adds a new component to the protection of ecosystems. It protects natural areas that are valued by the community as well as sensitive ecosystems. The objective also places greater emphasis on the protection and improvement of waterways and water quality throughout the community, although many policies under the current goal aim to achieve the same objectives.

The thematic objective also brings up a new focus on the value of engineered and natural green infrastructure such as bioswales and wetlands. This provides an opportunity to supplement the current OCP goal and policies with the valuation of natural assets (in line with Council's strategic priorities) as well as an enhanced recognition of the value of natural assets within the urban matrix.

The current Guard our Environment chapter of the OCP is structured around four key themes: ecosystem health, biodiversity and critical habitats; air quality and noise pollution; natural hazard areas; and archeology.

Ecosystem health, biodiversity and critical habitats

The municipality commits to protect and restore natural ecosystems, to address threats to biodiversity, to identify and connect green spaces and to make land use decisions using the best available information. It sets out to measure progress on its implementation by monitoring land use by type and area, the amount of land under conservation management, the number of species at risk inhabiting the District and annual fish counts in the Cowichan River. These objectives are to be accomplished through a number of policies, organized into four main policy directions/commitments.

The first group of policies focuses on protecting environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) through the OCP's Development Permit Areas (DPAs), to update data on the distribution of ESAs over time, to support the development of community-based ESA management plans and to support land acquisition of ESAs. It seeks to protect North Cowichan's watersheds, in particular from the impacts of development, by protecting streams, avoiding flooding and erosion impacts, protecting vulnerable aquifers and developing watershed management plans. It includes monitoring of water quality, avoiding the detrimental impacts of stormwater runoff and recognises the importance of allowing seasonally flooded agricultural lands.

The policy also states the importance of maintaining the integrity of the Coastal Douglas-fir zone and commits to working with the Province to do so. Finally, it seeks to address threats to biodiversity. This includes protecting the integrity of natural forest communities, protecting habitat required by species at risk as well as second growth forest, limiting the use of cosmetic pesticides and encouraging the planting of native and drought-resistant plants for landscaping. It also seeks to reduce the impact of invasive species, to require restoration plans when environmentally sensitive areas are damaged and to protect the integrity of North Cowichan's soils.

The second group of policies in this section relates to the recognition of water features including the waterfront, streams, wetlands, estuaries and groundwater for their special characteristics as well as to protect the unique characteristics of the marine foreshore. The Marine Development Permit Area is one

of the tools to deliver on this policy, but the District also seeks to reduce conflicts particularly in the Cowichan and Chemainus estuaries and to concentrate marine commercial uses in three specific locations. The municipality wants to discourage development that would alienate public foreshore access or negatively impact the environment, to prevent dumping, to discourage the infilling of foreshore as well as private moorage.

The third group of policies seeks to identify and connect environmentally sensitive areas and green land across North Cowichan. The municipality wants to identify and connect habitat remnants, natural areas and green spaces through the identification of green corridors and blue ways. This network of natural areas will promote biodiversity by facilitating wildlife movement and protecting important natural habitat areas.

Finally, the fourth group of policies protect environmentally sensitive areas by ensuring that land use decisions are made by referencing the best available information and data. All data collected for development permit applications that identifies species at risk will be submitted to BC's Conservation Data Centre.

Environmental Development Permit Areas (DPA) are one of the strongest tools for protection of the natural environment available to municipal governments. North Cowichan has multiple DPAs. DPA 3 (Natural Environment) is the primary DPA related to protecting the natural environment, however, DPA 2 (Marine Waterfront) also contains protections for the marine waterfront areas throughout North Cowichan. While the guidelines are not contained within the OCP, the development permit area section and a map of ESAs are included in an appendix in the OCP. Standard practices for environmental DPAs now usually maintains mapping outside of the OCP to facilitate its amendment over time, while hosting the guidelines within the OCP. Required setbacks such as riparian or foreshore setback are often included in the zoning bylaw.

DPA 3 aims to protect, manage and/or mitigate: sensitive aquatic ecosystems; sensitive terrestrial ecosystems; groundwater, aquifers and watersheds; and the marine shoreline and adjacent coastal waters. It provides general and specific guidelines on how best to develop while protecting and enhancing existing ESAs. It also provides information on exemptions. While DPA 2 largely focuses on the look and feel of the marine waterfront, it does contain protections for the marine waterfront and contains an objective to "integrate development with the site's natural attributes to reduce negative impacts to coastal ecosystems".

Please see Section 6 for further discussion on DPA's.

Air Quality and Noise Pollution

The municipality commits to minimizing the public health risk from air and noise pollution. This is measured by reducing fine particulate levels, improving the air quality index and the number of air quality and noise complaints from the public.

To protect air quality, the OCP states that the municipality will limit emissions from its operations, reduce outdoor burning, reduce vehicle emissions, and require new commercial and industrial operations to identify ways to reduce emissions. To mitigate noise pollution, the municipality will minimize the noise created by its operations, consider noise pollution in the review of development applications and investigate reported noise complaints.

Natural Hazard Areas

North Cowichan commits to coordinating land use and environmental management policies to protect people and property from natural hazards such as floods, wildfire and landslides. Emergency response plans will be developed for these hazards. Progress will be measured by the number of completed response plans, the number of practice and training sessions for emergency preparedness, the implementation of wildfire mitigation plans and completing a multi-hazard risk analysis.

The first natural hazard areas group of policies seeks to coordinate land use and environmental management policies to protect people and property from natural hazards. It involves discouraging development in natural hazard areas through a DPA. The risk of flood will be mitigated through land acquisition (where possible), the review of provincial flood mapping for estuaries prior to approving development, considerations of the impacts of flooding on agricultural lands, and discouraging development in the floodplain. Where development proceeds in areas prone to flooding, provincial standards will be enforced, and flood management plans required for flood proofing. The municipality discourages land filling as much as possible and if necessary, requires that it have no impact on adjacent lands.

The policy also seeks to reduce risk from inappropriate and potentially dangerous development in steep slope areas through the discouragement of development and a refusal to support development on slopes greater than 30%. The municipality will ensure that development follows its DPA requirements and is sensitive to the natural site profile while minimizing impacts on views and ESAs. The risk from wildfire will be reduced in fire-prone areas by discouraging single access developments, requiring a fuel-free buffer on new lots and requiring exterior materials and landscaping to be fire resistant.

The second policy for natural hazard areas seeks to prepare emergency response plans in cooperation with appropriate agencies through continued work to plan, coordinate response and assist community recovery. The municipality wants to provide leadership to reduce risk in the region.

Archeology

In this last subsection, the municipality commits to protecting archeological resources and developing protocols with neighbouring First Nations for the referral of development applications to ensure the protection of those resources.

The section's first policy seeks to protect archeological resources by making decisions based on the best available information and to support the identification and mapping of land with high potential to contain archeological values. It seeks to protect the resources in the development process by notifying applicants if properties overlap or are near documented archeological sites or areas with potential to contain them.

The second policy requires the development of protocols with local First Nations, with the example of the Cowichan Valley Bridge Building Protocol Agreement for guiding the development of other coordinated efforts.

PROGRESS SINCE 2011

Progress on the OCP's indicators to "guard the environment" can be tracked using the indicators identified in that section as well as newly adopted plans and policies that support the section's objectives. While not all indicators have been reported on since 2011, the municipality has reported progress on several of them in its 2015 Baseline Monitoring Report.
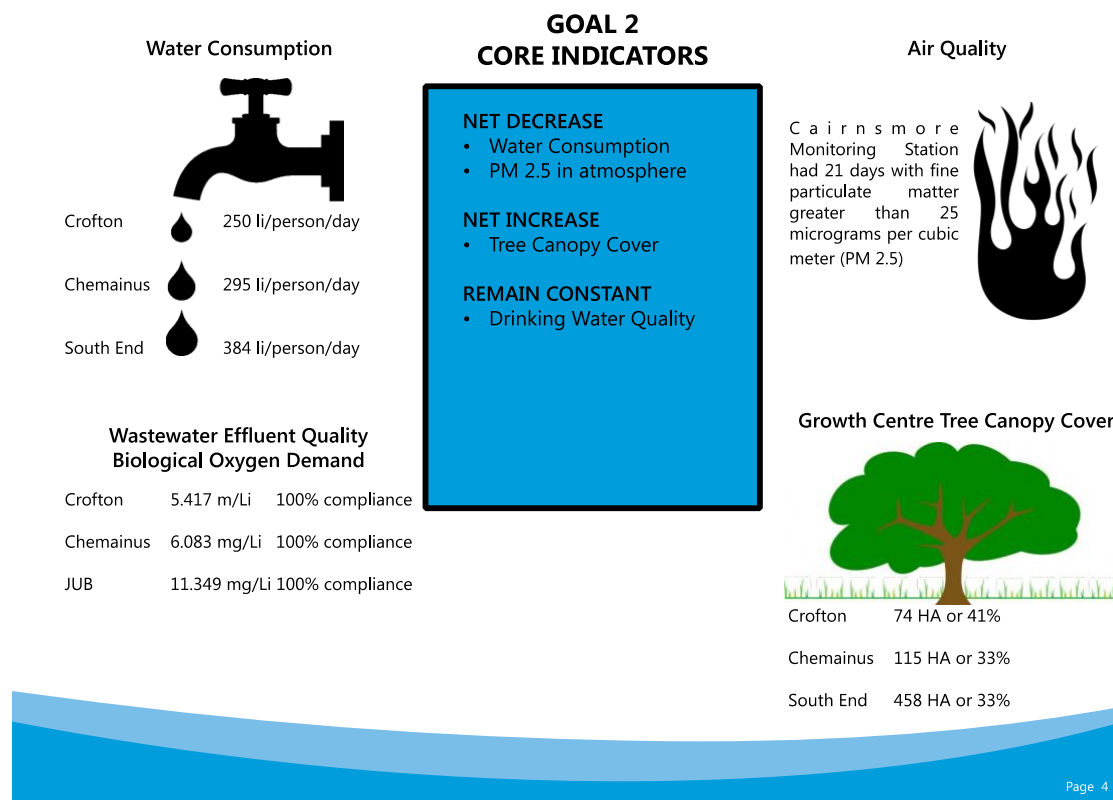

Figure 6: 2015 Baseline Monitoring Report

Regarding the objective to protect *ecosystems health, biodiversity and critical habitats*, North Cowichan had noted in 2015 a net increase of conservation management land and Municipal Forest Land Reserve as well as an increase in overall forest area. The District recorded the loss of 129 hectares of sensitive ecosystems due to disturbances and mapped an additional 1,688 hectares of older second growth forest and seasonally flooded agricultural fields. Overall, mapped environmentally sensitive ecosystems cover 30% of the municipality. The adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2017, which lays out objectives and actions towards the maintenance and expansion of the parks system in North Cowichan, should further support the protection, connectivity and restoration of the natural environment.

Although it was not included as an indicator in the OCP, the Monitoring Report also reported a net increase in canopy cover in its three growth centres, which reflects the improvements to protect and enhance the natural environment within urban settings. This is also a new indicator which will prove useful to ensure the updated OCP maintains, protects and restores natural areas and urban forest within its three urban centres.

Additional work has been completed to advance our understanding and management of water quality in North Cowichan. Blue-green algal blooms have been increasing in frequency and severity in Quamichan Lake in recent years due to high phosphorus concentrations, leading to poor water quality. These concerns led to the development of a 2019 report detailing current conditions and management options for the lake. A Management Plan was also created for Bonsall Creek Watershed in 2016 to identify and prioritize actions to support the sustainable use of the watershed and address competing interests. In addition, a volunteer group in North Cowichan has been collecting data on water quality in Somenos Lake over the last five years, and the municipalities is starting to monitor water quality in Quamichan Lake this summer. This data could provide good indicators to monitor the success of implementation of the updated OCP.

The current OCP and Monitoring Report also tracked indicators that may not provide the best information on the implementation of OCP actions and achievement of its objectives. This includes the reporting of annual fish counts in the Cowichan River; data is most readily available for salmon, but their presence in the river may only serve to indicate that conditions are survivable, while variations in their population could be related to a wide array of conditions along their migratory route. In addition, the Monitoring Report reported changes in water consumption. Changes in surface water quantity and quality are likely to provide more insights into the state of the natural environment.

The Monitoring Report also reported improvements for *air quality* with a net decrease in levels of fine particulates. Cowichan's Regional Airshed Protection Strategy was also adopted in 2015 and provides the basis for sustained regional collaboration towards protecting air quality.

Progress on the *natural hazard* policy was made with the adoption in early 2020 of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This plan identifies high risk wildland interface areas, the assets that are at greatest risk as well as suppression capabilities. It provides recommendations to mitigate high risk forest areas, ensures that future development considers wildfire risk, and improves suppression preparedness and response.

Finally, there were at least six additional *archeological sites* that were documented in the provincial inventory since 2011 out of the 147 total sites documented within the municipal boundaries.

CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THIS OBJECTIVE

There are several challenges to recognize in order to achieve this goal and associated thematic objectives.

Climate change must be considered to protect the natural environment. Changes in temperatures, precipitation patterns and extreme weather events are already impacting natural areas. Symptoms of climate change are evident including the decline of certain tree species such as western red cedar. The decline of species such as this one also has significant cultural and heritage implications given its importance for the community as well as local First Nations. Climate change will require communities to regularly evaluate and adapt their approaches to protect and restore natural areas.

Development often requires some impacts to the natural environment. However, many of the OCP policies support informed decision making to limit any negative impacts on the municipality's sensitive ecosystems or avoid impacts on fish and fish habitat and seek to maintain connectivity between natural areas. As the municipality seeks to concentrate growth in its urban centres, consideration will be required to integrate natural features and functions into its urban matrix. In addition, an improved understanding of the important values to protect will be required. This may create a need to better define terms such as green land or habitat remnants so as to better understand and target the protection and enhancement of important natural features in North Cowichan.

Higher demand for properties near Quamichan and Somenos Lakes may pose additional challenges, and make it difficult to strike a balance between watershed protection and farming uses. While water quality is dependent on current land use and management decisions, historical disturbances can also pose a challenge and leave a long-term impact. This is apparent in Quamichan Lake, in which the majority of the high concentrations of phosphorus comes from sediments from historical inputs. This suggests that the phosphorus that finds its way into the lake and leads to problematic blue-green algal blooms is in large part a legacy from historical uses, in addition to current – predominantly farming – uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER

Guarding the environment depends on and is closely related to several other thematic areas. Perhaps the most relevant being our approach to growth management as well as consideration of climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience.

Revise the approach to growth management, considering environmental and social values in order to ensure watersheds, sensitive ecosystems and natural areas of value to the community will be protected. Access to, protection and views of the natural environment are important to the community and could be further enhanced or protected through smart growth and development principles as well as the extent and location of the UCB. The contribution of the natural environment to the urban cores will be crucial to consider in order to build strong, resilient communities that integrate natural assets within their fabric; nature has several proven benefits on socialising, active transportation, mental health and even commercial economic activities.

Climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience are consistent with strengthening the natural environment: Natural assets can provide significant and important benefits by increasing resilience to

the effects of climate change such as extreme heat or rain events. As a result, the natural environment can be leveraged to improve community outcomes in the future and in particular through its integration into the three urban cores. However, in order for North Cowichan to benefit from its natural environment, climate change impacts must be monitored. In addition, measures to recognise the role of ecosystems for carbon sequestration presents a good synergy and can further protect natural areas.

There are a few important recommendations that could contribute to strengthening the guard the environment goal and to better align it with the thematic objective as well as council strategic priorities.

A more thorough consideration of urban nature and connectivity is recommended so as to support many important OCP goals and community objectives within the UCB. More specific policies would allow for a better guidance to maintain, protect, restore and enhance nature within North Cowichan's urban centres. The Bell McKinnon Local Area Plan offers several relevant avenues for identifying new OCP policies to protect the natural environment. This may be supported by new indicators such as canopy cover and effective impervious areas. Considering the strengthening of the natural environment in and around the urban cores can also be a good way to protect areas valued by the community. Initiatives such as the native drought tolerant planting recommendations available on the municipality's website could provide a basis upon which to encourage naturescaping and other initiatives to improve connectivity and wildlife habitat in the UCB.

Consider expanding ESA coverage to protect sensitive ecosystems. For instance, while second growth forest is recognised as important in the OCP policies and identified on map 7, they are not protected under the current DPA. Considering ways to better protect some of those forests would contribute to implementing current policies as well as allowing for old growth forest regeneration which could become an exciting possibility for future generations. The protection of ecosystems may require targeted human intervention, such as Garry oak ecosystems which are the result of careful maintenance from First Nations. Improved protection of the foreshore.

Refine the designation wording: The OCP update will also present a good opportunity to refine the wording used to designate components of the natural environment that the community wants to protect and enhance. This may include updating wording such as "natural environment", "green land" or "habitat remnants" towards more specific descriptors that consider the integrity and quality of those areas or their value for the community.

Improve the protection of its ESAs by improving how it maps and maintains its ESA map. For example, ESA mapping should continually be updated based on new information and submissions from QEPs. As a result, consideration should be given to removing the ESA map from the OCP and referring to an online spatial data set that can be updated without requiring an OCP amendment.

Include further considerations for climate change impacts on the natural environment to include relevant adaptations and support actions that will improve outcomes. The natural environment should also be leveraged to help our communities adapt to climate change. Integrating natural assets in the District's asset management system would help better plan for and maintain those assets so as to leverage their important ecosystem services to regulate the impact of climate change in the community. Initiatives that emerged since the adoption of the OCP such as the Municipal Natural Asset Initiative may provide helpful guidance for the consideration of OCP policies for that purpose.

Consider invasive species: Invasive species are likely to be a growing threat for the protection and strengthening of the natural environment. . Expanding on OCP policies and providing direction on other

actions (i.e. policies, projects, programs) in an implementation plan that seek to control the spread of invasive species will contribute to achieving the thematic objective.

Incorporate community values: The thematic objective statement about protecting natural areas of value to the community opens the door to a broader conversation

about natural features and assets that are viewed as having value by residents and visitors.

. This could include further consideration of First Nations values and important places. Environmental degradation through land use as well as climate change has drastically impacted the availability of resources of importance to local First Nations. This OCP update may present an opportunity to better acknowledge, protect and enhance some of those resources in keeping with principles of reconciliation

Include an objective on culture and heritage:

Consideration should also be given to creating space in the OCP to acknowledge values and provide direction to protecting culture and heritage. This would build on the archeology policies and could expand on those areas. This would build on the archeology policies and could expand on those areas. Additionally, archeology should be more explicitly linked to the environmental objectives if the municipality seeks to focus on middens which are usually found along the ocean foreshore. In addition, while the marine DP currently mentions archeological sites, while the natural environmental DP doesn't include requirements specific to archeology.

STAFF SURVEY COMMENTS

Staff members commented on the current OCP section to 'Guard the Environment' in a survey. They noted the environmental DPAs have been helpful, though they require an update to the mapping and reference materials as well as improvements in the language to clarify the requirements. Staff noted that some of the key environmental challenges in North Cowichan include homeowner encroachments into riparian and natural areas, a lack of consideration of ecosystem connectivity, and the need to consider ecosystem connectivity.

4.6   Thematic Objective: Consider Employment and Economic Changes

Current OCP Goal: Encourage Economic Activities

INTRODUCTION

A key goal of almost every community is to create a vibrant local economy that:

- Offers high quality employment opportunities
- Includes a diverse range of successful and sustainable businesses
- Makes it possible for all residents to enjoy a decent standard of living, and
- Provides a solid base of tax revenues to support community services and amenities
- Fosters an enjoyable lifestyle with good access to nature, short distances between homes and services/workplaces, good civic amenities, and walkable/bikeable neighbourhoods.

An additional one that is important to North Cowichan is an economy that preserves or enhances the natural environment. This section will keep these broad objectives in mind and consider how North Cowichan can adapt to new and emerging directions in the economy at the regional, municipal and community level.

The *Employment and Economic Changes* section reviews economic objectives for the North Cowichan OCP update, one of five thematic areas to be included in the plan. To complete the analysis, we reviewed policies in Section 2.4 and 2.5 from the previous OCP and a range of regional and local policy to formulate three report sections based on related themes and indicators. The detailed sections included in the Appendix are: 1) Industry and Employment Lands and 2) Economic Development. We completed a high-level market analysis in each section, allowing us to best address policy gaps and provide recommendations that would strengthen each area. Each goal or policy gap is linked to a section in the previous OCP to facilitate organization of future OCP updates.

An important component of the *Employment and Economic Changes* gap analysis is the high-level market review. In the market review, we analyse relevant indicators and how they have performed since 2011, where possible. This provides insight into how well policies are working and highlights potential gaps where new policy may be needed to address market issues. As the OCP covers the full breadth of economic factors in the municipality, a full review of all pertinent information was not feasible for the purposes of this analysis.

A summary of the sections is included below and full descriptions are in the Appendix:

- **Industry and Employment Lands**: Relevant chapters in the previous OCP include '*rural-and-environmental based economic opportunities'*, '*waterfront, commercial and industrial development'* and '*industry'*. This section focuses on policies related to employment sectors that occupy industrial space, employment lands or agricultural lands. This includes employment land inventories, infrastructure that services employment lands, and sector-specific economic development policies.
- **Economic Development.** Relevant chapters in the previous OCP include '*economic development environment'*, '*rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities'*, '*new technologies'* and '*commerce'*. This section focuses on policies related to the service and professional sectors, including users of office and retail space, home-based businesses and tourism.

Economic Development Goals and Objectives

The 2011 OCP includes a number of policy directions under the OCP Goal: Encourage economic opportunities. These policy directions include:

- Promote a **business-friendly environment**;
- Encourage new and support existing, **rural and environmental-based businesses**;
- Meet the needs of **high-tech and green businesses**;
- **Balance industrial and commercial uses** with residential, recreational and environmental requirements;
- Support the economic viability of **existing businesses**;
- Provide clear policies guiding the **location and operation** of commercial enterprises;
- Ensure the availability of **adequate commercially zoned land**;
- Promote a **healthy industrial sector**;
- Ensure the availability of **industrially zoned land**; and
- **Reduce the potential for conflicts** between industrial and other land uses;

North Cowichan also has two others sets of economic development goals, one from the 2010 Economic Development Strategy and one from the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan. These are presented in Table 1. These three sets of goals/policy directions have the following common elements:

- Support/expand business in high tech, agriculture, environment, health services, and tourism;
- Protect and better use, commercial, agricultural, forested and industrial lands;
- Balance commercial/industrial land uses with residential, recreational and environmental needs;
- Foster a business-friendly environment, support existing businesses, and expand local purchasing; and
- Develop a vibrant and accessible waterfront and a sustainable town centre.

2010 Economic Development Workplan	Council Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022
Create business park and industrial/commercial land opportunities	Support, retain and attract light industry
Develop and communicate key marketing messages	Buy from local businesses when they can deliver comparable value to non-local firms
Enhance public access to the waterfront and create a sustainable town centre plan	Review options to provide future municipal forest timber to local businesses
Promote opportunities in the resource sectors	Develop a long-range strategic plan for North Cowichan-owned real estate
Expand tourism opportunities through strategic investments	Support small-scale, innovative agriculture
Promote development of the high-tech and knowledge sector	Facilitate the development of specialty services in or around the Cowichan District Hospital

2010 Economic Development Workplan	Council Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022
Create and implement a climate action plan and promote waste reduction	Update the Agricultural implementation plan and encourage the use of arable land
Promote infrastructure that supports development	Support sport tourism and Rowing Canada Aviron's entry into the community

At a regional level, the CVRD prepared a strategic economic plan in 2019, with the following goals:

- Create new opportunities for business expansion and attraction through collaboration, networking and leveraging shared resources (focusing on industrial land use and connecting with business).
- Support the development of existing and emerging sectors in the Cowichan Region (focusing on tech, agriculture and food processing, value added wood, tourism, and the film industry).
- Strengthen the capacity of communities in the region to act on new community investment infrastructure and economic development opportunities.
- Effectively communicate the business and lifestyle advantages of living in Cowichan and raise the profile of economic development activities in the region (through website development, forums and sector profiles).
- To take an active role in strategic initiatives of the CVRD that have a direct impact on economic development and effective management of CVRD resources (focusing on licensing, first nation engagement, and the Cowichan 2050 project).

As would be expected, these goals are strongly aligned with the North Cowichan economic development goals, with perhaps special attention given to first nations collaboration and the film industry.

GOAL 4
CORE INDICATORS

Labour Force Activity***

Business License by Type

NET INCREASE
- Employed persons
- New Business Licences
- Diversity of Labour Force Activity
- Firms with greater than one employee

Labour Force Activity by Sector***

Farm Cash Receipts***

$29.6 Million

Firms by Number of Employees***
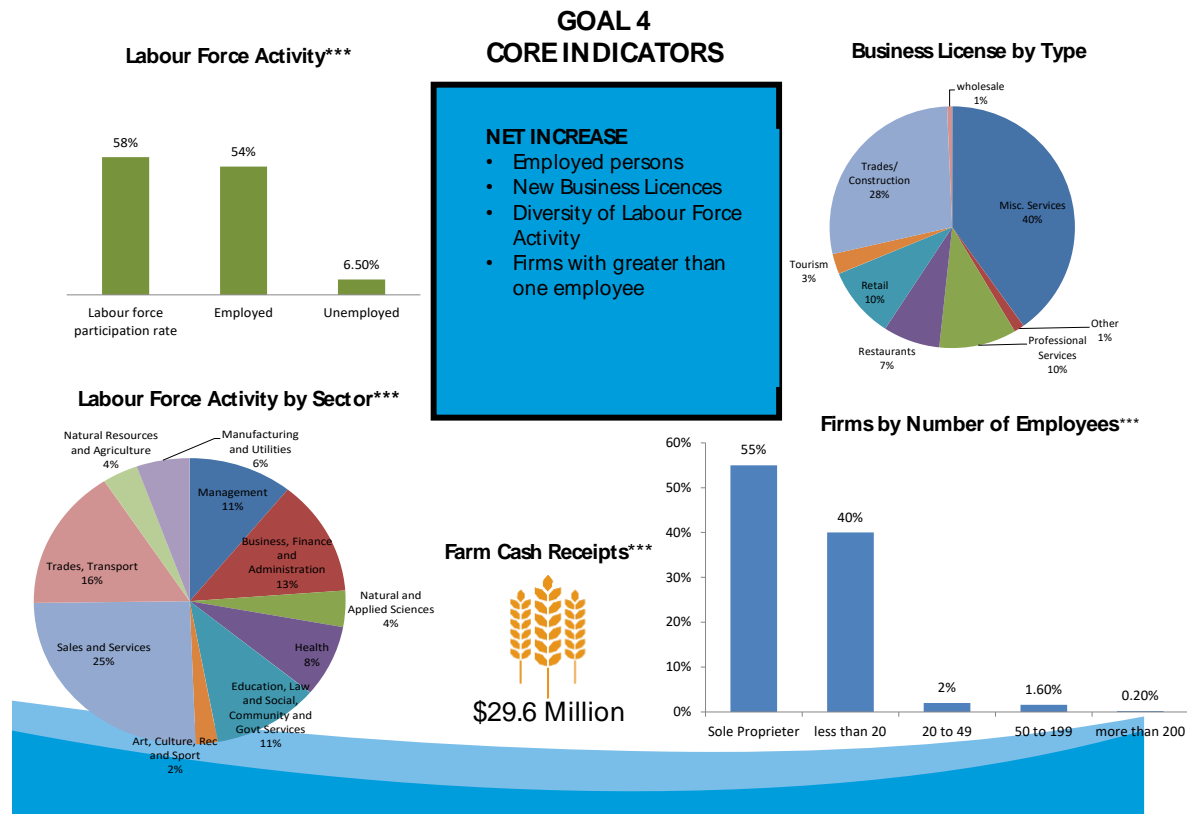
Figure 7: 2015 Baseline Monitoring Report

Improvements in the local economy have been made in a number of areas, including the following:

- Particular sectors have expanded including food and agriculture (including food processing, agri-tech, and wine/beer/spirits), biomedical, and high-end wood and stone design firms;
- The unemployment rate has dropped from 6.9% to 4.6% from 2012 to 2018;
- North Cowichan has a higher % of employees than the provincial average in the following sectors (manufacturing, waste management and remediation, health care, and accommodation/ food) and lower % in (construction, scientific/professional, and education);
- Net financial assets of the District have increased from $7.5 million to $26 million between 2012 and 2018, indicating that tax revenues have been sufficient to make a number of capital improvements to civic infrastructure and community services; and
- Two new visitor information centres in the District, one in Chemainus and one on the highway.

Lack of a recent economic development strategy: Perhaps the biggest challenge in addressing these goals is that the most recent economic development strategy was prepared in 2010 so no single document exists that summarizes the economic status of North Cowichan or presents specific goals.

Lack of targets: While some indicators have been developed, very few targets have been established.

Agricultural productivity: Agricultural land continues to be under-utilized and food processing infrastructure is lacking.

Partnerships with Cowichan Tribes: Economic partnerships with Cowichan Tribes are limited relative to nearby communities, such as Ladysmith with Stz'uminus First Nation, and Lake Cowichan with Tsu'uubaa-asatx First Nation.

Availability of industrial land: The availability of industrial land is constrained by the amount of vacant land that is held by private forestry, lumber and pulp and paper companies.

Conflicts with residential land uses: Conflicts continue to exist between industrial and residential land uses.

COVID-19 Considerations

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a huge economic and social impact on all aspects of our daily lives. In addition to the devastating health impacts, social distancing has shut down the economy in ways that were previously unimaginable. While many statistics measuring the economic impact of COVID are not yet available, we do know that the Canadian economy shrank by 9% in March. This contraction occurred when the economy was shut for only part of the month.[2] We will soon know the scale of the economic impact for April – but with large sections of the economy shut down - it is anticipated to be large.

Due to limited access to statistical data, we spoke with different real estate brokers about the immediate impact the economic shutdown is having on planning and development. Not surprisingly, the level of default on commercial space has increased. The number of available sub-leases has increased, and close to no new leases are being signed for professional and service space. Smaller independent retail outlets have begun shuttering operations for good, with no revenue stream to pay rent during the shutdown.

One surprising outcome of the COVID response is continued activity in industrial sector. Brokers have indicated the pandemic has tempered demand only slightly, as developers and operators seek to secure land for manufacturing, transportation and storage. In many cases, these industries have been impacted less by COVID-19, as consumers continue to need supplies. For policy makers and governments, COVID has highlighted the importance of local supply chains and self-sustainability when it comes to food and goods production.

[2] Statistics Canada. March 2020.

Housing developers continue to process development applications where possible, understanding that approvals can take a significant amount of time. Municipal staff consulted in larger communities have indicated continued activity in zoning and development departments. Municipal staff in smaller communities have seen a slow down as demand in these markets has taken an immediate hit. Sales and marketing of projects everywhere have been put on hold, as wary consumers delay real estate purchases in order to wait and see how long the shutdown will last.

While the scale of the economic impact from COVID is unseen in many of our lifetimes, a review of historic recessions has shown that economic downturns are temporary. For example, the 2008 recession lasted only 7 months. It is likely that the recession from COVID-19 will be larger than the 2008 recession, but this will depend on how the virus behaves over the next few months.

Though the employment forecasts contained in this report will surely need to be updated, many overarching trends will resume post-recession due to underlying demographic, economic and social factors. However, growth management, development and housing policies will need to factor in a significant slow down in the short term. When the economy returns to normal, demand forecasting will need to use a longer historical time horizon to factor in the short term drop and accurately project future development.

One area which will hopefully not return to business as usual is global energy demand. A bright spot of the pandemic has been the massive reduction in energy consumption, with demand for oil falling by 10.8 million barrels per day. The COVID pandemic is showing us that we can change collective behaviour dramatically when the circumstances require it. It will be up to governments and policy makers to translate this mentality into a response to the equally important and urgent impacts of climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER

Increase the diversity of housing types to improve housing affordability and reduce housing related GHGs and build compact, walkable, aesthetically pleasing town centres where independent, small businesses can thrive.

Expand aquaculture: Expand small scale, sustainable food/aquaculture production and processing and create a regional food hub, including a distribution facility to ship products to consumers to the south and north of North Cowichan. Once successful, build agri-tourism opportunities.

Support and an early learning and child care strategy to support working families and contribute to an health economy

Strengthen partnerships: with Cowichan Tribes and other Indigenous peoples.

Expand specialty health services and potential create a health business park near Cowichan District Hospital.

Work towards light industrial land for green technologies: Work with owners of potential industrial lands (e.g. at Bell Mckinnon, Coast Environment Lands, Bing Creek Recycling) to sell/lease land for light industrial activity related to green technologies, specialty food processing, cannabis production, and aquaculture.

Make North Cowichan a regional trades education node that provides technical and business training to people interested in working in small scale agriculture, aquaculture, food processing, viticulture, specialty health services, light industry, the environmental industry, value-added wood manufacturing and wood product design.

Enhance the waterfront to expand regional tourism visits.

Showcase the forest reserve: Develop the forest reserve into a showcase of sustainable forestry that also provide significant employment/income generating activities through progressive silviculture practices, timber revenues, non-timber forest product revenues, and value-added wood manufacturing revenues.

Showcase green technologies: Provide a showcase of green technologies/demonstration projects that enhance the environmental brand of North Cowichan and draw green entrepreneurs to the District and create new green jobs.

Re-think for the post-pandemic era: Consider lessons learning from COVID (e.g. for example, Milan has made many of its retail shopping streets pedestrian only to allow for social distancing and also to enhance the retail experience).

STAFF SURVEY COMMENTS

- Do you think the Official Community Plan is clear in its vision regarding employment and the local economy?
    - 1 neutral, 1 disagree

- What is working well regarding employment and the local economy in the Official Community Plan?
    - Maintained industrial zoned land base
    - Long-range planning has worked to effectively identify neighbourhood and regional commercial centres
- What are the challenges regarding employment and the local economy in the Official Community Plan?
    - Shopping habits shifting online and increase remote work may mean many vacant commercial spaces
    - New types of work (right to repair, manufacturing start-ups, etc) may result in need to consider different types of permitted uses in industrial/commercial spaces
    - Lack of economic development officer means little understanding of vacancies and action plans for future

- Do you have suggestions for specific changes to improve the Official Community Plan regarding employment and the local economy?
    - Look at Innovation and Entrepreneurship program in TRU – good model of incubating new local businesses. Potential partnerships with VIU and UVic?

- Hire economic development office
- Conduct SWOT analysis of economy and jobs

5 ANALYSIS OF SECTION 3: MAKING THE PLAN WORK

This section (page 103-115) outlines methods and tools available to the municipality, as well as monitoring to ensure the various policies are implemented, and that they are having the desired effect. This section includes *Keys to Success*, much of which is outdated and/ or does not need to be in the OCP. *Monitoring the Plan* and *Adjusting the Plan* sections should be carefully revised as a monitoring program plays a central role for ensuring that the OCP is being implemented and also provides elected officials, staff and community stakeholders the information necessary to determine whether the OCP's objectives and policies are being achieved. A monitoring program may also influence policy development. Indicators are a useful tool for evaluating whether we are on track to achieving OCP goals

The indicators for the Baseline Monitoring Report were selected based on two key criteria: the indicator has to be meaningful by reflecting the goals and objectives of the OCP and they have to be based on data that is readily available on a regular and ongoing basis. This report identifies a number of representative indicators for the five OCP goals that will be used to monitor the efficacy of OCP policies into the future. This report contains the baseline information for each indicator to enable future comparisons against how things were when the OCP was first adopted. If possible, the new OCP should include these indicators so North Cowichan can continue to track progress over time.

Another big gap in the OCP is definitions for land use designation. Land use designations are one of the most important tools for implementing the OCP as they guide all future land use decisions. It is imperative to include them in the OCP update.

Recommendations to Consider

In order to improve Section 3 we recommend the following:

- Delete *Keys to Success* section and move some of this information into other documents such as a guide for public engagement;
- Include land use designations definitions in this section;
- Select indicators that have data readily available on an ongoing basis; and
- Include the plan structure and relationship to local plans here.

Staff Survey Comments

- Do you think the implementation section of the Official Community Plan is effective?
  - 1 neutral, 1 disagree

- What is working well regarding implementation in the Official Community Plan?
  - "we have a section that talks about implementation"

- What are the challenges regarding implementation in the Official Community Plan?
  - Measurements not clear and not carried out on an annual basis

- Do you have suggestions for specific changes to improve the Official Community Plan regarding implementation?
  - o More detailed and realistic implementation goals
  - o SMART goals

6 ANALYSIS OF APPENDICES

This section includes an analysis of the OCP Appendices and recommendations for the OCP update.

Appendix 3: Development Permit Areas (DPAs)

A development permit area (DPA) is an important tool used in the development process to protect the natural environment, to protect development from hazardous conditions, to guide the form and character of development, to promote energy or water conservation, and/or to promote reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The maps in the OCP indicates where the DPA is designated and text of the DPA indicates for what types of development a permit is required. The text of the DPA also describes its objectives, special conditions that justify the designation and guidelines respecting the manner by which the objectives or special conditions will be addressed. In an area where a DPA is designated, a development permit must first be obtained prior to certain types of development such as subdivision, construction, or land alteration.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA 1- GENERAL (DPA1)

As set out within the OCP, it seems unnecessary to include use-specific designations (e.g. commercial revitalization and form and character for intensive residential, commercial, industrial and multi-family) as a blanket across all of North Cowichan. The preferred approach is to match the DPA with the land use designation. For example the DPA 1 would cover areas that were designated for intensive residential, commercial, industrial and multi-family.

Based on a recent legal review of DPAs, we offer the following additional observations:

- Individual DPAs should reference a specific map and use words to describe the geographic extent / designation in the event there is any discrepancy between the two;
- A "basis for designation" should take the place of the existing "justification" language that references individual sections of the *Local Government Act;*
- "Justification for Designation" should describe any technical studies and/or investigations that support the designation; and,
- "Exemptions" and "Permit Guidelines" may continue to be held within the zoning bylaw, as per current practice.

Exemptions are clearly noted and well organized within the table. However, it may be unclear for applicants the extent to which of the general guidelines apply to their application (in light of the comment above re: blanket coverage). On the other hand, it appears that the simple answer is "they all apply" unless otherwise exempt (as a single-family or duplex unit).

The Application Requirements are very helpful and well described and makes the lengthy description within the DAIA (see next section) seem redundant and/or potentially unnecessary.

The development permit guidelines themselves (Zoning Bylaw, pp.139-193) are extensive, logically organized and well described. If anything, the guidelines may be viewed as onerous and opportunities to simplify and/or streamline content would be recommended.

Certain guidelines and their descriptions are at times vague and/or not accessible to the layperson (e.g. urban design jargon). To a certain degree this may be unavoidable, but an effort to add specificity and/or use more accessible language may improve clarity for applicants and regulators alike. Illustration of key and/or complex/problematic guidelines is recommended.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA 2- MARINE WATERFRONT; DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA 3- NATURAL ENVIRONMENT; AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA 4 - HAZARD LANDS

This section provides a high-level review of guidelines for three development permit areas: DPA 2 – Marine Environment, DPA 3 – Natural Environment and DPA 4 – Hazard Lands. Comments on the challenges related to all three of the DPAs as well as recommendations for DP mapping, language and requirements as well as updates are provided below and followed by a table which provides further detail for each DP.

Marine Waterfront

The Marine Waterfront DPA includes objectives related to natural environment, form and character, and commercial revitalization. It makes sense to delete the Marine Waterfront DPA and move the relevant information into the other DPA's e.g. move the environmental information into DPA 3 (Natural Environment).

Mapping

Mapping riparian areas: Riparian areas do not appear to follow RAR/RAPR in the OCP map. Additional clarification around these areas would be helpful, as the map doesn't match the DP guidelines. The municipality could also consider adding a 30 m riparian assessment area to all watercourses to represent the required minimum assessment area under RAR/RAPR.

Buffers: Buffers can be contentious if their purpose is not clear. Consider better defining them and clarifying or updating their purpose. For example, a root protection buffer zone around tree stand edges could be included.

OCP map: Currently, the DPAs are mapped in an appendix of the OCP. While this is helpful for enforcement, it makes it difficult to update as an OCP amendment is required every time an area boundary changes. Many municipalities have begun to host their DPA maps online instead of in the OCP. This makes it easier to update as QEP reports are received and the areas are refined.

Language and Requirements

Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEPs): Clarify which QEPs are acceptable for each of the DPAs and their subsections. Hazard QEP reports in particular requires clarification.

QEP Report Requirements: Clarify when reports are required, and what information should be contained within those reports.

Clarify language and make consistent: Improve definitions within the DPs to strengthen their application. Reduce the number of references to external sources for definitions, as these can and have changed over time. Use the same language to address the same concept within a DP and across DPs.

Remove redundancies: A few of the DP guidelines have the same concept or guideline listed multiple times within it.

General Updates

Pre-determined setbacks: It is common for DPAs to set minimum setbacks that must be met or can be refined through the use of a relevant Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) or by proving hardship. This could apply to natural areas, the marine shoreline, watercourses, and hazard areas. It helps to set the expectations upfront and places the onus on the owner and their QEP to demonstrate that their development will be safe and will not have adverse effects on the environment.

Update legislation and best management practices: Several of the legislations referenced and BMP documents need updating. For example, the Riparian Areas Regulation has been updated and is now called the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR). Another example is that notifications or approvals under section 11 of the Water Sustainability Act (WSA) are required for any work completed below the top of bank of a stream. This includes emergency works carried out by the municipality.

Windfirm edges: Consider adding the requirement for windfirm edges to all developments adjacent to natural stands, especially if trees are to be removed along these boundaries.

Table 1 includes specific comments for each of the three DPs reviewed.

Table 1. Detailed comments for individual Development Permit Areas for North Cowichan

Development Permit Area	Comments
DPA 2: Marine Waterfront	**Definitions:** Clarify the definition of natural boundary, and ideally change it to highest highwater mark or highest high tide mark to improve clarity.
	Environmental considerations: Environmental requirements are not well defined in this DP. General requirements could be expanded to require developments to: consider climate change, sea level rise, and existing vegetation and sensitive areas for building sittings; connectivity between natural areas; etc.
	Jurisdiction: Municipalities do not have jurisdiction over areas below the highest highwater mark. Consider separating these out as recommendations vs. requirements.
DPA 3: Natural Environment	**Wildlife Trees:** This DP says it applies to wildlife trees; however, it defines a wildlife tree as one with nests of eagles, herons, osprey, falcons or burrowing owl, as detailed under the provincial Wildlife Act. This requires additional details, as the trees are only protected as long as the nests are located within them. Nest locations change frequently and are therefore difficult to map. In addition, active migratory bird nests are protected under federal legislation, and could be included

in this DP as protected. The language around those trees is inconsistent throughout the DP guidelines, later changing to nest tree.

Municipalities often require raptors bird nest surveys prior to tree removal year-round, with management plans required if they are discovered within proximity of the development. It is unclear what is required under this DP. Migratory bird nest surveys are required based on local nesting conditions, typically from mid-March to mid-August. It is unclear if these nests are currently included in the DP or not. This section needs a general update.

Protected Areas: Consider expanding protections to include the Second Growth Forest areas in the OCP map. If at least partially protected, these forests could mature into Older Forest, and they already contain valuable habitat.

The DP needs to clearly specify that all watercourses are protected under the DP, regardless of whether they are mapped or not. For example, ditches are often protected under RAPR but are typically poorly mapped.

Consider using a diameter-based approach to tree protection instead of dripline.

Restoration: Restoration and monitoring requirements are vague. Consider better defining how restoration is considered successful and include metrics it must meet. Consider increasing monitoring timeline from 2 years to the standard 3.

	Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEP): QEP requirements will be different for the three types of hazard lands. These requirements should be described per hazard type instead of as a general guideline (ex. Forester (RPF) for fire hazard, geotechnical engineer (PEng) for steep slopes, etc.).
DPA 4: Hazard Lands	**Conflicts with DPA 3:** There are a number of conflicts between DPA 4 and DPA 3. This should be addressed, and priorities established. For example, fuel treatment on fire hazard lands often requires the removal of trees for protection, which conflicts with DPA 3.
	Reporting requirements: Requirements could be more specific as it is currently somewhat subjective.

Staff Survey Comments

- Do you think the Development Permit Areas in the Official Community Plan is effective?
  - 1 agree, 2 neutral, 1 disagree
- What is working well regarding the Development Permit Areas in the Official Community Plan?

- o Ability for planning department to require work through DPAs is good. Covenants are used readily and appropriately
  - o More developments are reviewed for compliance at early stage
  - o DPA 3 forces review and improves environmental values
  - o DPA authority is with staff so permitting process much faster than if have to go through Council
  - o
- What are the challenges regarding the Development Permit Areas in the Official Community Plan?
  - o DPA mapping is outdated
  - o DPA language needs clarification and doesn't describe what is expected
  - o Enforcement for violations are weak
  - o DPA structure is flawed – e.g. many "exempt" development form DP requirement when development is deemed compliant with applicable guidelines or where covenant has been registered
  - o Need for greater protection of the greater context of a development, historical artifacts, significant natural features, and more prescriptive operational language to make this happen
  - o Uninformed applicants taking up lots of staff time only to get substandard result, especially related to remediation DPs
  - o Need options to daylight watercourses
  - o DPA 4 has incomplete processes and hazards mapping
  - o "Wildfire Protection DPA is particularly bad"

- Do you have suggestions for specific changes to improve the Official Community Plan regarding the Development Permit Areas?
  - o Stronger enforcement language that reinforces ability to require restoration and remediation works
  - o Update with proper legislation
  - o Stronger enforcement e.g. taking non-compliance to Bylaw
  - o Include incentives for good environmental practices
  - o Move DPA guidelines from zoning bylaw to OCP so all information on DPs is in one document
  - o DPA 3: need resources to update GIS mapping when site-specific applications provide applicant-funded mapping for stream locations, sensitive ecosystems
  - o Need alternate process for remediation DPs – fine-based system to enforce remediation is done properly?
  - o DPA 4: area of fire risk is larger than currently mapped
  - o DPA 5: language between OCP and guidelines is confusing

Appendix 4: Development Approval Information Area (DAIA)

The DAIA appears to function as an effective means of identifying the geographic area and potential requirements for information needed to support an application.

By comparison, other jurisdictions either: house a more specific checklist of requirements within a procedures bylaw; and/or include the checklist within a "how-to" guide that can be updated / adjusted without the requirement for a bylaw amendment.

Notably absent from the guideline is any means of determining the extent to which the additional information will suffice to address concerns regarding negative impacts. The undefined nature of the list also implies a significant risk and/or cost burden to the applicant towards addressing a potentially ill-defined objective.

An alternative structure could provide: more specificity in individual application requirements; criteria regarding applicability; and/or criteria for exemptions.

Staff Survey Comments and Suggestions

- Do you think the Development Approval Information Area in the Official Community Plan is effective?
  - 1 agree

- What is working well regarding the Development Approval Information Area in the Official Community Plan?
  - It is comprehensive, describes all the considerations staff may require of an applicant

- What are the challenges regarding the Development Approval Information Area in the Official Community Plan?
  - Applicants not required to state real and perceived impacts and mitigation solutions

Appendix 5: Land Use and Development Application Objectives (LUDAO)

The LUDAO appears to function as an "integrated checklist" for significant amendment applications and/or variances.

It is unclear as to how this section would apply under the *Local Government Act* and – more simply – why this exists outside the policies, regulations and DPA guidelines within the OCP and zoning bylaw. At worst, this section may be *ultra vires*.

An additional concern is that duplication of content (albeit organized according to objectives) within this section may ultimately result in lack of clarity and/or confusion among applicants. The recommendation is to remove this Appendix from the updated OCP.

Staff Survey Comments and Suggestions

- Do you think the Land Use and Development Application in the Official Community Plan is effective?
    - 1 agree, 1 neutral, 1 disagree

- If you work in Land Use and Development Applications, do you reference this section the Land Use and Development Application in the Official Community Plan? Why or why not?
    - Why?
        - Used to consider whether proposals were speaking to goals and needs of community
        - Referenced what DPA 1 or zoning-related applications is proposed
    - Why not?
        - Doesn't have legal standing
        - Can't implement it through DP process because they're not associated
- What are the challenges regarding the Land Use and Development Application in the Official Community Plan?
    - Hierarchy between LUDAO and DP guidelines is confusing
    - Applying OCP policy on single residential applications that meets the zoning bylaw

Appendix 6 & 7: Temporary Use Permits and Comprehensive Development Plans

The Local Government Act states that TUPs may be housed in the OCP or Zoning Bylaw. A temporary use permit may do one or more of the following:

(a) allow a use not permitted by a zoning bylaw;
(b) specify conditions under which the temporary use may be carried on;
(c) allow and regulate the construction of buildings or structures in respect of the use for which the permit is issued.

To simplify the OCP, it makes sense to move the TUPs to the Zoning Bylaw when updating the Zoning Bylaw in future (subject to direction from legal counsel).

Comprehensive development plans for zones (are 'one of a kind' zones, usually created when rezoning larger sites and a mix of proposed land uses that do not match up with existing zones). This information is related to local area plans and should be included when the local area plans are created.

Recommendations to Consider

In order to streamline this section we suggest:

- Updating list of background documents
- Remove the marine waterfront and move content into DPA 1 and 2
- Updating DPA's as per the above suggestions
- Removing the LUDAO
- Refine, update and re-organize maps (move them to relevant sections or online)
- Update temporary use permits section
- Comprehensive Development Plans should be included in updated local area plans.

7 CONCLUSION

This gap analysis report provides the technical background knowledge to move forward in developing the vision, goals and policies for the OCP. While we offer initial recommendations based on our technical review of the current OCP, we look to North Cowichan Council, staff, and community members to provide further feedback.

This document and ultimately the updated OCP will be shaped by community engagement that we will seek throughout the process.

Appendices

APPENDIX A- LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

The Local Government Act (the Act) states that an OCP is a statement of objectives and policies to guide planning and land use decisions within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government. The "purpose of local government" are outlined in Part 1 of the Act, and include:

- providing good government for its community;
- providing the services and other things that the local government considers necessary or desirable for all or part of its community;
- providing stewardship of the public assets of its community; and
- fostering the current future economic, social, and environmental well-being of its community.

This is not an inclusive and exhaustive statement, and other purposes of local government not mentioned in Part 1 might properly inform the scope and content of an OCP.

The Act further requires that an OCP work toward the purpose and goals relating to section 428 of the Act relating to the purpose of regional growth strategies. This requirement applies whether or not the regional district has prepared a regional growth strategy. The purpose of a regional growth strategy is to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources. The Cowichan Valley Regional District does not have one, but the OCP should respond to the Cowichan 2050 Regional Collaboration Framework.

The Act provides a list of purposes and goals that OCPs should work towards. OCPs must include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the following:

(a) the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years;
(b) the approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
(c) the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for futures and and gravel extraction;
(d) restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
(e) the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
(f) the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites;
(g) other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the minister.
(h) housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing;
(i) targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan,
(j) and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.

A local government can include statements in an OCP on matters over which it does not have jurisdiction. Such statements are referred to as "advocacy policies". Advocacy policies may only state the local government's broad objective for areas within provincial jurisdiction and their context should clearly indicate that such statements differ in kind from within-jurisdiction policy statements in the plan. Advocacy policies include:

(a) policies of the local government relating to social needs, social well-being and social development;
(b) a regional context statement consistent with a regional growth strategy (North Cowichan doesn't have a RGS, but we'll be looking at ways to respond to the Cowichan 2050 Regional Collaboration Framework);
(c) policies of the local government respecting the maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area or in an area designated for agricultural use in the plan;
(d) policies of the local government relating to the preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

In addition, various parts of the Act stipulate that the applicable areas and rationale for the following must first be established in the OCP:

(a) development permits,
(b) temporary use permits,
(c) development approval information, and
(d) heritage conservation

The specific regulations relating to these areas can be established either in the OCP itself, the zoning bylaw, or another standalone regulatory bylaw. This is one of the ways that the legislation allows the community goals set in the OCP to be established as policy and ultimately actioned through development and capital works.

APPENDIX B- NORTH COWICHAN'S PROCEDURAL OBJECTIVES

The District of North Cowichan has provided five procedural objectives for the OCP update that provided the framework. These include:

1) Vetted Deliverables and Workshops
   - Present all deliverables and workshops first to the OCP Advisory Group, then to the Project Steering Committee, then to Council, prior to sign-off by the Project Director. In this way, Council and the Project Director benefit from insight of these OCP engagement groups.
   - The Community Ambassador Teams provide local knowledge in the planning and design of public consultation processes, and deliverable development.
2) Meaningful Public Consultation
   - Undertake public and stakeholder consultation in consideration of the
   - vetted deliverables and workshops objective.
   - Maximize use of Community Ambassador Teams in the development and
- execution of public consultations.
   - Residents and community partners (i.e. businesses and not-for-profits)
   - understand what the OCP is and why it is important and have influenced the development of the OCP.
3) Project Alignment
   - The project works to align with and set the stage for success in other major policy projects under development or revision through the project life cycle.
4) Creating an Accessible Plain Language Plan and Planning Process
   - The planning process, and the Plan itself, and any other project deliverables use accessible language and avoids technical jargon.
   - Clearly define the application of all plan elements (policies, maps, etc.).
5) Intergovernmental Consultation
   - Consistent and appropriate consultation is undertaken at key stages of the project plan.
   - Consultation processes are designed and executed in a way that generates useful input.

APPENDIX C- THEMATIC OBJECTIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT

RELATED PLANS & POLICIES

The following bylaws and policies are related to growth management and should be considered as important when updating the Official Community Plan.

Zoning Bylaw

The District's Zoning Bylaw is the primary regulatory document used to implement growth management. It regulates the location, form, density, and uses of existing and new development. Zoning-lylaw amendments must be consistent with the land use designations and policies within OCP. It appears that North Cowichan has many zones with a fine grain. Moving forward, it will be important to consider how the zoning bylaw aligns with and implements the envisioned growth and land use concept within the Official Community Plan. It is understood that the District intends to update the zoning bylaw following completion of the OCP.

Sub Area Plans

Since the 2011 Official Community Plan was completed, several sub-area plans have been created (as the OCP directed). This includes the Bell-McKinnon Local Area Plan (2018), University Village Local Area Plan (2015), Crofton Local Area Plan (2015), Chemainus Revitalization Plan (2011), and Kingsview Comprehensive Development Plan (2016). Several of these (Bell-McKinnon LAP, University Village LAP, and Crofton LAP) form part of the Urban Containment Boundary and are intended as focus areas for growth in North Cowichan.

These are important plans that outline the vision and goals, and guide growth and land use for these areas. It will be important for to consider how the OCP will integrate some part of these plans.

Climate Action & Energy Plan

Infrastructure and land use have significant effects on energy use and emissions. The Climate Action & Energy Plan modelled the GHG emissions from three different growth scenarios in order to investigate what may be required to meet the Municipality's emission targets:

- **Business as Usual**: This scenario is based on the 2011 Official Community Plan directives. Although the OCP focuses growth within the Urban Containment Boundary, this still results in a high spread of dwellings across North Cowichan, with a high average vehicle trip length. This scenario results in an increase in emissions by the target year (2020).
- **New Housing Densification**: this scenario calculates the land use changes required to meet a 33% reduction under 2007 levels by 2020. This results in new dwellings focused in James Alexander (40%), Gibbins/Prevost (10%), Chemainus (25%), and Crofton (20%).
- **Mixed-Use Nodes:** this scenario focuses on creating mixed-use nodes in several areas in North Cowichan in order to create greater land use and transportation changes over the long-term. This results in a more gentle curve initially with greater reductions over the long-term. This scenario focuses most new dwellings in James Alexander (30%), Gibbins/Prevost (30%) and Chemainus (30%). This scenario results in 80% reduction of GHGs from 2007 levels by 2050.

This modelling is important to integrate into the OCP update process. In particular, it is important to note the growth management policies in the 2011 OCP result in increased emissions for North Cowichan.

The growth scenarios should be reviewed, revised, expanded upon and further explored as part of the OCP process.

COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Engagement: Growth management is one of the foundations of an Official Community Plan, and will fundamentally shape how North Cowichan grows in the future. It is important to focus how North Cowichan will grow during community engagement so that the future growth plan is shaped by, understood, and supported by community members.

Housing: Growth management is intrinsically tied to enabling housing diversity and affordability. The types, locations, and amount of housing that is maintained or developed is crucial to affordability and is one of the main tasks of growth management.

Environment: Growth management is a main tool to protect the natural environment. By directing growth, important natural areas can be protected from unwanted types of development (e.g., intensive residential or commercial development). In addition, growth management is important for shaping long-term GHG emissions as it has important impacts on the built form and transportation options – two of the largest sources of GHG emissions across British Columbia.

Economy: Growth management can support a local economy, including protecting important agricultural, forestry, and commercial and industrial lands. Growth management can also enable residential densities that are supportive of local businesses across North Cowichan.

Community and Service: Growth and development typically support the development of new community amenities and facilities such as parks, daycares and community centres. This depends on the municipality having strong community benefit policies that clarify how developers are expected to contribute to these aspects.

SYNERGIES WITH OTHER THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

Growth management is strongly related to all other thematic objectives:

- **Respect individual community character:** Growth management can support distinct community character by establishing/maintaining a distinct boundary between rural and urban development and through the type, form, mix and density of development in each individual community.

- **Incorporate climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience:** Growth management contributes to climate adaption through restricting development in areas that have increased risk (e.g., from sea level rise) and through encouraging forms of development that develop greater resilience (e.g., through diverse mobility options, diverse housing, enabling social connections). Growth management is important for shaping long-term GHG emissions as it has important impacts on the built form and transportation options – two of the largest sources of GHG emissions across British Columbia.
- **Strengthen natural environment:** Growth management directs growth, which is vital to protecting natural environment from unwanted types of development. Growth management can also incentive forms of development that contribute to the natural environment (e.g., through stormwater management, urban forest).
- **Consider employment and economic changes**: Growth management and planning for economic changes should be highly integrated in order to plan for the "right" type and location of lands for North Cowichan's local economy.

APPENDIX D- THEMATIC OBJECTIVE INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER

CURRENT OCP GOAL 2.5: BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

Plans & Policies Related to this Goal

The following plans, bylaws and policies are related to respecting to the topic of 'individual community character' and should be considered as important implementation tools when updating the Official Community Plan.

Zoning Bylaw

The District's Zoning Bylaw is instrumental to respecting community character. It regulates the form, density, and uses of existing and new development. A community's character is often informed by the forms, massing, and setbacks of buildings, all of which can be covered by Zoning Bylaws.

It appears North Cowichan's Zoning Bylaw does include specific zones applicable to a single community (i.e. C9 - Chemainus Commercial Zone, CD14 – University Village Mid-Rise Residential Comprehensive Zone). It will be important moving forward to consider how land use designations in an updated Official Community Plan may require several implementable zones that are respectful of unique community characters.

University Village, Bell McKinnon, & Crofton Local Area Plans

Three local area plans provide deeper and more detailed land use direction for specific communities in North Cowichan. Each one provides a land use plan, policies, and design guidelines that will shape these communities. These are important documents that reinforce the expectations of development within a

specific area and help provide Council, District staff, residents, and the development community with more certainty.

As the Official Community Plan update progresses, it is recommended other areas that require this level of planning attention be identified and that the policies in the existing local area plans be reviewed in consideration of improvement to DPA's.

Chemainus Business Improvement Area Bylaw

The Chemainus Business Improvement Area Bylaw was adopted in 2018 and is intended to provide approximately $110,000 for the purposes of advertising and promotion, beautification of streets, sidewalks, or municipally owned land, buildings or structures in the BIA, special events, and related administration. The money is then recovered through a property value local service tax.

The Bylaw was approved for grants in 2018, 2019 and 2020. This being the final year for applications, it would be good to assess the impact grants have had on improving the character and liveliness of the Chemainus Town Centre.

Chemainus Town Centre Revitalization Plan

The Chemainus Town Centre Revitalization Plan is a document that defines Chemainus' community character and identifies key projects to enhance its distinctiveness. Though it has no legislative authority as it is not a bylaw, it can be used in prioritizing capital projects and setting expectations with developers.

The new OCP may lead to the creation of the Chemainus Local Area Plan to better implement the vision in this document. Including the breadth of work from the Revitalization Plan into an actual bylaw would give weight to the policies and ensure a more consistent application of them.

Engineering Standards

An element that is often overlooked but has crucial implications in relation to community character are municipal engineering standards. These often apply across an entire municipality with little flexibility for different or innovative designs.

Streets are defining community assets and their designs impact the vibrancy of a neighbourhood. Elements like on-street parking, number and width of lanes, turning radii, slip lanes, sidewalk widths, tree strips, and more are often standardized when applied in such a way can deteriorate the character and uniqueness of neighbourhoods. This is especially true of neighbourhoods that existed or emerged before many of these standards were developed.

It is important that land uses and development permit guidelines match and integrate with street standards. For instance, when a land use plan requires ground floor commercial that fronts a street, it is preferable to have a street with on-street parking to ensure the vitality of shops and services. The OCP update should identify where conflicts existing between these types of documents and set a course on how to address these.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities

Engagement: Defining community character requires robust community engagement. Honest discussions about what contributes to a neighbourhood's identity and how it can be preserved or enhanced will be essential to succeeding in this thematic objective.

Stronger relations with Indigenous communities can also help unearth important histories and landscapes that have defined the area now named North Cowichan for millennia prior to European settlement.

Housing: Tensions between preserving community character and providing new and diverse types of housing can emerge. This is why defining community character early on is very important.

Ensuring growth and land use policies mesh with a community's definition of its own character will be key to the OCP receiving buy in from residents and developers.

Environment: Much like housing, it's important to integrate growth and land use policies with environmental objectives. Often, community character is defined by residents through an environmental lens of proximity to nature (i.e. large rural lots with mature trees, streams, and wildlife).

In the context of sustainable growth, there's a delicate balancing act between preserving this "rural character" and building compact, walkable, and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Economy: A community with a strong identity in its built form is one that is often more attractive to investment. Residents and tourists alike have a preference for places with character.

However, onerous regulation seeking to preserve community character can stifle investment and development efforts. Population decline is common in places with strict land use regulations and rising housing costs.

Community: A diverse mix of neighbourhoods is key to North Cowichan's identity. Creating a common structure for Local Area Plans with clear, concise, and consistent policies from one neighbourhood to the next is important to create a level playing and standard expectations.

Service: Efficient service delivery and defendable decision from District Council and staff hinge on clear, concise, and consistent policies related to community character.

CURRENT OCP GOAL 2.1: PRESERVE OUR RURAL CHARACTER

Plans/ Policies are Related to this Goal

North Cowichan is developing an Interim and Long-Term Forest Management Plan for the Municipal Forest Reserve. During this process, stakeholders and the public will be able to share their vision for the forest and influence how the forest will be managed. The Interim and Long-Term Forest Management Plans will include a summary of what the public said and describe how input shaped the Plans.

Development pressure for residential purposes on agricultural lands, and increasing environmental concerns necessitated the creation of a Strategic Agricultural Plan for North Cowichan, which was completed in 2001. In 2009 the Cowichan Food Charter was adopted.

In 2013 the Agricultural Advisory Committee created a Work and Implementation Plan.

Council's Strategic Priorities

This goal is linked to the strategic priorities of housing, the environment community and economy. Because this goal covers such diverse topics it would beneficial to separate or group then in difference sections of the new OCP.

APPENDIX E- THEMATIC OBJECTIVE CLIMATE CHANGE

RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

As above, the CAEP, associated I and M framework produced afterwards, and the climate emergency declaration are some of the key plan/ policy pieces associated with the 2011 OCP section and 2020 thematic objective for OCP renewal.

Also as stated above, all other community plans and policies tend towards having some implications in the climate and resilience space; from land use planning and development that does or does not produce new risks (e.g. UCB policy), to the siting and design of that development in local area plans that can create more or less resilience, to the polices and plans associated with managing the natural assets and ecosystems which act as buffers against extreme weather, to the planning for economic development that does or does not integrate the opportunities to strengthen good /green jobs in the local economy which will be more resilient to global shocks and stresses than jobs that rely on large industry or other globalized processes.

The following are specific examples of how other policy/plans connect to 'adjusting to climate change' goals/objectives.

Bonsall Creek Watershed Management Plan, 2016

Proactively addressing water shortages and water related decision-making will become increasingly important in the changing climate to address both drought and flood concerns.

Parks and Trails Master Plan, 2017

Parks can be looked at via the lens of climate adaptation and resilience: they can be used as reservoirs to store excess storm water and be preserved as open space and recreational areas as a way to ensure that high risk uses (i.e. residential or industrial) are not located in high hazard areas. Parks can also be looked at through the lens of the tree canopy and how to foster resilience to extreme heat via tree planting (locations/varieties/quantity, etc.). Parks can also be viewed through the lens of carbon sequestration and how to ensure they become or remain carbon sinks. Trails are viewed as an important element in active transportation planning which supports decreases in use of SOVs, which are noted as the number one emission source for the community in the CAEP. Addressing the use of electric bikes on trails presents an opportunity to proactively support enhanced, low-carbon, personal mobility.

Management Options and Monitoring Programs for Persistent Blue-Green Algae Blooms in Quamichan Lake, 2019

Changing climactic conditions often exacerbate existing environmental concerns. See the section 'Strengthen Natural Environment' for more information.

Strategic Agricultural Plan, 2001

A review of this plan is identified in Council's Strategic Plan. This could integrate best practices in the agricultural adaptation space and be viewed through the lens of increasing local food security and creating good, green jobs in the community (and thus community resilience). The CAEP I & M

Framework has several actions/indicators related to agricultural, including *Implementing the Regional Agriculture Adaptation Strategies for Cowichan.*

Associated Indicators and Targets

'Adjusting to climate change' indicators and targets are found in the 2011 OCP section as outlined above (5 indicators), the OCP Baseline Monitoring Report from 2015 (3 indicators) which are all mitigation indicators (i.e. no adaptation indicators) the CAEP from 2013 (4 community and 3 corporate targets, all related to mitigation), and the CAEP implementation framework contains metrics under many of its actions (i.e. many indicators).

Relation to Council strategic priorities

Many of the council priorities outlined in the strategic plan (2019) (i.e. service, engagement, housing, environment, economy, community) have connections to climate action (adaptation and mitigation) and resilience. The climate emergency declaration emphasizes that 'adjusting to climate change' is a critical challenge that requires extensive engagement. The objective from the 2011 OCP remains relevant here: *Engage all sectors of the community in responding to the effects of climate change and the need to substantially reduce the use of fossil fuel; and adjust municipal policy and programs to adapt to actual and anticipated changing climate conditions.* This connects with the council priority of engagement "We work collaboratively and productively with all our government and stakeholder partners".

Addressing/managing climate risk is also an important component of ensuring community safety, which connect to the council priority of community "We have *safe*, inclusive and inspiring neighbourhoods". Safety has often traditionally been viewed through the lens of crime prevention/harm reduction but in present times, climate risks present real and present danger to the community if not managed effectively. From increased health risks associated with extreme heat, to casualty and economic loss risks from wildfires and floods, to many mental health related stresses from increased extreme weather events that challenge individual/ familial and community coping capacities.

As previously mentioned, there are many connections with priorities that involve the environment and the 'Strengthen the Environment' section, with connections here to council's priority action under Environment to "Integrate natural assets into the overall asset management program".

The action to develop a comprehensive climate change risk and vulnerability assessment (Environment priority) should inform the revisit of the CAEP/ Integrated climate action strategy and related work. This risk assessment can act as an evidence or fact base for adaptation and resilience planning. There is also a connection here to the action of 'working collaboratively with regional government partners, ensuring a strong relationship with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)' (Engagement priority) in that the regional district also notes a priority action to be 'undertaking a collaborative, region-wide climate vulnerability and risk assessment to better understand and link climate hazards across the region, and developing a coastal flood management strategy around sea level rise'. Taking advantage of combined resources and regional synergies here can ensure that a robust, dynamic, multi-hazard risk assessment informs risk reduction and resilience building efforts in the community and region.

APPENDIX F- THEMATIC OBJECTIVE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

The municipality of North Cowichan has adopted several plans and policies that are relevant to its goal to guard the environment and the associated OCP policies since the adoption of the OCP in 2011.

The Climate Action and Energy Plan was adopted in 2013. It seeks to protect sensitive ecosystems through low impact subdivision and development standards, a vulnerability assessment of ecosystems and species and monitoring program, as well as better protection of the marine foreshore. The Plan also calls for the development of an Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) for the urban cores as well as general increases in forested areas through the UFS and a rural afforestation program, recognizing the many benefits they will provide to the community. It identifies several risks including the worsening air quality as a result of increased wildfire activity, and sea-level rise. It makes recommendations to maintain and improve knowledge of those risks and to minimize community exposures through initiatives such as the recommended coastal DPA guidelines. Finally, it suggests leveraging the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem as an economic asset for sustainable forestry and carbon capture.

The Bell McKinnon Local Area Plan (2018) relates to several components of this OCP section particularly in terms of sensitive ecosystems, biodiversity and watershed protection. Some of its key targets include setting a maximum effective impervious area as well as neighbourhood and on-site canopy cover. Overall, it supports connectivity through blue-green corridors and infrastructure and accounts for urban nature through boulevard landscaping guidance.

The 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan's vision supports the ecosystem health, biodiversity and critical habitat policies through seeking to conserve and restore natural habitats and ecosystem services and improving connectivity. 'Keep nature in our future' is one of the strategies outlined in the Master Plan. It seeks to provide a green network of ecosystems and corridors that connects them to sustain ecological functions and provide economic, scenic and cultural amenities. Actions related to this strategy will contribute towards the implementation of many environmental OCP policies. Several of the actions aim to reduce the risk of introducing invasive species in North Cowichan's park ecosystems.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District undertook a study in 2018 to begin the process of developing a regional ESA Strategy to protect environmentally sensitive areas throughout the region. If completed, this strategy would look to identify and integrate natural areas within Cowichan Valley to significant natural areas in other municipalities within the CVRD and provide regional support to protect these key areas.

Quamichan Lake is a large shallow lake that experiences frequent blue-green algal blooms as a result of phosphorous inputs from historical development, deforestation and farming. 80-85% of current phosphorus in the system is resuspended from sediments, with the remaining 15-20% coming from nearby surface flow. A report was completed in 2019 reviewing the history of the lake, its current conditions, and recommending a number of follow up studies and management options to limit blue-green algal blooms and improve oxygen conditions to increase fish survival.

A management plan was also created for Bonsall Creek Watershed in 2016. This plan reviewed existing data, set a vision and objectives for management of the watershed going forward, and developed a list of 35 potential actions. This plan can be used as a tool to help local landowners prioritize actions to meet the various objectives.

In terms of air quality, the Cowichan Regional Airshed Protection Strategy – adopted in 2015 – provides significant support towards the OCP's public health risk reduction policy. Its targets are aligned with the OCP's indicators to limit fine airborne particulates. Outdoor burning is identified in the Strategy as a significant source of fine particulates, which supports the OCP policies currently in place to reduce the public health risk from poor air quality.

Concerning the mitigation of natural hazards, the recently adopted Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) represents significant progress towards mitigating the risk from wildfire. Several of its recommendations will be relevant to consider in this OCP update, including several measures to improve public education and reduce risk in interface areas on both private and public land. The CWPP also calls for the creation of a Wildfire Development Permit Area which will ensure new development in high risk areas will be designed to best withstand wildfires.

RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Council's Strategic Plan 2019-2022 aligns with several OCP policies under the environmental goal. It emphasises measures to improve water quality in the District and the protection of watersheds – particularly for Quamichan and Somenos Lakes – as well as to strengthen environmental policy related to land use planning. The Plan recommends the creation of a biodiversity protection policy, a comprehensive climate change risk and vulnerability analysis as well as for the integration of natural assets within the municipality's asset management program. Council will reconsider the Urban Containment Boundary, which could offer a good opportunity to review the mapping for ESAs and consider how to best protect the municipality's most sensitive ecosystems.

Finally, Council wants to consider the creation of a heritage protection policy which could offer good support towards the implementation of archeology policies. All these actions relate to current OCP policies but may warrant new or additional policies to support their implementation.

APPENDIX G- THEMATIC OBECTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

RELATED PLANS AND POLICES

In Table 2, we present 9 documents that address economic opportunities in North Cowichan.

Table 2. List of District documents that discuss economic opportunities and indicators

Document title + link	Year published	Economic Sectors	Stated or implied key indicators
Long range projections of population, housing and employment in the CVRD	Jun 2019	Demographic	Employment levels Housing needs Household incomes
Council Strategic Plan 2019-2022	Mar 2019	Industrial Forestry Agriculture	Light Industry revs Local procurement % Mun. forest revs Small scale ag. revs
CVRD Industrial Land Use Strategy	Mar 2019	Industrial	Land area industrial zoned Amt serviced industrial land Industrial land as % of total Amt potential ind. land
Economic Development Cowichan – Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022	2018	Cowichan Tech Ag & Food Proc. Value-Add Wood Tourism Film	Tech revs Ag and Food revs Value-add wood revs Tourism revs Film revs
North Cowichan profile	2018	Demographic	Household incomes Avg. home cost Labour force Largest employers
Economic Development Cowichan - North Cowichan community profile	2017	Forestry Agriculture Eco-tourism Light ind.	Mun. forest revs Agriculture revs Eco-tourism revs Light industry revs
Annual Municipal Reports 2012-2018	2012 -2018	General Demographic	Housing starts Non-res. Permits Unemployment rate Residential tax rate Avg. residential taxes

Document title + link	Year published	Economic Sectors	Stated or implied key indicators
Ag Advisory Cttee and Implementation Plan	2013	Food industry	Food production and processing revs Agri-tourism revs
Economic Development Work Plan	2010	General	Econ. Diversity index No. of partnerships Trail network kms

In the right-hand column we indicate the key economic indicators that are either stated in these documents or implied based on their objectives. In Table 3, we present a list of the key economic indicators included in the current OCP for North Cowichan. Note that while we list only commercial permit indicators, there are a matching set of industrial permit indicators.

Table 3. Key Economic Indicators in the 2011 North Cowichan OCP

General indicators	Sector specific indicators	Other indicators
No. of business licenses/year No. home-based biz licenses/yr. Employment rate Value of comm. bldg. permits/yr No. of comm. permits issued/yr % use of commercial land (matching indicators exist for industrial lands as well)	Agriculture revs/year Non-timber forestry use permits No. of env. farm mgmt. plans Attendance at fairs/markets	No. of LEED/Built Green buildings Energy Efficiency Subsidies Paid Waterfront development permits

RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The District's economic strategic priorities are detailed on the right side of Table 1. They are complemented by the Regional economic priorities in the CVRD's 2018 Strategic Economic Plan. These goals align well to the strategic priorities.

SYNERGIES WITH OTHER OBJECTIVES

Potential synergies with other thematic objectives are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Potential synergies with other Thematic Objectives

Thematic Objective	Potential synergies with Creating Economic Opportunities
Revising approach to growth management	A key economic asset is an enjoyable living situation. However, with rising house prices, people are forced to live farther away from their workplace and commute longer distances. Providing more housing options,

Thematic Objective	Potential synergies with Creating Economic Opportunities
	particularly duplex and townhouse zoned lands, will allow more people, especially young people, to live and work in North Cowichan.

Expand regional economic industry clusters where all stages of production, distribution, and retailing are integrated. Good examples of this are regional food hubs where food production, processing, storage, distribution, marketing, and retailing are all integrated and there are no middle agent broker mark-ups. The shared marketing and shared production costs serve to make local food more competitive and create stronger community connections by allowing residents to more directly see where their food comes from. |
| Respect individual community character | Increased agricultural production could enhance the rural character of north Cowichan. It could be further enhanced and generate economic opportunities if agri-tourism programs were developed, particularly farm/winery cycling tours as well as food processing allowed on ALR land.

Another element that could enhance the rural character are farm villages, essentially clusters of a dozen or so homes next to ALR land where all the residents are actively engaged in food production, have access to a barn with shared farming equipment and can market their products in a small scale farmer's store. |
| Incorporate climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience | Create more housing, diversity, particularly any forms of housing that result in a smaller square footage of living space per resident.

When people think of the forest economy, must people only think of timber. However, there are many other products that can be wild harvested from forests (called Non-timber Forest Products). These products include mushrooms, berries, medicinal herbs, floriculture products like salal, and so on. These products are local and required very little energy or materials to harvest. North Cowichan could issue licenses for these products (and this could be an excellent opportunity for partnership with Cowichan Tribes, who are skilled in wild harvesting).

Identify policies and bylaws that enhance the sharing economy (e.g. special parking areas for car share vehicles, preferential bylaws for reuse/consignment stores, municipal promotion of clothing swaps, tool lending libraries, toy exchanges, shared product distribution, shared wood-working shops). Sharing economy initiatives can increase employment for sharing economy entrepreneurs but they also have the benefit of reducing household expenses as second hand or shared goods are cheaper that new products.

Equally as important as enhancing the sharing economy is to uncover and remove situations where sharing is not allowed/encouraged. For example, |

Thematic Objective	Potential synergies with Creating Economic Opportunities
	boat marinas often have rules that prevent co-ownership of boats. The District could institute a municipal policy that disallows such practices. Explore policies to promote and facilitate home-based businesses, which eliminate the environmental impacts of commuting. One sector that many rural communities emphasize is the local arts and culture. These can be supported with Art week events, Promote green businesses that are focused on waste reduction (e.g. building deconstruction), eco-tourism, clean technologies, value-added manufacturing, small-scale food production, small-scale aquaculture (kelp harvesting, geoduck production), alternative energy supply, energy/water conservation, and small, independent businesses. This will, in turn, increase the number of green jobs in the region.
Strengthen Natural Environment	North Cowichan could experiment with community-owned energy utilities in multifamily buildings or offices over 50,000 square feet. These utilities would pay for energy retrofits of these buildings and then recover those costs by charging tenants a monthly energy fee that would be lower than the energy savings from the retrofit. Residents could invest in the utility and it could become an additional source of income for them. Focus on promoting recreation/leisure pursuits that are low/no energy consumptions (e.g. trail walking/hiking, running events, cycling/cycling events, e-biking, kayaking/canoeing, sailing, electric boats, even human powered rail cars on unused railroad tracks). These attract regional tourists and sports participants and generally have a low carbon footprint.

APPENDIX H – INDUSTRY, EMPLOYMENT LANDS & HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS

The Employment and Economic Changes section considers plans and policies related to the following goals:

- Acknowledging the need for ongoing employment in the community.
- Developing plan and policy work that considers and adapts to new and emerging directions of the economy at the regional, municipal and community level.

Summary of Section

The Employment and Economic Changes section reviews economic objectives for the North Cowichan OCP update, one of five thematic areas to be included in the plan. To complete the analysis, we reviewed policies in Section 2.4 and 2.5 from the previous OCP and a range of regional and local policy to formulate three report sections based on related themes and indicators. The three sections are: 1) Industry and Employment Lands 2) Economic Development 3) Housing and Community. We completed a high-level market analysis in each section, allowing us to best address policy gaps and provide recommendations that would strengthen each area. Each goal or policy gap is linked to a section in the previous OCP to facilitate organization of future OCP updates.

An important component of the Employment and Economic Changes gap analysis is the high-level market review. In the market review, we analyse relevant indicators and how they have performed since 2011, where possible. This provides insight into how well policies are working and highlights potential gaps where new policy may be needed to address market issues. As the OCP covers the full breadth of economic factors in the municipality, a full review of all pertinent information was not feasible for the purposes of this analysis. However, we have tried to recommend further study on topics which warrant a more in-depth review.

A summary of the three sections is included below:

- **Industry and Employment Lands**: Relevant chapters in the previous OCP that are related to this section include 'rural-and-environmental based economic opportunities', 'waterfront, commercial and industrial development' and 'industry'. This section focuses on policies related to employment sectors that occupy industrial space, employment lands or agricultural lands. This includes employment land inventories, infrastructure that services employment lands, and sector-specific economic development policies.
- **Economic Development.** Relevant chapters in the previous OCP that are related to this section include 'economic development environment', 'rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities', 'new technologies' and 'commerce'. This section focuses on policies related to the service and professional sectors, including users of office and retail space, home-based businesses and tourism.
- **Housing and Community**. Relevant chapters in the previous OCP that are related to this section include 'growth management' and 'housing'. This section focuses on smart growth for local area plans, housing supply by unit typology and affordable housing. The market review focuses on development trends over the past decade, including unit mix, housing by tenure, purpose-built rental units, and housing need. While this section introduces issues at a high level, further analysis is being conducted as part of a housing needs assessment for the CVRD. This will provide greater insight into policy directions for the OCP.

In the final sections, we review how the goals, plans and policies related to economic objectives are linked to the other thematic objectives, along with strategic objectives of council. We also provide commentary on the potential impact of recent events related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Industry and Employment Lands

The Industry and Employment Lands section reviews plans and policies related to primary industries, employment growth and infrastructure on employment lands, and industrial sectors. Goals and policies acknowledge the need for ongoing employment in the community, with the understanding that North Cowichan has many characteristics that make it attractive for these industries. Sections from the 2011 OCP as outlined below are reviewed, and opportunities to strengthen each section are discussed in Section 1.2.1.

2011 OCP Section		Previous OCP Objective	Policies/Data Reviewed for Gap Analysis
Section 2.4.2	Rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities	1. Encourage and promote economic activities that support the values of the rural and natural environment	• CVRD Industrial Land Use Strategy (2019) • CVRD Economic Development Strategic Plan - 2018 to 2022 • BC Labour Market Outlook (2019) • North Cowichan Building Permit Data • North Cowichan Business Licence Data • CVRD Strategic Energy Management Plan • Nanaimo Airport Master Plan and Land Use Plan • North Cowichan Climate Action and Energy Plan
Section 2.4.4	Waterfront commercial and industrial development	1. Accommodate legitimate waterfront activity while reducing environmental impacts and reducing conflict between land uses	
Section 2.4.6	Industry	1. Promote a healthy industrial sector 2. Ensure the availability of industrially zoned land 3. Reduce the potential for conflicts between industrial and other lands uses	

1.1.1   OVERVIEW OF GOALS: POLICIES, INDICATORS AND CHALLENGES

Policy gaps related to Industry and Employment Lands are shown in each exhibit, followed by the relevant market information, policy source and explanation of opportunities and challenges.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies

Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Industry	• Ensure the availability of economically viable industrial development sites, particularly light industrial sites. • Ensure the conservation of existing industrial land for industrial uses.

A review of the CVRD Industrial Land Use Strategy indicates that a shrinking industrial land supply in the Capital and Nanaimo Regional Districts is pushing demand to the CVRD. The CVRD is positioned to take advantage of this growth if there is an availability of zoned, serviced and graded industrial land.

A review of the industrial land supply in the CVRD shows that North Cowichan comprises a large share of the remaining industrial land supply in the District. However, a large share of the industrial inventory is located on parcels which have a significant slope (grade greater than 5%). This has the potential to impede development as remediation costs will be higher for these properties.

Exhibit 1 shows the supply of industrial land in North Cowichan and the CVRD, including zoned and designated lands, occupied lands, and vacant lands. North Cowichan has 410 acres of industrial land, or 35% of the total CVRD inventory. For industrial lands with a slope less than 5%, North Cowichan has an inventory of 156 acres of land, or 63% of the total CVRD inventory.

Exhibit 1: Zoned, Occupied and Vacant Industrial Land in North Cowichan and the CVRD (2019)

	Zoned, Designated Industrial Land (Acres)	Zoned, Designated Industrial - Net of Water Lots (Acres)	Occupied Industrial Lands* (Acres)	Occupied Industrial Lands - Net of Water Lots (Acres)	Vacant Industrial Lands (Acres)	Vacant Industrial Lands with 0-5% Slope
North Cowichan	2,398	1,916	1,643	1,453	410	156
Mill Bay/Malahat	856	844	614	602	186	n/a
CVRD Total	6,179	4,859	4,228	3,358	1,181	248

Source: Urban Systems *net of forestry lands

Exhibit 2 shows the share of the CVRD industrial inventory which is in North Cowichan by type.

Exhibit 2: Zoned, Share of Occupied and Vacant Industrial Land in North Cowichan and the CVRD (2019)

	Zoned, Designated Industrial	Zoned, Designated Industrial - Net of Water Lots	Occupied Industrial Lands*	Occupied Industrial Lands - Net of Water Lots	Vacant Industrial Lands	Vacant Industrial Lands with 0-5% Slope
North Cowichan	39%	39%	39%	43%	35%	63%
Mill Bay/Malahat	14%	17%	15%	18%	16%	n/a
CVRD Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Urban Systems *net of forestry lands

Exhibit 3 shows the supply of vacant industrial lands in North Cowichan with a 0-5% slope for both heavy and light industrial designations.

Exhibit 3: North Cowichan Zoned, Designated Vacant Land by Industrial Use

	North Cowichan Vacant Industrial Lands with 0-5% Slope (acres)
Heavy Industrial	122.8
Light Industrial	33.4
Total	156.2

Source: Urban Systems

A review of industrial building permit data in North Cowichan (Exhibit 4) shows annual floorspace absorption in the municipality between 2014 and 2019. Exhibit 4 indicates that an average of 44,721 square feet of floorspace was developed annually. While we do not have information regarding the amount of land this required, industrial development can range from an FSR of 0.1 for land intensive uses to 0.4 – 0.6 FSR for building intensive uses. This could represent land absorption of between 2 and 10 acres per year. (needs to be verified by North Cowichan as there were several industrial properties included in the commercial building permit data and it was difficult to tell whether the building permit data was referencing floorspace or land area).

Exhibit 4: Industrial Floorspace Absorption in North Cowichan 2014 to 2019*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Active	2014 to 2019
Industrial Floorspace (SF)	51,129	0	107,639	92,570	10,166	0	51,542	44,721

Source: North Cowichan

Based on the rate of industrial floorspace absorption in North Cowichan and the CVRD, the remaining inventory of prime vacant industrial land in North Cowichan does not represent a significant supply. This is particularly true of vacant light industrial land.

It will be important for policy to support a significant pipeline of industrial land supply which is economically viable for development for three reasons: 1) in order for businesses to have a viable selection of parcels to choose the location that meets their business needs, 2) so businesses have a

viable option to expand₃ 3) to limit price appreciation so landowners do not hold on to parcels during supply constraints. According to the CVRD Industrial Land Use Strategy, this is already happening. Landowners in the area have noted supply constraints and are holding on to development parcels with the hopes of seeing continued price appreciation.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Industry, Waterfront Development	• Support opportunities for industrial intensification.

Economic Development Cowichan recommends supporting intensification on lands designated for industrial development. Intensification increases the development potential of industrial lands by permitting more floorspace on a given parcel and can increase employment density. It can also increase the value of industrial land, which incentivizes redevelopment on parcels which may have higher remediation costs (large slopes/need significant grading). While intensification is discussed in the 2011 OCP, specific locations for intensification or detailed strategies are not included.

Industrial intensification is being considered in the CVRD in areas which are almost fully built out, including Koksilah and Fisher Road. Options for intensification include reducing and consolidating storage and parking, increasing ceiling heights, higher site coverage, and permitting roof-top storage. However, site coverage for single storey industrial development will not likely exceed 60% as it is constrained by the amount of site surface area needed for truck manoeuvring, trucks and parking. An additional measure includes removing uses which do not have capacity to support high paying employment opportunities, such as self-storage and private recycling facilities.₄

According to the CVRD, locations suited to industrial intensification in North Cowichan include Coast Environmental Lands, Bing Creek Recycling Area and Crofton Deep Water Ports.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and	Industry, Waterfront Development	• Employment growth in sustainable and sectors. • Leverage regional comparative advantage. •

₃ Of the industrial park business respondents that participated in a recent EDC survey, 42% indicated they hope to expand at their current location or another site within the Cowichan region

₄ Cowichan Industrial Land Use Strategy (2019)

| | | | Economic Changes | | | | |

Economic Changes		

There are location, infrastructure, environmental and characteristics of Vancouver Island, the CVRD and North Cowichan which provide it with an advantage in certain industries. For example, proximity to port facilities give North Cowichan advantage in shipping, warehousing, boat construction and transportation, and an abundance of prime agricultural land and significant forest reserves give it an advantage in primary industries.

Exhibit 5 shows the share of employment in primary and industrial sectors in British Columbia and North Cowichan. The exhibit shows that North Cowichan has a share of employment which is larger than the provincial share in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, construction and manufacturing.

Exhibit 5: Primary and Industrial Employment in British Columbia and North Cowichan by Sector (2016)*

	British Columbia	North Cowichan Total	British Columbia Share	North Cowichan Share
Total Jobs	1,766,965	13,255	100%	100%
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	28,570	625	2%	5%
21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	15,600	105	1%	1%
22 Utilities	9,960	70	1%	1%
23 Construction	68,790	1,115	4%	8%
31-33 Manufacturing	131,470	1,165	7%	9%
41 Wholesale trade	62,775	270	4%	2%
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	246,050	470	14%	4%

*Employment located in North Cowichan (Place of Work Data)

Source: Statistics Canada

Linking economic development policies to industries with a regional comparative advantage represents a potential 2020 OCP direction. However, industries also must be anticipated to experience regional growth for a municipality to capture a share of growth. Exhibit 4 shows estimated employment growth by industry in British Columbia and Vancouver Island over the 2019 to 2029 period. Since North Cowichan shares characteristics with other locations across Vancouver Island, it is reasonable to assume that the municipality could attract a share of this growth.

Exhibit 6: British Columbia Labour Market Outlook - 2019 to 2029

	BC				Vancouver Island			10-Year Increment Vancouver Island
Industry	2019	2029	10-year CAGR		2019	2029	10-year CAGR	
Farms	22,715	24,208	0.6%		3,459	3,611	0.4%	152
Forestry and logging	11,748	9,871	-1.7%		3,878	3,925	0.1%	47
Fishing, hunting and trapping	2,668	2,276	-1.6%		910	946	0.4%	36
Support activities for agriculture and forestry	8,383	8,363	0.0%		1,444	1,586	0.9%	142
Oil and gas extraction	4,189	5,436	2.6%		1,079	1,215	1.2%	136

Mining	16,540	16,241	-0.2%		1,723	1,281	-2.9%	-442
Support activities for mining and oil and gas	7,977	9,901	2.2%		1,422	1,723	1.9%	301
Utilities	13,556	13,931	0.3%		1,653	1,588	-0.4%	-65
Construction	239,456	244,075	0.2%		36,753	33,796	-0.8%	-2,957
Food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing	36,224	38,657	0.7%		3,150	3,555	1.2%	405
Wood product manufacturing	24,572	22,563	-0.8%		2,756	2,482	-1.0%	-274
Paper manufacturing	8,931	7,412	-1.8%		1,661	1,475	-1.2%	-186
Primary metal manufacturing	4,621	4,299	-0.7%		104	117	1.2%	13
Fabricated metal product manufacturing	13,544	13,764	0.2%		1,063	1,130	0.6%	67
Machinery manufacturing	8,734	8,842	0.1%		907	844	-0.7%	-62
Ship and boat building	4,445	4,868	0.9%		1,721	2,023	1.6%	302
Transportation equipment manufacturing	7,132	6,937	-0.3%		763	596	-2.4%	-167
Other manufacturing	66,682	68,709	0.3%		6,709	6,508	-0.3%	-200
Wholesale trade	83,635	91,320	0.9%		8,577	9,370	0.9%	793
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	33,706	38,079	1.2%		5,568	6,608	1.7%	1,040
Air transportation	13,080	14,131	0.8%		1,658	1,871	1.2%	213
Rail transportation	5,810	6,151	0.6%		70	68	-0.3%	-2
Water transportation	6,830	7,068	0.3%		2,973	3,148	0.6%	175
Truck transportation	38,168	42,370	1.0%		2,772	3,167	1.3%	395
Support activities for transportation	24,276	27,191	1.1%		1,672	2,158	2.6%	486
Warehousing and storage	9,950	10,561	0.6%		437	424	-0.3%	-12
Job Growth (green only)								**4,702**

Source: British Columbia Labour Market Survey

Employment in primary and industrial sectors which are anticipated to experience employment growth across Vancouver Island over the next 10 years are shown in Exhibit 7. Industries in bold are anticipated to grow at a faster rate on Vancouver Island than British Columbia as a whole.

Exhibit 7: Vancouver Island Growth Industries - 2019 to 2029

Primary Industries	Light Manufacturing	Heavy Manufacturing	Transportation & Logistics
• **Farms** • **Forestry and logging** • **Fishing, hunting and trapping** • **Support activities for agriculture and forestry** • **Oil and gas extraction**	• **Food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing** •	• **Primary metal manufacturing** • **Fabricated metal product manufacturing** • **Ship and boat building**	• Wholesale trade • **Motor vehicle and parts dealers** • **Air transportation** • **Water transportation** • **Truck transportation** • **Support activities for transportation**

Primary Industries

Primary industries including **farming, forestry and logging, fishing, hunting and trapping** are anticipated to experience employment growth across Vancouver Island. Promotion of these sectors is a fundamental component of policies in 'promoting rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities' and should continue to form a cornerstone of the upcoming OCP.

The CVRD has about 630 farms that produce gross annual revenues of more than $57 million.[5] Goals in the North Cowichan strategic plan which support these industries include continuing support small, scale innovative agriculture, updating the agricultural plan and encouraging use of arable land.

Light Manufacturing

Anticipated growth in the **food & beverage manufacturing sector** presents another employment lands opportunity for North Cowichan, which has the potential for synergies with tourism and a diversified agricultural sector. In addition, there are opportunities for food & beverage manufacturing on ALR lands, provided that 50% of the goods processed are produced on the farm.[6] A cluster strategy which seeks to provide research, support, incentives and serviced space for the food processing sector represents a policy direction for the 2020 OCP.

It is important to understand the limitation of focusing only on light manufacturing for employment lands. Light manufacturing growth industries are limited to a select few sectors, and do not represent a large share of regional job growth. An employment lands strategy which only permits light manufacturing could be limiting employment lands development.

Heavy Manufacturing

Employment growth areas in heavy manufacturing include **metal and metal product manufacturing**. The presence of the forestry sector in the CVRD has fostered a sector strength in this area, including companies like Promac, Umbrella Welding, Surespan and West Coast Pre-Fab. While heavy manufacturing can have a negative connotation with respect to sustainability and environmentalism, advances in manufacturing technology and proper environmental monitoring can minimise detrimental impacts.

Ship and boat building represents another employment growth area on Vancouver Island where North Cowichan has a robust existing sector due to ocean proximity and port facilities.

Transportation

[5] Cowichan Industrial Land Use Strategy (2019)

[6] 1st Order Processing: Activities that add value to primary agricultural products or make them ready for access to the market that usually includes washing, sorting and repackaging with minimal requirement for transportation and infrastructure services, such as basic electric power, natural gas, potable water, and sanitary sewer. Permitted on agricultural (ALR) land as long as at least 50% of the product involved in these activities is grown/raised on the farm

Transportation is a group of sub-sectors which is anticipated to experience significant growth across Vancouver Island. **Air, water, truck transportation, along with motor vehicles** industries also have supportive infrastructure in the CVRD which can help in attracting employment lands development.

The CRD, Nanaimo and Lower Mainland marine industries are facing capacity issues, which presents an opportunity for North Cowichan to allocate employment lands in proximity to existing sea docks. This includes leveraging Catalyst's deep-sea docks to open up air, water and truck opportunities. According to Catalyst, the group sees the location of its deep-sea docks at its Crofton site as a leading competitive advantage in obtaining access to supplies and primary inputs. A marine servicing strategy working in partnership with Catalyst could establish existing infrastructure and servicing issues, and estimate demand potential for this industry for North Cowichan.[7]

The CVRD is currently in the process of completing an Air Transportation Study for the region which should be factored into the 2020 OCP update.

Wholesale Trade

Demand for **wholesale trade** facilities is rapidly increasing across the region, representing one of the biggest demand drivers for industrial space. North Cowichan is ideally located to take advantage of its central location between two large markets, proximity to port facilities, access to the forestry sector and existing logistics network. Allocating industrial space in proximity to air, road, and port facilities, or along heavily trafficked transportation networks is key to taking advantage of this. Exploration into partnerships with air transport and marine services can leverage this strength.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Industry	• Ensure the conservation of existing industrial land for industrial uses.

In addition to ensuring there is an adequate supply of future industrial land, it is also important to conserve existing industrial lands. This includes limiting non-industrial uses in industrial designations, such as stand-alone office buildings, big box retail and recreation uses. Non-industrial uses which have increasingly been removed from permitted uses in industrial zones include big box retail, self storage, banquet halls, office space and other uses not related to the production, manufacture or movement of goods. In addition, there are a number of industrial buildings that are on lands not zoned industrial in the CVRD. It is recommended that these be re-designated to protect industrial uses at these locations.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies

[7] Urban Systems, Cowichan Industrial Land Use Strategy.

Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Industry, Rural- and environmental-based economic opportunities	• Accommodate small businesses/entrepreneurs.

Discussion with local businesses completed as part of the Industrial Land Needs Study indicate there is strong demand for small building units ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet. From a building perspective, this translates into multi-tenant buildings with 15,000 to 20,000 square feet and several units. As will be shown in the next section, there has been a significant increase in home-based businesses over the past five years. As these businesses grow and as more entrepreneurs come to the region, fostering the development of smaller spaces which accommodates growing businesses will be important.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Industry, Waterfront Development	• Ensure infrastructure servicing that aligns with the needs of employment lands. • Providing Infrastructure and Zoning for Development.

Notable plans and policies related to infrastructure and employment lands are outlined below:

- **Rail:** The business community is encouraging further research into the Island Corridor Line and opportunity to move freight and commuters
- **Air:** Nanaimo Airport Master Plan and Land Use Plan designating 15HA of industrial land near the airport was recently completed. This will likely expand airport capacity and create shipping economies for North Cowichan.
- **Marine:** CVRD has encouraged a potential marine servicing strategy working in partnership with Catalyst to expand deep seadocks operation.
- **Road**: Demand for industrial lots that are 0.5 to 2.0 acres near a highway represents upwards of 50% to 75% of overall market demand.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies

Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Industry, Rural- and environmental- based economic opportunities	• Recognize the value of partnering with First Nations for industrial projects. • Conduct further research to identify ideal pairings between producers of waste energy and industrial users of that energy.

The engagement of First Nations in exploring issues and opportunities related to industrial land development in the Cowichan region is a key component in increasing land supply and fostering engagement in North Cowichan.

North Cowichan can support the development of partnerships between producers of waste energy and industrial users of this energy. District energy is identified as a target of the CAEP and has the potential to reduce GHG emissions.

Economic Development

The Economic Development section reviews plans and policies related to the service sector and professional service industries, the retail environment and tourism. Goals and policies acknowledge the need for ongoing employment in the community and the importance of adapting to new and emerging directions of the economy. Sections from the 2011 OCP are reviewed and opportunities to strengthen each section are discussed in Section 1.3.1.

2011 OCP Section		Previous OCP Objective	Policies/Data Reviewed for Gap Analysis
Section 2.4.1	Economic development environment	1. Establish a welcoming atmosphere for economic development in North Cowichan while maintaining a high quality of life and high environmental quality.	• BC Labour Market Survey (2019) • CVRD Regional Recreation Plan • Bell McKinnon Local Area Plan • University Village Plan • Economic Development Cowichan Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022 • North Cowichan Strategic Plan • North Cowichan Building Permit Data • North Cowichan Business Licence Data
Section 2.4.2	Rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities	1. Encourage and promote economic activities that support the values of the rural and natural environment	
Section 2.4.3	New technologies	1. Encourage high-tech and green businesses to establish and grow in North Cowichan	
Section 2.4.5	Commerce	1. Protect and promote the economic viability of existing commercial enterprises in North Cowichan; 2. Attract new and emerging service, retail and other commercial businesses; 3. Encourage diverse types of commercial activity	

Policy gaps related to Economic Development are shown in each exhibit, with the relevant market information, policy source and explanation provided below.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, Rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities	• Continue to foster home-based businesses and small businesses.

Exhibit 8 and 9 summarize the number of business licences issued annually by sector in North Cowichan since 2010.

Exhibit 8 shows business licences for professional and retail related services. Most sub-sectors experienced an increase in business licence applications over the ten-year period, with the exclusion of entertainment, pet grooming and second hand stores. Sectors with the largest increase in applications include home occupation, professional business, retail merchandise and 'other'.

Exhibit 8:Business Licences by Sector in North Cowichan (2010 to 2019)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2010 to 2014	2015 to 2019	5 Year Incremental Increase/ Decrease
Financial Institution		1			2	1	1	1	1		3	4	1
Entertainment	1		1	2					1	1	4	2	-2
Home Occupation									7	7	0	14	14
Liquor License	2			1		1	2	1		1	3	5	2
Misc - Business Office										2	0	2	2
Misc - Other	5		4	5	2	8	8	14	16	25	16	71	55
Misc - Pet Grooming		1			1				2	2	2	0
Misc- Secondhand Store					1			1			1	1	0
Personal Service	18	14	18	18	24	11	15	26	19	26	92	97	5
Professional Business	3	5	12	3	4	3	8	13	7	12	27	43	16
Publication						1		1	1	0	3	3
Retail Merchandise	4	3	1	6	14	6	14	10	11	12	28	53	25
Total	43	36	47	52	66	49	75	93	88	144	244	449	205

Source: North Cowichan

Exhibit 9 summarizes the number of business licences issued annually since 2010 for home-based businesses. The exhibit shows that there were 5 times the number of home based business licences issued between 2015 and 2019, (127 licences), as were issued between 2010 and 2014 (25 licences).

Further clarity is needed regarding the difference between 'Home Based Occupation' in Exhibit 8 and 'Home Based Business' in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9: Home Based Business Licences Issued in North Cowichan (2010 to 2019)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2010 to 2014	2015 to 2019	5 Year Incremental Increase/ Decrease
Home-Based Businesses	4	10	2	6	3	8	12	8	35	64	25	127	102

Source: North Cowichan

The 2011 OCP included several policies that underscored the importance of supporting home-based businesses, particularly in the green business sector. Given the municipalities success in attracting home-based businesses, North Cowichan should continue to include supportive policy in the 2020 OCP. However, collecting further information regarding the type of professional businesses is recommended. For example, more information could inform whether the policy direction supporting green based home businesses has been effective.

The Cowichan Industrial Land Use Strategy found there was demand for smaller commercial units in the CVRD in the 1,500 square foot range. This could be in response to home-based businesses that are expanding and need more physical space. However, more information is needed to confirm the existing and planned space requirements of home-based businesses.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, Rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities	• Develop professional services and service sector in North Cowichan. • Build off existing economic and industry strengths. •

An important policy direction to be considered for the 2020 OCP under the theme of economic development is the promotion of professional services. The 2011 OCP included several related themes; new technology focusing on clean tech and renewable energy, rural and environmental based economic opportunities focusing on tourism industries and commerce focusing on the retail environment. However, there was a gap with respect to supporting the professional service sector, or users of institutional and office space. Recent and anticipated investment in large institutional facilities, including the District Hospital, Vancouver Island University and the Island Savings Centre can be leveraged to develop a professional sector.

Exhibit 10 shows employment in North Cowichan in 2016 and compares this with the share of employment in British Columbia overall. Exhibit 10 shows that North Cowichan has a larger share of employment than the provincial average in administration and support services (5%) and health care

and social assistance (15%). Industries with a notable share of employment in North Cowichan include professional, scientific and technical services, educational services, accommodation and food services.

Exhibit 10:Professional Services Employment in British Columbia and North Cowichan by Sector (2016)*

	British Columbia	North Cowichan Total	British Columbia Share**	North Cowichan Share**
Total Jobs	1,766,965	13,255	100%	100%
51 Information and cultural industries	44,355	190	3%	1%
52 Finance and insurance	76,725	375	4%	3%
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	33,700	220	2%	2%
54 Professional, scientific and technical services	126,055	665	7%	5%
55 Management of companies and enterprises	3,410	25	0%	0%
56 Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	53,365	645	3%	5%
61 Educational services	142,405	845	8%	6%
62 Health care and social assistance	229,150	1,955	13%	15%
71 Arts, entertainment and recreation	38,825	325	2%	2%
72 Accommodation and food services	180,575	1,095	10%	8%
81 Other services (except public administration)	82,930	620	5%	5%
91 Public administration	110,315	645	6%	5%

*Place of Work Data **Share of employment overall

Source: Statistics Canada

Exhibit 11 projects employment over the next ten years, forecasting job growth in British Columbia and Vancouver Island for service sector and professional industries. Across Vancouver Island, a total of 35,068 new service sector and professional service jobs are anticipated over the next decade.

Exhibit 11:Professional and Service Sector Employment in BC and Vancouver Island - 2019 to 2029

	BC				Vancouver Island			Total 10-Year New Jobs VI
Industry	2019	2029	10-year CAGR		2019	2029	10-year CAGR	

Postal service, couriers and messengers	15,709	16,418	0.4%		1,972	2,215	1.2%	243
Transit, sightseeing, and pipeline transportation	23,370	27,223	1.5%		3,291	4,007	2.0%	716
Publishing industries	14,080	14,125	0.0%		1,813	1,876	0.3%	63
Motion picture and sound recording industries	22,812	32,334	3.6%		1,313	1,686	2.5%	373
Telecommunications	16,977	16,318	-0.4%		1,474	1,488	0.1%	14
Broadcasting, data processing, and information	7,962	8,804	1.0%		871	963	1.0%	92
Finance	64,932	68,691	0.6%		8,143	8,417	0.3%	274
Insurance carriers and related activities	30,828	32,944	0.7%		3,126	3,021	-0.3%	-105
Real estate rental and leasing	55,616	57,180	0.3%		7,338	7,800	0.6%	462
Architectural, engineering and related services	42,746	50,760	1.7%		5,564	6,063	0.9%	499
Computer systems design and related services	53,746	69,651	2.6%		7,619	11,117	3.9%	3,499
Management, scientific and technical consulting	26,036	30,432	1.6%		4,028	4,781	1.7%	753
Legal, accounting, design, research, and advertising	88,135	104,382	1.7%		13,352	13,912	0.4%	559
Business, building and other support services	107,969	120,333	1.1%		15,956	18,480	1.5%	2,524
Elementary and secondary schools	92,469	100,625	0.8%		14,954	16,969	1.3%	2,015
Community colleges	12,064	12,279	0.2%		1,763	1,842	0.4%	79
Universities	35,934	37,770	0.5%		8,784	9,445	0.7%	661
Private and trades education	34,119	40,132	1.6%		4,664	4,486	-0.4%	-178
Ambulatory health care services	95,405	114,075	1.8%		17,909	20,922	1.6%	3,013
Hospitals	110,320	122,944	1.1%		20,539	22,508	0.9%	1,968
Nursing and residential care facilities	51,095	69,864	3.2%		11,411	14,655	2.5%	3,244
Social assistance	65,068	73,879	1.3%		13,787	15,297	1.0%	1,510
Performing arts, spectator sports and related industries	22,532	23,581	0.5%		3,772	4,107	0.9%	335
Amusement, gambling and recreation industries	45,534	56,678	2.2%		5,981	7,669	2.5%	1,688
Heritage institutions	3,914	4,399	1.2%		1,283	1,405	0.9%	122
Accommodation services	32,009	36,490	1.3%		5,961	6,791	1.3%	830
Food services and drinking places	163,282	190,208	1.5%		23,159	27,053	1.6%	3,895
Repair, personal and non-profit services	117,190	127,525	0.8%		18,947	23,278	2.1%	4,331
Federal government public administration	34,045	34,397	0.1%		8,194	8,032	-0.2%	-162
Provincial and territorial public administration	30,681	31,983	0.4%		14,609	15,508	0.6%	899
Local and Indigenous public administration	36,022	39,322	0.9%		7,386	7,793	0.5%	407
Net Job Growth								**35,068**

Source: BC Labour Market Survey 2019

The amount of job growth potential in these industries highlights the importance of supportive planning policy in North Cowichan. It can be challenging to attract professional services in smaller communities, as users tend to agglomerate in urban cores. Amenities, transit and supportive development policy are typically required to attract these sectors in community cores.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, New Technologies	• Build off investment in the future Cowichan District Hospital to foster a health-related professional services hub.

The Bell McKinnon Local Area Plan was established in 2018 to respond to investment in the future Cowichan District Hospital and to become a focus of residential growth. The plan envisions employment lands in proximity to the future hospital, including Employment Lands (EL) or 1-2 storey service commercial and light industrial buildings and Employment Lands-Mixed (EL-M) or residential uses over employment uses. There is an opportunity to support a health care zone, along with the planning policies that attract professional services with synergies to the hospital.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, New Technologies	• Ensure development sites are financially viable for development given zoning requirements in the Bell McKinnon Plan.

In addition to a cluster strategy, there are several financial factors to consider when supporting commercial development in the Bell McKinnon Plan. A review of commercial development permits over the past ten years indicates there has been minimal office development in North Cowichan.

Given demand for non-retail commercial space has been limited, careful consideration must be given to the land economics underlying land use designation requirements in the plan. This includes types of tenants which would occupy the Employment Lands designation, prevailing rents, and whether the sites are financially viable for development given the façade, parking and density requirements.

Exhibit 12:Employment Lands Designation in Bell McKinnon Plan (2018)

EL Preferred Land Uses	Preferred Building Typology	Employment Land Key Guidelines
• Non-retail Commercial • Service Commercial • Light Industrial • Studio / Workshop • Restaurants	• Adapted for use • Minimum ground floor to ceiling height of 5.5m to allow long-term adaptability/flexibility of use. • Minimize surface parking	• Min-Max Height: 2 to 3 storeys • Min-Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 0.7:1 to 1:1.

Source: Bell McKinnon Plan

Office/commercial development can be economically challenging, and slight changes to parking requirements, or density can make all the difference in whether or not a site is financially attractive to develop. Two storey commercial buildings are particularly challenging in markets where a large share of office demand is for local serving space (banks, insurance, notaries) which rely on ground floor exposure. Investment in the hospital is a pivotal opportunity to attract professional services, but land economics must be carefully weighed to ensure prohibitive zoning does not preclude development.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, New Technologies	• Link projected job growth to likely build-out horizon of Bell McKinnon Plan, University Village employment lands sites.

A review of historic job growth and demand for commercial floorspace space can be a helpful indicator of the build-out horizon for a given land use plan. This is an important component of smart growth policy, linking infrastructure, public realm and transportation investment.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, Rural-and environmental-based economic opportunities	• Align policy with the CVRD regarding tourism investment and civic facilities in North Cowichan.

Policy consideration to large civic investments in the municipality, including Vancouver Island University, Branch of the Library, Cowichan Performing Arts Centre, Cowichan Tribes Cultural Centre, Island Savings Centre will be important in tourism strategies for the 2020 OCP. The CVRD and Tourism Cowichan have substantial promotion material for these civic facilities and recreational and sports tourism in North Cowichan.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Economic Development, Rural-and environmental-	• Understand the role of Airbnb in the community in supporting tourism objectives, while minimizing negative impacts on housing affordability.

	based economic opportunities			

Airbnb can be an economic driver for a community, bringing tourism spending and supporting retail businesses. Many communities which rely on tourism across Vancouver Island have begun collecting data on the number of short-term rentals in the community, prices, and occupancy. This can help a municipality to understand total short-term accommodation demand, and also the impact on the housing supply.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Commerce, Economic Development	• Monitor retail floorspace development by type. • Minimize the export of local and region serving retail.

The 2011 OCP Commerce section includes policy which encourages the development of a range of retail facilities from local to regional in scope, along with mixed-use development. Exhibit 13 summarizes building permit data for retail floorspace development in the municipality since 2011. Tracking the type of retail, (mixed use, neighbourhood, service, regional) along with gross building floorspace and land area is recommended to determine the success of OCP policies.

Exhibit 13: North Cowichan - Retail Building Permit Data 2011 to 2019[8]

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average Annual 2011 to 2019 (SF)
Retail Floorspace (SF)	0	2,678	21,489	70,358	16,215	0	398	7,847	0	13,221

Demand for retail services is closely linked to population growth. Expenditure from each resident can support a given amount of local and region serving floorspace per capita. Monitoring the amount of retail floorspace captured in the municipality relative to population growth can provide the municipality with insight into the amount of retail retained within the municipality and the amount exported to other markets.

[8] It was difficult to determine floorspace data provided by the municipality so net leasable area was collected from BC Assessment. Total land area and FSR was not included in the building permit data so an assessment of land absorption and retail density was not undertaken.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Consider Employment and Economic Changes	Commerce, Economic Development	• Maintain sufficient commercial land inventory levels for local and region serving retail. • Review success factors for mixed use developments in commercial cores; Chemainus, Crofton, Duncan's South End.

The 2011 OCP Commerce section indicates the municipality will maintain sufficient commercial land inventory levels. In addition to maintaining an overall inventory, the municipality could ensure that the inventory factors in the land requirements for different types of retail. This includes large serviced sites for region serving retail and neighbourhood commercial centres (grocery stores) in the community, along with opportunities for specialty retail in community cores.

Based on a review of building permit data, there have been two mixed use developments in community cores in Duncan and Crofton. This is an indication that there is successful zoning policy in place at these sites. Further analysis of the site size, commercial and residential density, and built form permitted at these sites could be undertaken to replicate the success of this policy in other areas of the municipality.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

OVERVIEW OF GOALS: POLICIES, INDICATORS AND CHALLENGES

The Housing and Community section provides a high-level overview of growth management objectives and the housing market in North Cowichan. Development trends related to housing mix, housing tenure and affordable housing demand and supply are reviewed to address high level policy gaps. However, a more fulsome discussion will be undertaken as part of a housing demand assessment currently underway in the CVRD.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Revising our Approach to Growth Management	Growth Management, Housing	• Develop build-out scenarios for local area plans to better manage growth and coordinate infrastructure and community amenities delivery. • Increase opportunities for high density development.

The 2011 OCP provides direction on growth policies for the various local area plans in North Cowichan. However, linking historical and projected growth rates to likely build-out horizons by LAP is a key factor in smart growth which should be strengthened in the 2020 OCP.

A review of historical development trends by housing type from 2009 to 2019 shows historical unit absorption in the municipality. When analysed with population projections, they provide a likely indicator of anticipated unit demand going forward.

Between 2009 and 2019, an average of 103 single family units, 18 semi-detached units, 10 townhouse units and 25 apartment units were developed annually in North Cowichan. This represents total annual housing demand in the community.

Exhibit 14 :Historical Development Trends by Housing Type in North Cowichan– 2009 to 2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average 2009 to 2014	Average 2014 to 2019	Average 2009 to 2019	Share 2009 to 2014	Share 2014 to 2019	Share 2009 to 2019
Single	106	151	81	96	82	87	93	90	101	138	112	101	104	103	74%	61%	66%
Semi-Detached	32	44	10	16	14	4	4	17	6	24	26	20	14	18	15%	8%	11%
Row	4	16	12	8	13	6	0	18	6	10	20	10	10	10	7%	6%	7%
Apartment	0	0	5	6	6	19	3	4	15	126	92	6	43	25	4%	25%	16%
All	142	211	108	126	115	116	100	129	128	298	250	136	170	157	100%	100%	100%

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

The share of units captured by each LAP can be influenced by the municipality based on growth objectives or it can be driven entirely by consumer demand. Either way, once a share of projected unit growth is allocated to each community, an estimate of the total supply capacity in each plan will help to

formulate a build-out horizon. This is the estimated number of years of residential supply in each plan. This exercise may highlight growth management issues, such as inefficient community build-out, and can inform smart growth policies.

A review of the Bell McKinnon, University Village and other LAPs shows that there are no residential supply or unit capacity estimates in the plans. In addition, estimated growth or absorption by community has not yet been determined. This makes it difficult to forecast build-out, which can make infrastructure, servicing and community development initiatives difficult. Directions to adopt build-out scenarios for each of the local area plans is recommended for the 2020 OCP.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Revising our Approach to Growth Management	Growth Management, Housing	• Increase supply of purpose-built rental units. • Increase supply of all purpose-built rental unit types; bachelor, one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units.

Exhibit 15 shows historical housing starts by housing tenure. Over the past decade, over 90% of all housing starts in the municipality have been owner units and between 5% and 9% have been purpose-built rental units.

Exhibit 15: Historical Development Trends by Housing Tenure in North Cowichan – 2009 to 2019

												Average		Share	
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2009 to 2014	2014 to 2019	2009 to 2014	2014 to 2019
Owner Units	139	195	102	119	109	112	95	122	116	271	213	129	155	95%	91%
Rental Units	3	16	6	7	6	4	5	7	12	27	37	7	15	5%	9%
All	142	211	108	126	115	116	100	129	128	298	250	136	170	100%	100%

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

Exhibit 16 shows the total inventory of purpose-built rental units by age of construction in North Cowichan. The exhibit shows that the bulk of the purpose-built rental unit supply was built prior to 1979 (65%).

Exhibit 16: Inventory of Purpose-Built Rental Units by Age of Construction in North Cowichan –2009-2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 Share
Before 1960	71	71	71	67	71	71	71	71	71	71	68	5%
1960 - 1979	926	945	848	839	816	819	816	830	823	822	805	60%
1980 - 1999	342	338	332	331	330	300	277	331	330	316	272	20%
2000 or Later	**	**	97	85	85	96	93	93	94	79	191	14%
Total	**1,339**	**1,354**	**1,348**	**1,322**	**1,302**	**1,286**	**1,257**	**1,325**	**1,318**	**1,288**	**1,336**	**100%**

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

Exhibit 17 shows the total inventory of purpose-built rental units by unit type in North Cowichan. The exhibit shows that there is a limited supply of bachelor units (5% of all units) and 3 bedroom units (7% of all units).

Exhibit 17: Total Inventory of Purpose-Built Rental Units by Unit Type in North Cowichan – 2009 to 2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 Share
Bachelor	70	66	67	66	67	65	65	70	69	69	69	5%
1 Bedroom	638	632	627	626	611	590	564	626	627	624	626	47%
2 Bedroom	524	563	541	522	505	517	522	523	514	498	547	41%
3 Bedroom +	107	93	113	108	119	114	106	106	108	97	94	7%
Total	**1,339**	**1,354**	**1,348**	**1,322**	**1,302**	**1,286**	**1,257**	**1,325**	**1,318**	**1,288**	**1,336**	**100%**

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

Exhibit 18 shows total vacancy of purpose-built rental units by unit type. The exhibit shows that there was historically low vacancy in 2019 across all unit types, particularly in bachelor units (0% vacancy).

Exhibit 18: Historical Vacancy of Purpose-Built Rental Units by Type in North Cowichan – 2009 to 2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bachelor	8.6%	3%	1.5%	3.3%	**	1.5%	**	**	3.8%	0%	**0%**
1 Bedroom	6%	4.3%	6.1%	8.4%	9.7%	4.2%	5.6%	4.8%	3.8%	0.2%	**1.1%**
2 Bedroom	7.1%	4.6%	7.6%	9.8%	8.8%	6%	1. %7	1.4%	1.4%	0%	**0.6%**
3 Bedroom +	4.7%	3.2%	12.4%	9.2%	14.3%	6.1%	2.8%	0.9%	3.1%	1%	**2.1%**
Total	6.4%	4.3%	7%	8.7%	9.4%	5%	3.5%	3.2%	2.8%	0.2%	**0.9%**

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

As of 2016, there were 12,770 households in North Cowichan, with 3,210 renter households and 9,560 owner households. Based on the inventory of purpose-built rental units, we know there are 1,874 households renting units from the strata market. While the strata market plays a valuable role in providing housing for renter households, purpose-built units provide greater security to tenants with long term secured tenure and stable rents.

Policies which support the development of purpose-built rental projects are recommended for the 2020 OCP. This could include directions to study the density and zoning necessary to make these projects financially viable.

Separating out secondary suites and purpose-built apartment/townhouse projects in building permit data is recommended, as each unit types requires different policies to support development.

Since there has been a recent increase in the development of purpose-built rental units (2017 to 2019), an analysis of these projects and the underlying success factors is recommended.

Thematic Objective	Previous OCP Chapter	Recommended Goals/Policies
Revising our Approach to Growth Management	Growth Management, Housing	• Undertake financial testing of viability of affordable housing. • Define what rents constitute affordable housing. • Understand measures required to make affordable housing projects financially feasible.

Exhibit 19 summarizes the average rent of purpose-built rental units by age of dwelling. The exhibit shows that older apartments are a valuable source of affordable units. This highlights the importance of ensuring a stable supply of purpose-built rental units over the long term, as new units will eventually experience rent depreciation.

Exhibit 19: Average Rent of Rental Units by Age of Construction in North Cowichan – 2009 to 2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Before 1960	$506	$517	$529	$528	$524	$535	$540	$580	$612	$637	$661
1960 - 1979	$576	$600	$607	$614	$613	$632	$631	$652	$677	$718	$776
1980 - 1999	$690	$715	$735	$732	$733	$755	$765	$807	$822	$846	$972
2000 or Later	$904	$921	$916	$914	$891	$903	$918	$926	$1,026	$1,166	$1,300
Total	**$639**	**$665**	**$679**	**$679**	**$681**	**$700**	**$708**	**$731**	**$761**	**$805**	**$892**

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

Exhibit 20 shows total households by income level in North Cowichan and the maximum monthly rent they could likely afford if a third of income was spent on rent. Exhibit 20 highlights the depth of affordability which may be required for an affordable housing project aimed at the lowest income bracket.

Exhibit 20: Total Households by Income Level and Maximum Monthly Rent* in North Cowichan - 2016

	Less Than $20,000	$20,000 to $39,999	$40,000 to $59,999	$60,000 to $79,999	$80,000 to $99,999	$100,000 And Over	Total
Total Households	1,280	2,350	2,395	1,810	1,465	3,475	12,770
Max. Monthly Rent	$550	$825	$1,375	$1,925	$2,475	$2,750	

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal *assuming 1/3 of income is spent on rent, assumes mid-point of the range for income.

Exhibit 21 highlights the scale of immediate need for additional housing in the municipality. According to the exhibit, there are 340 units in North Cowichan which are 'not suitable' for the current residents.

Exhibit 21: North Cowichan Housing Suitability - 2016

	Suitable	Not Suitable (Crowded)	Total Households
2006	10,910	380	11,290
2011	11,575	485	12,055
2016	12,425	340	12,770

Source: CMHC Housing Market Portal

Affordable housing policies should be strengthened in the 2020 OCP, with particular attention paid to the economics of developing these projects. Affordable housing projects are very costly to build - and the high cost must be offset by a significant share of private sector units in the building, or land and equity subsidies. The first step is defining rents or prices which constitute affordable housing. This gives clarity to developers or non-profit organizations about the investment required to undertake these projects. It is also recommended that the municipality engage a partner to test a potential affordable housing project on a select site in the municipality to understand the zoning and financial requirements of a standard project.

Council's Strategic Priorities and Other OCP Thematic Objectives

Exhibit 22: Industry and Employment Lands Goals and Other Objectives

Recommended Goals/Policies	Strategic Priorities	Other Thematic Objectives
Ensure the availability of economically viable industrial development sites, particularly light industrial sites. Ensure the conservation of existing industrial land for industrial uses. Conduct further research to identify ideal pairings between producers of waste energy and industrial users of that energy.	**Engagement:** The Industrial Land Use Strategy completed by the CVRD has been the outcome of stakeholder engagement at all levels of the community, including local businesses and municipalities. **Economy:** A supply of serviced employment lands will allow the municipality to retain high paying jobs in the community. **Environment:** Increased development on employment lands allows the municipality to take control over environmental monitoring and green building standards.	**Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience:** According to the Climate Energy and Action Plan, reducing vehicle kilometres travelled is the single most important way to reduce GHG emissions. Retaining jobs in the community through the provision of economically viable industrial lands will reduce VKT and GHG emissions. Strategic planning of employment lands increases the opportunities for district energy, which is another recommendation of the CAEP.
Support opportunities for industrial intensification.	**Environment:** Industrial intensification provides the opportunity to use land more efficiently. **Economy:** Promotes higher job density in a municipality.	**Strengthen Natural Environment:** More efficient use of industrial lands will allow for greater environment protection of other lands.
Foster employment growth in sustainable sectors. Leverage regional comparative advantage.	**Environment:** Leveraging comparative advantage allows the region to produce goods more efficiently than other regions. **Community:** More high paying jobs in the community will support opportunities for higher quality housing and infill high density projects in community cores.	**Respect Individual Community Character:** Employment sectors which represents the values and natural resources of the community. **Strengthen Natural Environment:** Capitalizes on rural economic opportunities and promotes synergies amongst farming, forestry, food manufacturing and tourism industries.
Accommodate Small Businesses/Entrepreneurs.	**Environment:** Providing opportunities for small business growth at home and reduces VKT and GHG emissions from employment buildings. **Service:** Allows residents to self-actualize and earn an income in the community.	**Strengthen Natural Environment:** More efficient use of existing dwellings supports an increased ability to preserve lands for environmental preservation.
Ensure infrastructure servicing that aligns with needs of employment lands.	**Service:** Provides members of the business community with a level of service to effectively undertake business operations.	**Revising our Approach to Growth Management:** Strategically planning for build-out of employment areas will maximize return on infrastructure investment.

| Recognize the value of partnering with First Nations on industrial projects. | **Engagement:** Ensures inclusion and collaboration with all members of the community. | **Revising our Approach to Growth Management:** Inclusion of all potential growth areas. |

Exhibit 23: Economic Development Goals and Other Thematic Objectives

Recommended Goals/Policies	Strategic Priorities	Other Thematic Objectives
Continue to foster home-based businesses and small businesses.	**Environment:** Increases services in the community, reducing the need to travel to adjacent communities.	**Strengthen Natural Environment:** Efficient use of housing and existing community infrastructure.
Develop professional services and service sector in North Cowichan. Build off existing economic and industry strengths. Build off investment in the future Cowichan District Hospital to foster a health-related professional services hub.	**Community:** Development of a professional service sector can support office development in community cores, which leads to growth in amenities and housing. Provides economic incentive for higher density development. **Environment:** Increase of jobs in the community, reducing the need to travel for services in adjacent communities.	**Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience:** High job density in the professional services sector can increase opportunities for transit, walkability, green building and compact residential development. **Respect Individual Community Character:** Sector strengths play a role in fostering individual community character.
Align policy with the CVRD regarding tourism investment and civic facilities in North Cowichan.	**Engagement:** Collaboration with different levels of government can leverage regional advantages for local tourism initiatives.	**Strengthen Natural Environment:** Opportunities for economic development in sustainable sectors, including tourism and agriculture.
Understand the role of Airbnb in the community in supporting tourism objectives, while minimizing negative impacts on housing affordability.	**Housing:** Ensures impact on the housing sector is minimized. **Economy:** Can provide supplemental income for households. Increases tourism opportunities for more cost sensitive consumers.	**Revising our Approach to Growth Management:** Ensures impact on housing industry is minimized.
Ensure development sites in the Bell McKinnon Plan are financially viable for development given zoning requirements.	**Engagement:** Financial testing and liaising with the development community regarding the viability of building requirements will ensure the Bell McKinnon Plan captures regional share of employment growth.	**Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience:** High job density in a community core can increase opportunities for transit, walkability, green building and compact residential development.
Link projected job growth to likely build-out horizon of Bell McKinnon Plan, University Village employment lands sites.	**Community:** Ensures efficient build-out of local area plans.	**Revising our Approach to Growth Management:** Ensures community activation and capital expenditure is prioritized in build-out of local area plans.

| Monitor the local to regional commercial inventory.

Minimize the export of local and region serving retail.

Review success factors for mixed use developments in commercial cores; Chemainus, Crofton, Duncan's South End. | **Environment:** Increasing retail services in the community reduces the need to travel to adjacent communities.
Community: Retail in urban cores in an important factor contributing to community character.
Economy: Specialty retail contributes to tourism objectives. | **Respect Individual Community Character:** Local and region serving retail plays a role in fostering individual community character. |

Exhibit 24: Housing and Community Goals and Other Thematic Objectives

Recommended Goals/Policies	Strategic Priorities	Other Thematic Objectives
Develop build-out scenarios for local area plans to better manage growth and coordinate infrastructure and delivery of community amenities.

Increase opportunities for high density development. | **Environment, Service:** Build-out scenarios for local area plans are important to efficiently allocate land demand and capital spending on infrastructure and servicing. | **Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Resilience:** Efficient build-out of communities will minimize pressure on growth outside of the UCB. Moving the share of development toward higher density development near amenities will also reduce car trips and improve efficiency of land use. |
| Increase supply of purpose-built rental units.

Increase supply of all purpose-built rental unit types, bachelor, one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units. | **Housing:** Increasing the supply of purpose-built rental units will increase housing options for residents, increase security of tenure and provide options for lower income residents. | **Respect Individual Community Character:** Purpose-built rental projects, particularly mixed use apartment projects, can activate a community core and increase demand for local services and amenities. |
| Undertake financial testing of viability of affordable housing. Define what rents constitute affordable housing.

Understand measures required to make affordable housing projects financially feasible. | **Housing:** Strategic affordable housing policy which takes into account the difficult financial realities of this form of development increases the likelihood of project success. This will increase the supply of housing options for lower income residents. | **Revising our Approach to Growth Management:** Ensures housing options for all members of the community. |

Report

Date	June 17, 2020		File: 6480-30 2019.01
			Prospero No: SPP00040
To	Committee of the Whole		
From	Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator		Endorsed:
Subject	OCP Volunteers Membership Appointment		

Purpose

To provide an update on the membership of the two OCP Volunteer Groups (the OCP Advisory Committee and the Ambassador Teams) and to discuss options for appointment or replacement members.

Background

The framework for the OCP Volunteer Groups was established when Council endorsed the OCP Engagement Strategy (the "Strategy") in July, 2019. An open call for volunteers was held in fall 2019 from which Council appointed members with qualifications consistent with the terms of reference outlined in the Strategy.

Council originally appointed 13 members to the OCP Advisory Committee (membership is limited to 14 members under the Terms of Reference) in 2019. One member who was selected with experience in social planning, health and affordable housing, has since resigned.

There are eight Community Ambassadors Teams, each representing a geographic community in North Cowichan. This group initially consisted of 19 members (membership is not limited in the terms of reference). Since the initial appointments were made, four of the ambassador positions have been vacated. As a result the Quamichan, Berkey's Corner and South End Centre areas are now under represented given that Quamichan and Berkey's Corner are the two most populated areas of North Cowichan.

Discussion

Committee Terms:
Council originally selected volunteers to include representatives from various sectors and from all of North Cowichan's communities. The OCP Volunteer Groups have raised the matter of vacancies at recent meetings, and the Municipality has recently received requests from some groups interested in participating on the OCP Advisory Committee. Members have proposed replacing vacant positions with members from under-represented backgrounds, to represent diversity in ways other than geographic and sectoral representation, such as ethnic diversity, a youth perspective, or an increased representation of indigenous residents (i.e. North Cowichan residents living off-reserve).

The current terms of reference for the OCP Volunteer Groups do not explicitly address these forms of diversity. However, Council could consider such perspectives and backgrounds when appointing new members.

Timing
The timing to recruit new volunteers is opportune, given the engagement process is somewhat nascent. It is possible that we may lose members from these groups as we proceed further with the OCP Update project. There may come a time, later in the project, when volunteers have developed a working relationship and built up project momentum that it may no longer be suitable to bring on new members. Our research into other communities that have utilized advisory groups in community plan developments, identified this as a potential project risk.

Options

Staff suggest the following options to address membership renewal:

Option 1:
Maintain the status quo and adopt a position to not replace members that resign or are terminated. Operationally this is the simplest option, but it may compromise the capacity to involve and engage the community to the degree originally envisioned. The project is about to move into the heaviest period of community engagement and having multiple community ambassadors in each community over the next six months, as originally intended, should improve community participation in the project.

Option 2:
Make no changes to the Terms of Reference and have an open search for new volunteers.

In this option, Council would ask all OCP Volunteer Groups to assist in seeking new members for each of the Quamichan, Berkey's Corner, and South End Centre teams, and an Advisory Committee member with a focus on social planning, and affordable housing issues.

The application process would be open to anyone who wishes to apply through the application form, and promotion of the call would take place through cross-promotion in the engagement plan with final appointment made by Council.

Recommendation

That it be recommended to Council:

That staff initiate call for replacement volunteers to participate on the OCP Advisory Committee, or as an OCP Ambassador on either of the Quamichan, Berkey's Corner, and South End Centre teams.

Report

Date	June 17, 2020	File: 6480-30 2019.01 Prospero No: SPP00040
To	Committee of the Whole	
From	Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator	Endorsed:
Subject	OCP Update – Engagement Plan	

Purpose

To present the OCP Update Engagement Plan for review and comment.

Background

The OCP Engagement Plan was identified as one of four deliverables for Phase II of the OCP Update project.

Discussion

Expectations and guidelines for the engagement plan are as follows:
- The engagement plan will identify key stakeholders; articulate objectives; integrate with the project timeline; outline engagement goals, methods, tools and levels of engagement for each deliverable; and describe commitments for reporting throughout and at the conclusion of each project deliverable;
- Engagement will support the project goal to undertake a community-driven project to review and update the current North Cowichan Official Community Plan in a way that better addresses local area planning and modernizes the plan in the face of policy, demographic, environmental and technological change;
- The engagement plan will be developed collaboratively with the OCP Advisory Group, Community Ambassador Teams, the OCP Project Steering Committee, and input from stakeholder representatives;
- The engagement plan will include a communication plan that effectively uses visual media to engage and inform the community over the course of the engagement period; and
- Engagement will be primarily focused on residents of North Cowichan.

Staff believe that this draft document sets a course to achieve these expectations.

The attached Engagement Plan was presented to the OCP Advisory and the Community Ambassador Committees, and their final comments will be summarized in a presentation at the meeting (workshop). In addition, the Project Steering Committee is providing comment on the Engagement Plan, which will also be summarized during the presentation.

Feedback received during this workshop will be used to finalize the document. The final Engagement Plan document will reflect all of the input presented at the meeting and received from Council for acceptance by the Director of Planning and Building (Project Director), with the anticipated public launch of the OCP commencing in July.

Recommendation

That the Committee of the Whole receive the draft OCP Engagement Plan for its review and comment.

Attachment: OCP Engagement Plan

135

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

North Cowichan Official Community Plan

thinkforward
North Cowichan Community Plan

Prepared by: MODUS Planning, Design & Engagement Inc.

Version: 3 (DRAFT)

Report Date: 15 June 2020

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

WHY WE ARE ENGAGING

CONTEXT

In March 2019, the North Cowichan Council adopted a Strategic Plan that sets out Council's focus and strategic priorities for the 2019-2022 term and beyond. One of the Strategic Plan's key actions is to re-write the 2011 Official Community Plan, which will form the basis for new and updated local area plans throughout the diverse communities of North Cowichan. Council has also endorsed an OCP Engagement Strategy that includes the creation of an OCP Advisory Group and eight Community Ambassador Teams to reach as many voices and perspectives as possible.

The goal of the OCP project is to undertake a community driven review and update of the current OCP to better address local area planning and to modernize the OCP in the face of policy, demographic, environmental and technological changes. Concerns due to COVID-19 will also be addressed and broadened to cover other possible public health emergencies.

Key to the success of this process is good policy alignment with Federal, Provincial and Regional policy direction and data, including the Cowichan 2050 Regional Collaboration Framework. The primary outcome will be a revised OCP that reflects local values and expectations related to growth and development in North Cowichan.

COVID-19 CONTEXT

We are currently living in unprecedented times that will impact our efforts to engage with the public and the OCP volunteers. Not only because there may be physical distancing measures still in place during this engagement window, but because of the anxiety that might prevent individuals participating in person for quite some time.

Because of these concerns on March 18, 2020 Council implemented a 90-day pause on public engagement due to the COVID-19 crisis. On April 15, 2020, Council decided to reconsider this pause, and directed staff to liaise with the OCP consultants to explore ways to resume engagement digitally in a safe and fulsome way. On May 6, 2020 Council asked staff to engage with the OCP volunteers on the Engagement Plan, specifically about moving ahead with digital engagement. We met with the OCP Volunteers on June 5 and June 11, 2020 to seek their input.

The COVID-19 pandemic and required public health measures necessitate a thoughtful, intentional approach to online engagement until it is safe to resume in-person activities and events. Information and requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic are changing daily and while it is difficult to plan for engagement during this crisis, we have provided options to in-person engagement where possible.

When considering virtual engagement during this time we need to be sensitive to the digital divide, how digital engagement might amplify existing discrimination. We must also be sensitive to the state of mind

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

of the public and volunteers. In light of these challenges the following principles guide our work in this time:

- Assess and be sensitive to the state of mind and competing priorities that may impact ability to engage and proactively address barriers to participation
- Provide mixed interactive virtual methods (online, by phone, by mail) to access different audiences
- Pay attention to accessibility of online methods and mobilize advocates or specific supports to increase participation
- Create safe spaces for online participation by establishing ground rules and active moderation

Our Engagement Plan is designed for virtual events and meetings for the next few months and provides some ideas on engagement options that follow physical distancing requirements. As we move into the various phases outlined by the Province in managing the transition to our new normal and physical distancing and self-isolation requirements begin to relax, we may conduct some smaller in person activities.

To provide further context for engagement during the pandemic a research study by Hill + Knowlton Strategies on *Public Consultation & Engagement in the Era of COVID-19* (March 27-29, 2020) provides some insight and direction that we will apply to the OCP process:

- 61% of respondents believe that engagement with local government is more important now
- 79% believe that government consultations online can be as effective as in-person
- 58% agree that engaging citizens on issues not related to COVID-19 is still important at this time.

Further, respondents had the following suggestions for effective engagement:

- 81% asked for objective fact-based information on the issues
- 79% asked for the ability to ask questions of subject-matter experts
- 77% asked for the opportunity to hear arguments from various sides of an issue

Online surveys and discussion forums were the most appealing platforms with the ideal length taking under one hour.

The top five barriers to online consultations included:

- Being too shy to voice opinions (29%)
- Being reluctant to voice my opinions (24%)
- Lack of time (24%)
- Lack of interest or motivation (23%)
- Access to appropriate technology (22%)

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

NORTH COWICHAN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

In July 2019, Council endorsed the OCP Engagement Strategy. The Engagement Strategy includes a distinct framework to engage both the North Cowichan community and Council and staff, see the graphic below. The engagement framework and approach is intended to create internal (organizational) and external (community) ownership of the OCP. The OCP will be shaped by a diverse community and an inter-disciplinary staff approach. While staff and Council involvement is extremely important the focus of the Engagement Plan is on engagement with the community (i.e. external engagement).

Community (External)	Organization (Internal)
Advisory Group of North Cowichan focused district leaders from various sectors and communities	**Project Steering Committee** of senior leaders representing each department who will provide strategic engagement and promotion of the plan
Ambassador Teams champion local communities	**Project Team** of staff who will prepare technical information and draft policies for inclusion in the OCP

Figure 2 : Engagement Framework from Council's Engagement Strategy

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with the local First Nations will be built at the government to government level i.e. the municipality (rather than consultants) will approach each First Nation to enquire about their capacity and interest in participation in the OCP process. By using this approach, we acknowledge the varying capacities of individual nations whose traditional territory intersects the boundary of North Cowichan. The municipality will work to build a relationship with each Nation, with an openness to acknowledge unique needs of each Nation.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The following engagement objectives provide clear directions which shape the actions and tactics.

AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

- **Raise broad awareness** of the planning process, what an Official Community Plan is and why it is being reviewed and updated (note: this has already started in Phase 1)
- **Provide clear information** about key issues and opportunities; and
- **Build a shared understanding** of what the OCP will look like 'on the ground.'

OPPORTUNITY & INPUT

- **Provide a range of meaningful engagement opportunities** for the public to learn about the project, share input, and participate in conversations around key issues.
- **Gather ideas and input** from a diverse range of community members and stakeholders to inform the OCP update.

PROCESS & ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Document our process** with clear and transparent information about what we did, who participated, what we heard through engagement activities and how input was used to influence the OCP update.

The Municipality has also identified the following procedural objectives for the OCP project:

1. **Vetted Deliverables and Workshops**
   - Present all deliverables and workshops first to the OCP Advisory Group, then to the Project Steering Committee, then to Council, prior to sign-off by the Project Director. In this way, Council and the Project Director benefit from insight of these OCP engagement groups.
   - The Community Ambassador Teams provide local knowledge in the planning and design of public consultation processes, and deliverable development.

2. **Meaningful Public Consultation**
   - Undertake public and stakeholder consultation in consideration of the vetted deliverables and workshops objective.
   - Maximize use of Community Ambassador Teams in the development and execution of public consultations.
   - Residents and community partners (i.e. businesses and not-for-profits) understand what the OCP is and why it is important and have influenced the development of the OCP.

3. **Project Alignment**
   - The project works to align with and set the stage for success in other major policy projects under development or revision through the project life cycle.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

4. **Creating an Accessible Plain Language Plan and Planning Process**
   - The planning process, and the Plan itself, and any other project deliverables use accessible language and avoids technical jargon.
   - Clearly define the application of all plan elements (policies, maps, etc.).

5. **Intergovernmental Consultation**
   - Consistent and appropriate consultation is undertaken at key stages of the project plan.
   - Consultation processes are designed and executed in a way that generates useful input.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Based on the International Association of Public Participation, we suggest using these proven engagement principles to guide the OCP project:

1. Participation is **meaningful** - the questions used are genuine and the input gathered impacts the policy, plan, program, design, or service in question.
2. Participation is **scoped and scaled** appropriately to the issue's importance (or potential impacts), degree of conflict possible, and the diversity of opinion it may engender.
3. Participation is **informed** - framing of the issues and sharing of research, facts and options supports thoughtful contributions for all concerned.
4. Participation starts **early and continues** throughout the process - input opportunities are integrated into all stages.
5. **Active outreach** is designed to reach those most likely to be interested in or impacted by the project - awareness raising and "go-to-them" approaches are key.
6. **Diverse voices** are heard and conflict is reduced - a range of tools helps to access a wide range of information, ideas and opinions and is not restricted to the 'usual suspects'.
7. The process is **transparent and communication-rich** - sharing of information/options, documenting input received, communicating resulting decisions and actions.
8. The process is **sufficiently resourced** by the organization - human and financial assets are assigned, while capacity limits are respected.
9. Ensure **proper roles** for individual residents, stakeholder and community groups, municipal staff, and council members in designing processes, gathering input, making decisions, and taking action.
10. The **cultural context** of participation must be appropriate, relevant and recognize diversity.
11. The process helps build **organizational and community capacity** for participation, dialogue and collaboration and supports cross-learning and learning-by-doing, taking a long-term view."

An additional to the principle that has emerged from Council's recent directive is:

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

Engagement should be conducted with due regard for **individuals' safety and should be consistent with public health orders regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Council's Strategic Plan includes Engagement as a strategic priority which is relevant to the OCP engagement:

- Through collaborative relationships with other governments, Indigenous peoples, stakeholder partners and engaging the community at large, we achieve optimum outcomes for all.

KEY CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum describes the various levels of participation and the public's role in any public participation process. The level of participation will vary throughout the project and will depend on the objective for each stage of the process. For example, early on, we will be looking to simply "Inform" residents and stakeholders about the process. This will quickly lead to 'Consult" and 'Involve" on future issues and ideas and "Collaborate" with the OCP Ambassadors and Advisory Group. While there will be many opportunities for the public and stakeholders to influence the OCP, we will stay within the input and engagement zone (see graphic below) with the public. Council will be the final decision-maker.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.	To work with public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	"We will keep you informed."	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."

INPUT ZONE   ENGAGEMENT ZONE

International Association of Public Participation

Figure 3: IAP2's Spectrum on Public Participation

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

It is important to recognize that public and stakeholder engagement is only one stream of influence on the project. The OCP is also influenced by technical expertise and subject to ultimate approval by Council. The diagram below, 'The Weave' shows how this information informs the final decision.
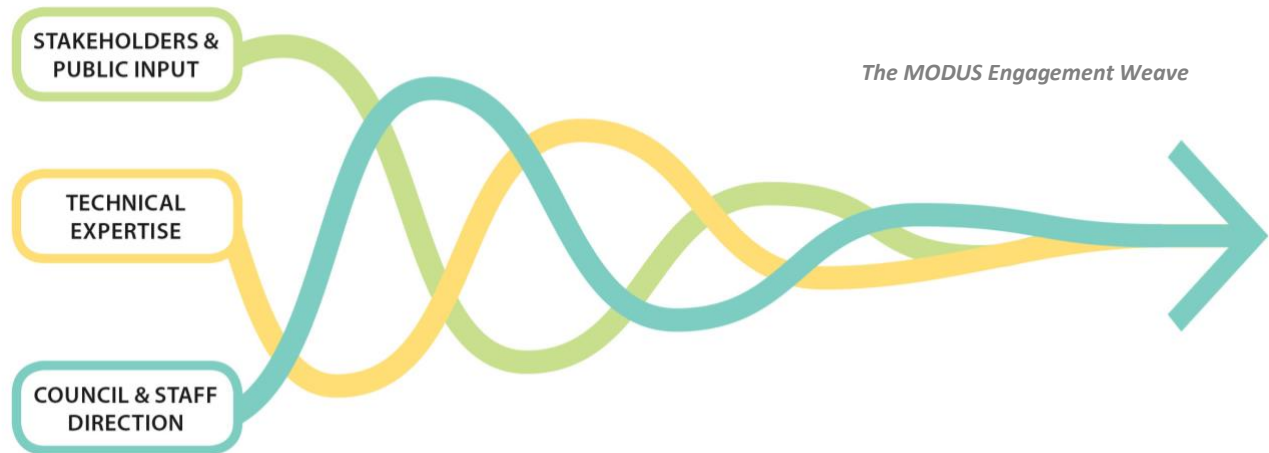

Figure 4: The Engagement Weave

KEY TOPICS FOR ENGAGEMENT

To effectively engage community members and stakeholders and deliver on the project's objectives, it is essential to take a transparent approach to engagement so that expectations are clear and consistent.

Certain elements of the planning process are already established by existing Municipal policy and procedures, as well as other technical considerations. With that in mind the engagement strategy clearly identifies where and how the public and stakeholders can influence the Official Community Plan update. The Municipality has already identified the following thematic objectives that will frame the OCP Update:

1. Revising our Approach to Growth Management
2. Respect Individual Community Character
3. Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation, and Resilience
4. Strengthen Natural Environment
5. Consider Employment and Economic Changes.

Through the OCP process more thematic objectives may be identified such as 'social resilience and well being', particularly given the COVID-19 context.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

WHO WE ARE ENGAGING WITH

This process will seek to involve a broad range of community members and stakeholders to ensure a diversity of views and interests are represented. The 'engagement staircase' shows the progression to implementation.
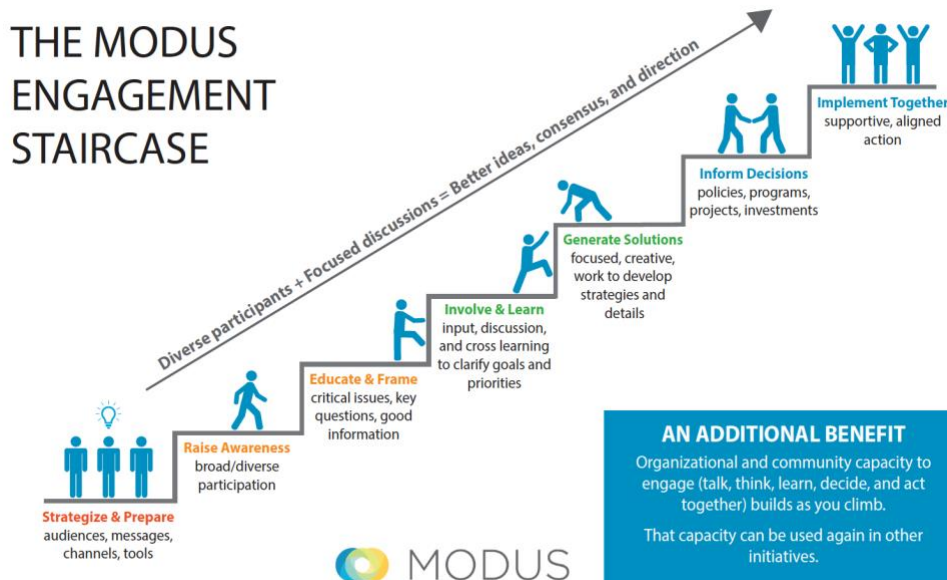

Figure 5: The Engagement Staircase

AUDIENCES

MUNICIPALLY APPOINTED GROUPS

OCP Advisory Group's purpose is to provide advice to the OCP steering committee and consultants through all phases of the community planning process. It consists of community members with experience in key sectors: climate, small business, industry, transportation, health, education, housing, agriculture, water, community design, forestry heritage, arts & culture.

The Advisory Group operates under the following principles in carrying out the functions and activities associated with advising formulation of the Official Community Plan for North Cowichan.

- Transparency –Transparency is built on the free flow of information and ensures access to relevant, timely and reliable information.
- Respect – Respect is the appreciation of individual participation in the Advisory Group process in a manner acceptable among members.
- Accountability – Accountability is the requirement to accept responsibility for carrying out assigned roles.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

- Consensus – Consensus is a commitment to work towards general agreement on matters considered by the group.
- Communication – Members will commit to regular meetings and will respond to any other communication in a timely manner.

Within the context of COVID-19 we will need to meet virtually until it is safe to have in person meetings.

Community Ambassadors Teams represent the various unique geographic communities within North Cowichan. The purpose of each is (1) to gather, consolidate and feed community-specific information into OCP policies; and, (2) to review draft OCP directions and policies for community impact and relevance. The Ambassador Teams will represent the diverse segments of the community and include individuals who represent the diversity and local interests of the community. The above principles apply to this group.

EXETERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

External stakeholders are defined here as individuals, groups, or representatives of organizations (including other government agencies, business interests, and community groups, and residents).

To help determine how we will communicate and engage different groups, a 'stakeholder mapping' exercise was completed with the OCP Advisory Group and Community Ambassador Teams at their orientation in October 2019. In this exercise, stakeholders were identified in order to inform the engagement strategy. This list and outreach tactics will continue to be built upon with further discussions with staff, Council and the OCP volunteers.

We will group, expand, and organize the stakeholders into the following categories which will inform our engagement tactics and specific methods to reach out to these groups:

- **Collaborate:** High interest and high influence groups who will be strongly encouraged to attend our events and to help share information with their networks and encourage others to participate.
- **Involve:** High interest and low influence groups will be invited to our events and encouraged to participate in our surveys and share information with their networks
- **Keep Informed:** High influence and low interest groups will be kept up to date and encouraged/invited to participate in our events and surveys

The **'general public'** also includes many different subsets of people and groups. These people and groups typically take extra efforts to reach as they require the project team/ volunteers to meet them where they are in the community, rather than inviting them to typical open house style evenings. We can plan the process to include several activities that will seek to reach a broad and diverse range of participants including:

- A range of age groups (youth, young adults, families, seniors)
- People who get around by different transportation methods (pedestrians, people on bikes, transit users, drivers)

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

- People who live or work in the study area or nearby (residents, commuters, etc.)
- People with mobility challenges (walkers, mobility scooters, wheelchairs, strollers)
- "Seldom heard" populations (homeless / at-risk, women and children, new immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities). This may include translating documents/ survey and going to venues to connect with people directly to get their input on surveys.

KEY INTERESTS & CONSIDERATIONS

Council's Strategic Plan identified a number of key trends and issues that are important considerations in the OCP update

Positive Trends

- New recreational facilities
- Growing culture and diversity
- Focusing development within urban containment boundary and greater collaboration with developers
- Increased focus on the environment, tourism, agriculture, arts and culture
- Revitalization of core communities
- Increased retail opportunities
- Enhanced community and Indigenous consultation
- Growing public participation in local governance
- Use of local expertise for work within the community

Challenging Trends

- Loss of high-paying natural resource jobs
- Urban sprawl
- Consistent application of urban containment boundary
- Environmental degradation
- Increasing income disparity
- Opioid crisis
- Challenge of communicating Council's vision to the community
- Lack of affordable housing

Key Future Issues

- Responding to all facets of climate change
- Limiting environmental degradation
- Cleaning-up industrial brownfield sites
- Enhancing community planning
- Enhancing asset management
- Crime
- Attracting and retaining skilled workers
- North Cowichan's popularity as a retirement destination

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

- Homelessness, and capacity of homeowners to pay property taxes
- Potential loss of industrial tax base
- Increasing costs for local governments

To add to this list and to help determine local interests and considerations for engagement on the OCP in North Cowichan, we identified the following opportunities and challenges with the staff group at our initial meeting. These included:

- Community Boundaries
- Current OCP
  - Current OCP has lots of good, relevant content but is bulky and hard to navigate. Needs to focus and streamline and be directive
  - We need policies and goals that are attainable. Current OCP has 60 indicators.
  - There is 2015 Baseline Report that review progress against many indicators
- Growth Management
- Climate Action
- Housing affordability
- Community Wellbeing
- Regional Alignment
- Transportation Planning

The OCP Advisory Group and Community Ambassador's kick-off session included brainstorming the following issues and opportunities:

Issues:

- agriculture key to rural character and economy (food security)
- growth - different communities have different ideas unique "grow own way"
- outside forces drive growth (city folk/refugees)
- services/roads for populations
- lack of affordable housing
- road capacity study/maple bay road
- safety security/crime
- water, flood and groundwater
- seniors housing/aging in place
- urban sprawl and high density

Opportunities:

- create a unified view of District
- alternative and active transportation
- reconciliation and treaty making
- railroad corridor as connector
- renewable energy
- how to plan/ encourage for diverse population

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

Further questions, like the ones below will be asked of the public and stakeholders through the OCP process:

1. What are the top issues the updated OCP should address? Why are these important to you?
2. What's the biggest opportunity you see for the OCP?
3. What would be a realistic outcome you'd like to see? (what would be different? what would success look like?)
4. Do you have any concerns about updating OCP?
5. What's the best way to engage you and your network? (e.g., newsletters to use to help get the word out, existing events that we might be able to coordinate on? Can you put us in touch with the right person?)
6. Who else do you think is important to engage in this process? How could we best involve them?

HOW WE ARE ENGAGING

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The OCP update includes four phases. MODUS is leading phase 2 & 3. Public engagement detailed in this Engagement Plan occurs in three of these phases, as per the diagram on the next page.

- **Phase 1: Project Background** consisted of background research, the creation of Background paper, and the start of the project. This included creating an OCP Advisory Group of volunteer residents, and Community Ambassador Teams for each community within North Cowichan.
- **Phase 2: Community Vision & Local Character Mapping** includes engaging on policy gaps, vision and goals, and community character and values.
- **Phase 3: Plan Development** focuses on creating the updated OCP. We will develop and engage on growth scenarios and policy directions, including options and selection of urban containment boundaries, land use designation, and growth targets, and development of final policies and maps.
- **Phase 4: Plan Consideration** will include the final revisions to the updated OCP and the legislative process to adopt the OCP, including a Public Hearing and Council Meeting.

PHASE 2

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Summary: The Engagement Plan identifies key stakeholders, articulates objectives, integrates with the project timeline, outlines engagement methods, tools and levels of engagement, and describes commitments for reporting. We have created a separate Digital Engagement Plan with alternative tactics to respond to the COVID-19 crisis that is attached to this document. The initially planned workshops scheduled for March 12 and 13, 2020 on the Engagement Plan with the Steering Committee and OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors were cancelled due to COVID-19. Council had the

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

opportunity to provide input on the Plan framework on March 12, 2020. On May 6, 2020 Council reviewed the Digital Engagement Proposal.

Approximate Date: March to May 2020

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	March 12 & May 6 (digital engagement) & mid-June
Steering Committee	N/A	No meeting due to COVID.	N/A
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	N/A	Rescheduled due to COVID-19- Virtual meeting	Early June
Public Engagement	N/A	N/A	N/A

POLICY GAP ANALYSIS

Summary: The Policy Gap Analysis will include a thorough background review of all relevant policies and strategies and include analysis and general recommendations for initiatives to be considered through the OCP planning process. This will include proposed policy changes to the OCP document, necessary internal resources, and refinement to the work plan. As part of development, we will facilitate an opportunity with the Steering Committee for their input. Once the Policy Gap Analysis is complete, we will have a virtual meeting with Council and the OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors to present the Policy Gap Analysis Report. We initially envisioned an online survey with the public during this phase but due to the COVID-19 crisis this has been delayed. We suggest including questions on the gap analysis during vision and goals public engagement.

Approximate Date: April to June 2020

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Mid-June
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Mid June
OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Early June
Public Engagement	N/A	No general public engagement due to COVID (will be included in next stage)	N/A

VISION AND GOALS

Summary: Subject to Council approval, late June to July we propose a 'light' outreach to the public to re-introduce the OCP project and help them become familiar with the digital tools that we propose to use, such as Place Speak. This timeline will also allow extra time for people with competing priorities to review materials when they are able. This deliverable will include the first broad public engagement period, with an online survey via Placespeak, as well as further engagement with key internal and external stakeholders and decision-makers. The timing will depend on Council's comfort with proceeding with public engagement.

This period would involve updating the website with the background papers, social media to generate interest, mail drops, local media outreach and newsletter updates. We suggest targeting the end of July for our first public survey which gives the public time to become familiar with the digital tools and the context for the OCP update.

During this deliverable, we will confirm principles, assets and challenges, and establish a vision statement, goals, and identify critical themes to consider.

Approximate Date: June-August 2020

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Late July
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Late June
OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Mid July
Public Engagement	Notices with property tax assessment Social media Website update Press release for local media Print advertisement (posters) Advertisement on radio Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Online survey via PlaceSpeak	July-August

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND VALUES

Summary: For this deliverable, we will identify unique aspects that identify individual community-character and values, creating profiles for eight communities (including boundaries, characters, and individual values). These will start to inform community planning and policy development. To do this, we will engage with members in each community, using a community-driven approach, with workshops (virtual or in-person) in each community and online character mapping. In addition, we are proposing self-guided exercises to help the public get fresh air and exercise and look at their community from the perspective of the project's thematic objectives. This might include photo and video submission, self-guided tours, and other activities that people can do while practicing social distancing.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

We will also facilitate interactive workshops with the Steering Committee and OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors. Ambassadors may also help facilitate the workshops in each community, if feasible.

Approximate Date: September to October 2020

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Mid September
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Late September
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Print advertisement (posters) Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Online character mapping with visual preference survey on PlaceSpeak or Workshop with community mapping and walking tour	October

PHASE 3

GROWTH SCENARIO OPTIONS

Summary: During this deliverable, we will create growth scenarios for North Cowichan. We will engage the public, Advisory Group, and Ambassadors on growth scenario options, where growth should go in the District, and potential impacts for the different scenarios. To do this, we will facilitate interactive workshops, and create "kitchen table" workbooks (facilitated by Ambassadors as well as publicly available on the website) to reach a larger number of residents, including those unable to join the interactive workshops.

Approximate Date: November to January 2021

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct Invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Late November
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Early November
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Mid December
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Print advertisement (posters) Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Virtual or in person Focus group interactive workshops on growth scenarios "Kitchen table" workbooks (hosted by Ambassadors and available online)	January

DRAFT OCP POLICIES

Summary: We will create a framework for the OCP and draft policies for each theme in the OCP. We will engage with the OCP Advisory Committee and Community Ambassadors on discrete pieces of draft OCP policy in order to garner their feedback. Building on the workshop feedback, we will draft policies for each theme/chapter of the OCP. We will then offer a comment period for further feedback on draft policy, and send the draft OCP for referrals to other governmental bodies.

Approximate Date: February to March 2021

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct Invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Late January

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

155

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Steering Committee	Direct Invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Early February
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct invite	In-person interactive workshop on policy options and trade-offs	Mid February
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Advertisement in local media and radio Print advertisement (posters) Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Online survey review of draft OCP at high-level	March
Intergovernmental	Direct email or phone call	Referral of draft OCP	Late March

COMPLETE DRAFT OCP AND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Summary: Based on feedback on the draft OCP, we will revise policies as needed. This phase includes a workshop to Council on the revised draft OCP and implementation tools, intergovernmental referrals, and a presentation of the revised draft OCP to the public.

Approximate Date: April 2021

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct Invite	In-person meeting	Mid April

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Steering Committee	Direct Invite	In-person meeting	Early April
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct Invite	In-person meeting	Early April
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Public presentation of revised draft OCP	Late April
Intergovernmental	Direct email or phone call	Referral of revised draft OCP	April

PHASE 4

FINAL OCP CONSIDERATION

Summary: Based on additional feedback on the draft revised OCP, we will complete final revisions to the OCP. This phase includes the legislatively required public hearing, and final Council Meeting to approve the updated OCP. This phase will be run by the Municipality of North Cowichan, and so further details are not included in this Engagement Plan.

Approximate Date: April to July 2021

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

HOW WE ARE COMMUNICATING

BRANDING

North Cowichan invited submissions from local artists to create a logo and a tagline. The following logo was developed based on submissions and will be included on all public-facing material.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers on the key theme areas that the project will address are now being developed by staff and will be uploaded to the website as useful information and context. They will also use questions to prompt conversations among participants, which is key to engagement success.

KEY MESSAGES

1. **We are updating the District of North Cowichan's Official Community Plan!**
   a. The Official Community Plan is a guide to how we will use our land and manage growth as a community over the next 20-30 years.
   b. Official Community Plans typically cover topics such as housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, parks and recreation, community and social well-being, arts and culture among other important aspects of life in our community.
   c. Official Community Plans reflect what we care about and what we strive to be as a community. These values are directly reflected in the Plan's vision, goals and policies, and will guide decision-making into the future.

2. **Local and global trends may mean that life in North Cowichan may not be the same as it always was. As we "ThinkForward," how might we adapt to the future together?**
   a. The Official Community Plan lays out a roadmap for our community's change over the next 20-30 years. How the world has changed over the past 20-30 years may be an indication of the pace of change we should expect over that time span.
   b. A changing climate may mean rising sea levels, hotter and drier summers with more extreme weather events.
   c. The changing nature of work and an uncertain economy may mean we need different infrastructure to accommodate new businesses and attract new workers
   d. Having a comprehensive plan that reflects our shared values will help us navigate our future together.

3. **Updating the Official Community Plan means thinking forward as a community**

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

    a. At the heart of any Official Community Plan is our community's shared values. Living in North Cowichan, what brings us joy? What makes life challenging? What do we care about now? What might we care about in the future? What will life be like for our children and grandchildren?

    b. Having conversations with our family, friends, neighbours -even those we haven't met yet - will help us discover what these values are.

    c. While we may not always agree, listening and learning with others will help us create a Plan that will allow us to grow together for the years to come.

4. **Let's "ThinkForward" together!**

    a. Have your say on the future of North Cowichan! Visit our [website](#) or [PlaceSpeak](#) for more information.

    b. For more information be sure to like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/northcowichan and/ or Twitter.

    c. Looking for exciting Friday night plans? Host a dialogue with your friends on the future of North Cowichan (virtual connections for now).

    d. What are the top issues the updated OCP should address? Have you thought about how North Cowichan may adapt to rising sea levels and more extreme weather? How will we manage growth in our communities? What is your vision for North Cowichan for the next 20 years? What is unique and special about your community that we need to preserve and protect? What sort of jobs are needed to provide a stable economic base for North Cowichan residents? What impacts will COVID-19 have in planning for our future? Take our survey to share your ideas!

COMMUNICATION TACTICS

Any tools that we use for digital engagement and the information collected will need to meet the requirements of BC FIPPA. We will work with MNC's IT department on this requirement.

OCP PROJECT WEBSITE

The OCP project website will be updated throughout the process, sharing information out and sharing back reports and findings. It will also invite participation in various engagement activities. We recommend the following to make the webpage more successful:

- Create a large button in the Quick Links area during notification periods, and then under Community -> Current Topics -> Official Community Plan
- Include events on the District's calendar
- Locate the webpage under "Your Government" then "Projects & Initiatives" in the navigation
- Include event announcements in the rotating banner on the homepage
- Webpage could include:
  - **Short link:** Link to page should be easy and relate to the brand, like
  - **Video:** quick explainer video would widen participation and understanding

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

- o **Purpose:** Brief introduction to the project
- o **Engagement Process:** Summary of the engagement process, with a visually appealing and simple timeline image describing each stage in high-level terms
- o **Get Involved:** Summary of current opportunities to get involved (i.e. sign up for updates, link to questionnaire, event details)
- o **Background:** Information for the layperson to become more informed of the issues, process, etc.
- o **Contact:** Who to contact for more information

NOTIFICATION TOOLS

PLACESPEAK

PlaceSpeak is a web-based platform used currently by the MNC and has about 3000 registered users. It has number of features (surveys etc.) that we can incorporate into the process.

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

An email newsletter should be maintained, with sign-up forms at all public events and on the website, for people to receive regular updates on the process and engagement opportunities.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The engagement team will provide North Cowichan with a simple social media strategy including content for posts and a schedule of posts.

PRINT MEDIA

The engagement team will work closely with the North Cowichan Communication Team at major stages of the process to provide timely information about public input opportunities and summary reports for circulation in local print media.

Ongoing media relations (press releases, story starters, briefings, photo ops).

FACE TO FACE

Direct interviews with key stakeholders may provide an opportunity for face to face engagement later in the process if deemed safe by public health authorities. Ambassadors will be trained to provide additional opportunities for face to face promotion. There may an opportunity to convene existing seniors, youth, children, parent groups etc. for meetings.

RADIO

Major public events can be advertised on local radio, 30-second ads, road and weather tags, "What's On" calendar of events, digital advertising and interview opportunities are all possible.

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

SIGNAGE

Posters will be considered to ensure community members are aware of the project and opportunities to get involved.

OVERVIEW OF TACTICS FOR ENGAGING & COMMUNICATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION

The risks associated with moving to more online engagement are:

- o Some people don't have access to technology such as computers (need to ensure mixed methods such as mail drops, paper surveys)
- o Engagement is less relationship-focussed than when it is conducted in person
- o People may be distracted and focussed on other priorities right now
- o It may be harder to reach some audiences while we cannot offer in-person activities.

The benefits are that:

- o More people may become more involved since there is less time and travel commitment
- o Engagement may be more accessible for people with mobility challenges
- o Families with young children may have more time/ ability for online engagement rather than attending an event.

Beyond the issues we have described with COVID-19, we think that speaking clearly to the public on planning issues and avoiding jargon will be essential. Clarifying and stressing the benefits of the updated OCP will be key to encouraging participation, as will talking about then most critical issues and trends. Using the strong branding to get awareness in the early days of the project will be essential, as will timely response to inquiries throughout the project. Finally, profiling engagement successes and the inputs of various citizens and groups will build awareness and trust, as will showing progress on substantive issues.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

At the OCP Volunteers sessions the following measures of success were developed:

- • A guiding OCP with a clear implementation plan

PLANNING, DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT

- Bold, creative long-term solutions

- Measurable objectives with clear indicators and review points at regular intervals

- Still as excited about committee and plan in 2021 as we are today

- Engaging physical document with accessible language and visuals and direct quotes

- All opinions are considered

- Clear plan for marginalized communities to be involved.

The Council session on March 12, 2020 garnered the following measures of success:

- Process where community can be proud of outcome

- A plan that all of Council can support

- Full of creative, big ideas for innovative planning

- Transparent and inclusive public engagement

- Full community buy-in

- Broad engagement that includes all of the community

- An inclusive process that values the input of youth as well as all other demographics.

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