

Municipality of North Cowichan

Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams

AGENDA

Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 5:00 p.m.
Electronically

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting, though electronic, is open to the public and all representations to the Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams 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 live stream webcast at www.northcowichan.ca/meetings.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation:

That the OCP Community Ambassador Teams approve the agenda as circulated [or as amended].

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2 - 7

Note: these minutes are also included on the OCP Community Ambassador Teams May 13, 2021 agenda for their consideration.

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the OCP Community Ambassador Teams meetings held June 11, 2020, October 20, 2020 and October 22, 2020 be adopted.

4. BUSINESS

4.1. Welcome - Project Update

4.2. Presentation on Community Character Profiles Staff to Provide Brief Overview of Engagement Results and Procedure in Breakout Sessions

8 - 13

4.3. Community Ambassador Teams Review Profiles – Breakout Sessions

14 - 45

4.4. Report Back – Each Team to Present Results of Discussion

4.5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. ADJOURNMENT

Municipality of North Cowichan
Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams
MINUTES

June 11, 2020, 5:00 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present	Anne Murray, Sheila Kitson, Carreen Unguran, Ken Brown, Wendy MacPherson, Tom Andrews, Cindy Lise, Andrew Wilson, Dave Jackson, Sarah Nelles, Nancy Dower, Christina Godbolt, Carol Donelly, Douglas Hume, Matthew Huotari, David Darwin
Members Absent	Laura Funk, Marita Judson
Consultants Present	Suzy Lunn, Rob Barrs, Vince Verlaan
Staff Present	Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator Mairi Bosomworth, Community Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Chris Hutton called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the OCP Community Ambassador Teams adopt the agenda.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Community Ambassador Team Meeting

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the minutes of the February 24, 2020 Community Ambassador Teams meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Welcome

Introductions and round table

4.2 Project Schedule Overview

The OCP consultants from MODUS provided a presentation and facilitated the workshop with team members and responded to questions and comments regarding the gap

analysis and engagement plan which was the focus of their presentation. Each of the following topics below were covered.

4.3 Engagement Plan

Teams received presentation for information.

4.4 Engagement Tools and Techniques

Teams received presentation for information.

4.5 Gap Analysis

Teams received presentation for information.

4.6 Housekeeping, Wrap Up and Next Steps

Draft gap analysis will be sent to the teams for review.

5. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:01p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Chair

Municipality of North Cowichan

Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams

MINUTES

October 20, 2020, 5:00 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present Gregg Perry, Chair
 Sandy McPherson
 Sheryl Sametz
 Christina Godbolt
 Tim Openshaw
 Dave Jackson
 Ender McDuff
 Margo Young
 Carreen Unguran
 Nancy Dower
 Brielle Varasteh
 Tom Andrews
 Ken Brown
 Mona Kaiser

Staff Present Megan Jordan, Manager of Communications
 Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator
 Mairi Bosomworth, Community Planner
 Anthony Price, Planning Technician

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams approve the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS

3.1 Part One - Conference session with all attendees

3.1.1 Welcome

Name and brief intro.

3.1.2 Introducing Community Character and Values Engagement

A presentation was provided to the teams followed by a discussion.

3.1.3 Presenting Community Character Framework

A presentation was provided to the teams followed by a discussion.

3.1.4 Present example survey/workbook exercise

The survey tool and workbook have not yet been finalized.

3.1.5 Discuss proposed role of Ambassadors

A presentation was provided regarding the role and expectation of the Ambassadors.

3.2 Part Two - Breakout with each community

The teams broke out into four groups, representing each Community Ambassador Team, led by a member from the Planning department. Each team was asked the same questions identified below.

3.2.1 Is this the right area for your community?

3.2.2 Is this the right name for your community?

3.2.3 Discussion of Engagement Framework and Engagement Exercise Questions

3.2.4 Can you tell us your top 3 (natural, built, cultural/heritage) landmarks in your community?

3.2.5 Are there any questions we should not be asking?

3.3 Part Three - Conference session with all attendees

3.3.1 Wrap Up and Next Steps

Summaries of each breakout occurred and the teams then had an opportunity to ask staff any questions they may have.

4. NEW BUSINESS

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 7:02 p.m.

Signed by Chair

Certified by Recording Secretary

Municipality of North Cowichan Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams MINUTES

**October 22, 2020, 5:00 p.m.
Electronically**

Members Present Lisa Hudson, Chair
 Wendy MacPherson
 Marita Judson
 Craig Meredith
 Sheila Kitson
 Cam Campbell
 Caitlin Kenny
 Andrew Wilson
 Laura Funk
 Rhiannon Snaith
 David Messier
 Cindy Lise

Staff Present Megan Jordan, Manager of Communications
 Chris Hutton, Community Planning Coordinator
 Mairi Bosomworth, Community Planner
 Anthony Price, Planning Technician

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Official Community Plan Community Ambassador Teams approved the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS

3.1 Part One - Conference session with all attendees

3.1.1 Welcome

Name and brief intro.

3.1.2 Introducing Community Character and Values Engagement

A presentation was provided to the teams followed by a discussion.

3.1.3 Presenting Community Character Framework

A presentation was provided to the teams followed by a discussion.

3.1.4 Present example survey/workbook exercise

The survey tool and workbook have not yet been finalized.

3.1.5 Discuss proposed role of Ambassadors

A presentation was provided regarding the role and expectation of the Ambassadors.

3.2 Part Two - Breakout with each community

The teams broke out into four groups, representing each Community Ambassador Team, led by a member of the Planning department. Each team was asked the same questions, identified below.

3.2.1 Is this the right area for your community?

3.2.2 Is this the right name for your community?

3.2.3 Discussion of Engagement Framework and Engagement Exercise Questions

3.2.4 Can you tell us your top 3 (natural, built, cultural/heritage) landmarks in your community?

3.2.5 Are there any questions we should not be asking?

3.3 Part Three - Conference session with all attendees

3.3.1 Wrap Up and Next Steps

Summaries of each breakout occurred and the teams then had an opportunity to ask staff any questions they may have.

4. NEW BUSINESS

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 7:03 p.m.

Signed by Chair

Certified by Recording Secretary

1 INTRODUCTION

North Cowichan is comprised of several distinct communities. Each of these communities have their own natural and built elements, history, and values. These define the character of that community and guide the direction of how each will evolve over time.

One of the objectives set for the OCP update is ‘Respecting Individual Community Character’. Community character, within the planning context, refers to the built environment (buildings, street design, pathways etc.) and natural environment (landscapes, views, etc.) found in each community.

In order to respect individual character as we move through the OCP update we must understand it from the community’s perspective. The eight draft profiles in Attachment 2 articulate the unique character of each community from the community member’s perspective and provide insight into values related to change. These profiles are crucial as they will inform the OCP policy development process, providing local knowledge for future strategic plans (agriculture and heritage), local area planning, design guidelines and the zoning bylaw update. Communities most in need of local area planning are: Berkey’s Corner, Quamichan and Maple Bay.

2 SUMMARY

The general findings distilled from the profiles about preferences for land use, development and housing forms provide insight as we move into the growth management phase of the OCP update. They fall under the following categories:

- the **established centres** of the South End Centre, Chemainus and Crofton
- those **communities in transition** on the urban and rural edge such as Berkey’s Corner and Bell McKinnon
- those with an **appetite for change** such as Maple Bay
- those that have seen rapid **development perceived as being ‘out of character’** such as the Quamichan Lake Area, and
- the Rural Areas that need **continued protection** of the natural areas and farmland.

Established Centres

The community input suggests support for low rise multi-family housing over commercial space (mixed use buildings) in the established town centre of the South End Centre, village centres of Chemainus and Crofton. Higher density and growth in the South End Centre are reasonable given its proximity to the services and amenities in Duncan. Transitions from mixed-use commercial core includes ground-oriented forms of infill housing that would be suitable for families. Residents were interested in revitalizing centres to help create viable commercial opportunities, to support public realm improvements and to promote liveability for all residents. The local plans for these communities provide sound guidance for moving forward to meet local needs.

Communities in Transition

Communities in transition such as Berkey's Corner would benefit from a local area plan as there appears to be appetite for compact development surrounding a commercial core that supports public realm improvements.

The responses for Bell McKinnon were limited likely due to the fact the community provided input on the Local Area Plan in 2018 spurred on by the hospital development. While some feedback indicated a desire to protect the rural landscape, the majority of respondents were hopeful the vision for a model green growth centre of a vibrant, walkable urban village would be achieved.

Appetite for Change

Maple Bay is another community that could benefit from a local area plan formally recognized by the municipality. Though currently outside the urban containment boundary and outside the sewage system, there appears to be appetite for change that would strengthen the village centre with a viable commercial core while still maintaining its rural, coastal charm. Consideration for ground-oriented housing forms that are compatible with local character and site context paired with public realm improvements such water access, pedestrian networks and public gathering spaces would add to the charm and liveability of Maple Bay.

Development Perceived as 'Out of Character'

Quamichan community members value the natural ecosystem, the large rural properties and heritage-lake front buildings and homes. Recent slope slide housing development approved under comprehensive development zones have been perceived as out of character of the rural and lakeside charm of the Quamichan area. Though some residents indicated a desire for a commercial node for local residents the financial viability needs further consideration. The Quamichan Lake Area could benefit from a local area plan.

Continued Protection

Feedback from rural community members has reinforced that the rural areas need continued protection to safeguard the character of natural and agricultural lands, views to forested mountains, fields or oceans, travel on rural roads, working farms and forests. Some opportunity exists to create or enhance gathering places for neighbours and improve pedestrian mobility along rural roads. The rural areas could benefit from the proposed update to the Agriculture Strategic Plan.

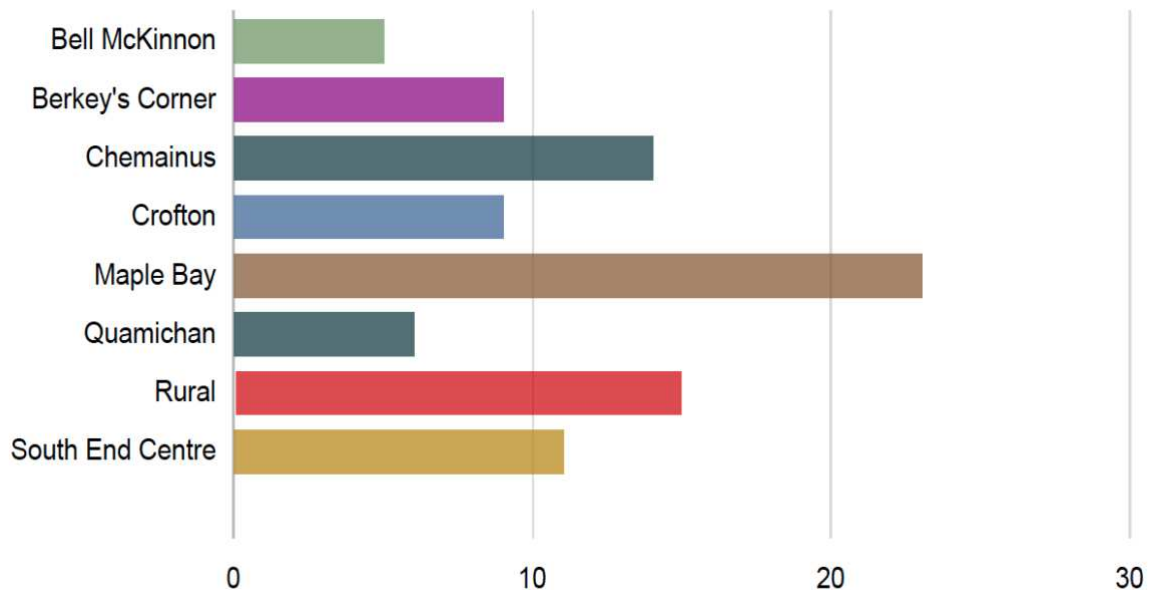
The Character Profiles

The eight draft profiles include a brief summary of the local planning context and a geographic representation of the community's heart or centre. They include the graphic illustrations from the Community Dialogue sessions. They include a description from the community's perspective of the local character of the buildings, streets and pathways, community spaces, natural places and views replete with photo documentation taken by survey respondents. The last section identifies any features or places that are considered 'out of character' and captures the community's ideas of how the character might evolve over time.

3 METHODOLOGY

Community Survey

A community character survey launched on November 23rd 2020 until February 1st 2021, garnering input from 92 community members across North Cowichan. Participants could submit their survey online through Survey123 or as a hardcopy. The Quamichan Lake Neighbourhood Association submitted a written submission. Participant breakdown by community is denoted below.



Residents answered questions about the built form and natural features that exist where they live, providing values-based feedback about the current and future state of their community. There was an opportunity to pin a location on a map denoting valued community landmarks and residents were encouraged to submit photos further identifying preferred built form styles, and important community landmarks and natural areas.

Community Dialogues

Two community dialogues were held on January 26th and January 27th 2021 through Zoom, facilitated by MODUS and North Cowichan staff. A total of 60 people attended the two sessions. The majority of attendees were from Maple Bay, Berkey's Corner, Quamichan and the rural areas. The attendees were split into break out rooms based on their community. A facilitator and notetaker used a Google Jamboard (see the graphic to the right) to guide the discussion on a series of questions related to the built and natural environment. The sessions were further documented by MODUS' graphic illustrators. The illustrations are included in Attachment 1.

The Jamboard is titled "thinkforward BELL MCKINNON" and features a "North Cowichan Community Plan 2020" logo. It is divided into sections for community input:

- HEART**: Includes a red heart icon and a wavy line.
- TOP 3 Ideas**: A section for recording top ideas.
- BUILDINGS, STREETS, PATHWAYS + TRAILS (Look and Feel)**: Accompanied by a blue building icon.
- GATHERING SPACES, PARKS, PLAZAS + WHERE DO YOU FEEL MOST CONNECTED TO NATURE?**: Accompanied by a green leaf icon.
- WHAT PHYSICAL OR NATURAL FORMS DETRACTS or TAKES AWAY from the character?**: Accompanied by a yellow warning triangle icon.
- CHANGES + ADAPTATIONS for the future?**: Accompanied by a circular arrow icon.

A small map of the Bell McKinnon area is located in the top right corner.

4 CONCLUSION

The character profiles document community members' dedication and love for their communities. Their thoughtful comments and insightful photos tell a tale of what makes each of their communities special. These profiles lay a foundation as we move forward with the OCP update, specifically how to address the important topic of growth management. The question of whether these communities will change is indisputable. The question of how is one we must get right.

ATTACHMENT 1: CHARACTER MAP OF THE COMMUNITIES

thinkforward

North Cowichan Community Plan



COMMUNITY CHARACTER

BELL MCKINNON

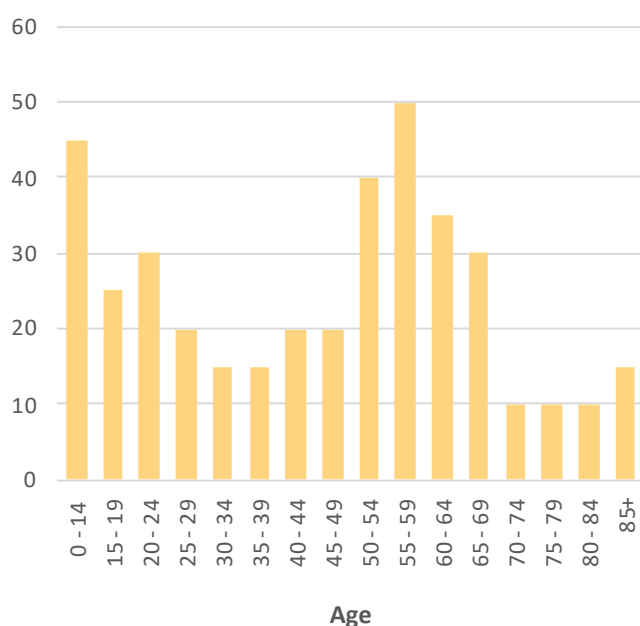
COMMUNITY CHARACTER PROFILE

Introduction

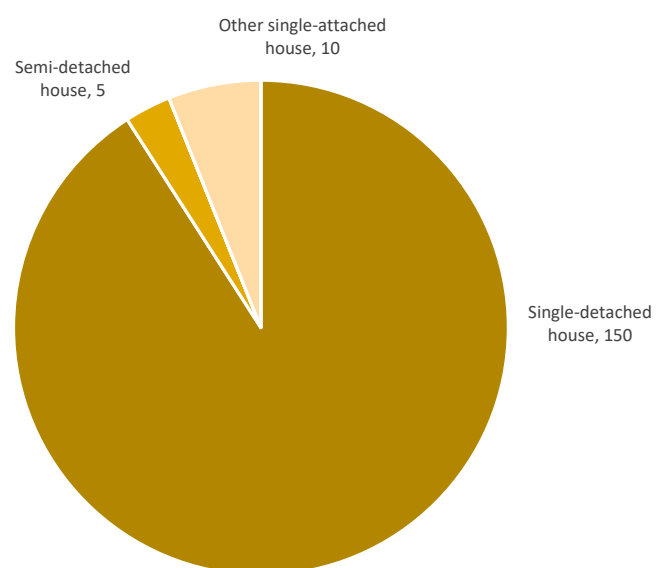
The Bell McKinnon corridor runs parallel and east of the Trans-Canada Highway, bisected by Herd Road and bordered by Drinkwater Road to the south.

The total population of Bell McKinnon is 395 people with the median age being 51.1 years. A large majority of dwelling types (150) are single-detached homes, while a very small minority are a combination of other single-detached houses and semi-detached houses. This community has no apartments (5+ storeys), row houses, apartments or flats in a duplex, apartments (4 or fewer storeys) or movable dwelling types.

Bell McKinnon Community
Demographics - Age



Bell McKinnon Community
Demographics - Dwelling Type



Local Planning Context

Bell McKinnon is with the Urban Containment Boundary identified in the 2011 Official Community Plan. Due to poor soil conditions in the Bell McKinnon corridor it was removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Bell McKinnon is currently characterized by a large-format regional shopping centre and highway commercial uses, as well large rural residential lots.

There is currently substantial commercial and medium-density residential development activity. Construction of a new RCMP station is underway.

The Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District purchased 22 acres on Bell McKinnon Road for replacement of the Cowichan District Hospital. The new hospital is forecast to open in 2026.

The 2018 [Bell McKinnon Local Area Plan](#) was prepared to respond to anticipated regional growth over the next 50 years and the new hospital. The plan envisioned "a model green growth centre in the Cowichan Valley that is a vibrant, walkable, urban village that facilitates healthy living in all stages of life."



Heart of the Bell McKinnon

Community members indicated what they considered the heart or centre (their favourite places) of Bell McKinnon. No images or map data were provided for this community. Some felt the heart of the community was at the Cowichan Commons and others felt it was close to Municipal Hall and the Herd Road crossing.

During the 2020/21 Official Community Plan update process, community members generously took time to take photos and talk about the character of the natural and built environment of their community and how this character might evolve over time. This profile compiles this rich and informative community perspective.

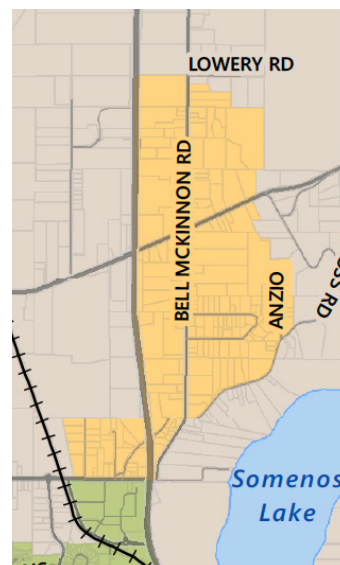
Buildings

Large rural residential lots are anchored by older, rancher-style homes and blend into the tall trees and agricultural landscape of the area. Other buildings include large format and service commercial development along the highway.

Streets and Pathways

Stretches of tree-lined roads characterize the transportation network in Bell McKinnon, supported by rugged paths bordered by thick vegetation. Many agreed that roads that fostered slower vehicle speeds were important to maintain and enhance. Supplementary infrastructure to maintain safe vehicle movement and enhance pedestrian activity is identified in the local plan.

Bell McKinnon is arranged in a linear settlement pattern, with major services and commercial retail running parallel along the Trans Canada Highway. Bell McKinnon, Herd and Drinkwater Roads act as the backbone of the street network, which generally lack residential sidewalks and are characterized by narrow, gravel shoulders along arterials. The car-oriented nature of Bell McKinnon is evidenced by an absence of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, even along updated roadways.



Path



Tree-Lined Paddle Road



All the photos included in this Community profile have been provided by the community members.



I like the soft tree-lined paths



Community Spaces

Rolling agricultural fields beyond the UCB, like those behind Mellor Farm provide ample opportunities for enjoyment of pastoral settings. A marked lack of outdoor plazas and parks, as well as indoor areas, provides opportunity for future development of its community spaces.

Natural Places

There's no lack of greenery in Bell McKinnon as rural lands stretch out in all directions. Areas like Mellor Farm encapsulate this pastoral magic for many, as stands of tall trees buffer up against bright green fields, framed by distant mountains like Mount Prevost. Community members feel connected to nature in Bell McKinnon. The Trans Canada Trail provides accessible outdoor recreation and the forested area behind hall road is equally close to home.

Views

Just as the natural spaces in Bell McKinnon are actively enjoyed, so too are they appreciated from afar. Views of the bucolic landscape as well as Mount Prevost are a defining feature in the area.

“ I appreciate the mature
trees, mountain views,
pastoral areas and Mount
Prevost. ”

Thinking Forward - Resident's Perspectives

Bell McKinnon is on the precipice of change, spurred by increasing regional growth and the anticipated hospital on Bell McKinnon Road. Community members acknowledged that the built environment is certain to shift as urban development increases and look forward to changes that enhance the community.

The Local Area Plan, identifies the creation of a mixed-use village and multi-family housing at a modest scale and a number of other public realm improvements.

A walkable community core characterized by vibrant local retail and independent cafés can support the needs of local residents and the surrounding lands are preserved for recreation, protection of ecosystem and appreciation.

Multi-Family Housing



Mixed-Use Village

“

As the community changes, we need sidewalks, more trees narrowing of the road and traffic circles.

”

“

I support a village similar to those on Saltspring Island near the hospital site

”



CROFTON

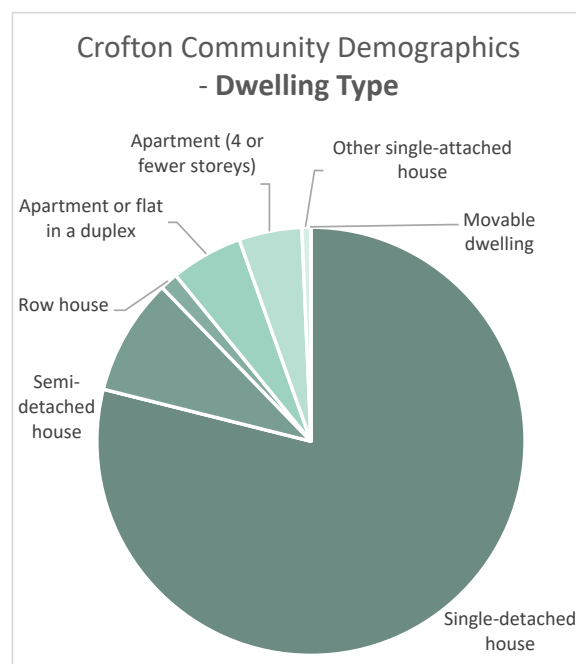
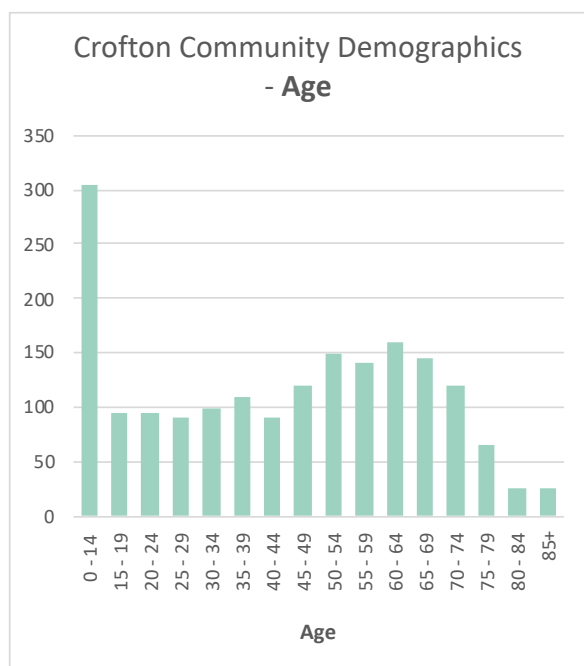
COMMUNITY CHARACTER PROFILE

Introduction

Crofton is a community nestled into the shoreline of Osborne Bay and overlooking Saltspring Island. Its sloping topography offers dramatic views and panoramic vistas. The existing grid road system and gentle slopes in the developed centre of the community creates a highly walkable, pedestrian friendly, village scale and feel. Crofton has a somewhat 'remote' feel, being surrounded on the south by low density rural agricultural uses, on the west by Municipal Forest Reserve, and on the north by Agricultural Land Reserve and the large industrial zone north edge of Crofton.

Historically, the community has undergone significant economic change. In its early days, Crofton was a smelting centre in support of mining on Mt. Sicker. After the smelter closed, the small harbour provided opportunity for fishing operations. In time, forestry activities and the Crofton Mill became the predominate economic generators.

The total population of Chemainus is 1,835 people with the median age being 45.3 years. 79% of the dwelling type here are single-detached homes, while the remaining 21% consists of semi-detached houses, row houses, apartments or flats in a duplex, apartment (4 or fewer storeys) and other single-attached houses.



Local Planning Context

Crofton is within the Urban Containment Boundary identified in the 2011 Official Community Plan (OCP). The 2015 Crofton Local Area Plan outlines the vision, goals, priorities to help shape the direction of the community as it grows and changes over the years.

The vision, principles and goals from the local area plan are still relevant today and have been confirmed through the engagement during the community character phase of the OCP update.



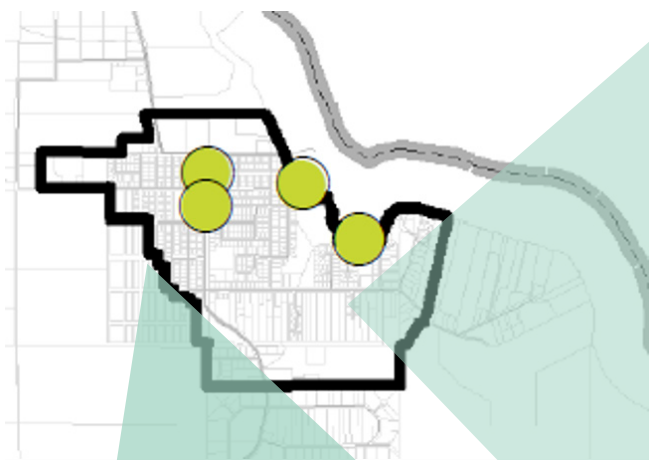
During the 2020/21 Official Community Plan update process, community members generously took time to take photos and talk about the character of the natural and built environment of their community and how this character might evolve over time. This profile compiles this rich and informative community perspective.

The vision statement is:

"Crofton is an inclusive waterfront community, which fosters economic development, environmental stewardship, and small town values. The community prides itself on its seaside setting, small town scale, walkability and access to nature and the sea. Crofton provides affordable housing in a variety of architectural forms which are consistent with the existing small town character. Crofton has safe roads, alternative modes of transportation, with good access to the waterfront and regional trail systems. Crofton has balanced development and the natural environment with a special focus on maintaining existing educational facilities, and expanding its array of commercial and employment services. Both public and private sector investments have contributed to a beautification of the mixed use commercial core area."

The Heart of Crofton

As part of the OCP update process, we asked community members to indicate on a map what they considered the heart or centre (their favourite places) of Crofton. The map below details the locations that community members chose. The mixed use commercial core surrounding the post office was identified as the heart as was the ocean, mountains, trees and trail systems.



Sea Walk at Crofton Beach



Crofton Elementary

Buildings

Nautically inspired buildings reflect the deep connection to Osborne Bay and the seaside village charm of Crofton. Older buildings like the post office are an ode to the heritage and waterfront nature of the area embracing warm pastels and dormer windows. Newer buildings like the Osborne Bay Pub and the mixed-use Mews over Osborne Bay make use of shiplap as well as traditional brick and wrought iron, equally reflective of the nearby shoreline.

Dormers and decorative gables enhance the historic charm of various buildings.

Crofton Schoolhouse



Crofton Mews over Osborne - Mixed Use

Older Multi-Family Residential



“

Crofton is a beautiful mix of old and new.

”

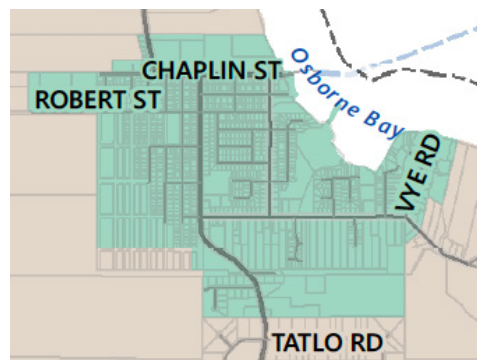


All the photos included in this Community profile have been provided by the community members.

Streets and Pathways

The raised Crofton Seawalk is a pedestrian haven bridging land and sea and providing an accessible opportunity to enjoy the idyllic seaside beauty that Crofton has to offer. Commercial vibrancy defines Joan Avenue, as well as safe pedestrian crossings, landscaping and street furniture. In many areas of the community, the waterfront is easily visible from roads and sidewalks.

Crofton is unique among North Cowichan communities as this area exhibits an irregular grid street pattern, dissimilar to the largely curving street network of the region. Crofton is arranged in a compact settlement pattern predominantly along Osborne Bay Road. Narrow, discontinuous sidewalks featuring rolled and barrier curbs constitute the majority of pedestrian infrastructure, including along Joan Avenue which acts as the major waterfront connector. Residential streets lack sidewalks, and some feature gravel shoulders for parking and walking.



Crofton Seawalk Entrance



Crofton Seawalk



Road to Waterfront



Seawalk

“

I like Joan Avenue with its shops, raised intersection and view toward the Bay

”

Community Spaces

Green spaces close to home, like Joan Avenue Park and school playgrounds are enjoyed by many, from children and parents to dog owners. Summer is marked by community members gathering regularly at the local pool, and the popular Wooden Crofton Seawalk sees pedestrian traffic year-round.

Schoolhouse



Playground on Queen Street



Crofton Elementary School



Crofton Pool

“

The Joan
Ave park is
nice with
great views.

”

Natural Places

The Crofton Seawalk delivers unparalleled ocean views, allows visitors a bird's eye view of the cyclic intertidal and affords many with peace and serenity. Beachside parks offer equal opportunities to experience the nexus of land and sea. Crofton Lake and nearby trails up Mount Tzouhalem, Mount Prevost and Maple Mountain are a walker's delight, with endless opportunities to stay active and explore the outdoors.

Crofton Seawalk



Crofton Beach Park



Osborne Bay Park



“ The
Boardwalk
along water's
edge is so
peaceful ”

“

I feel connected to nature at Crofton Lake, and at the
Crofton Foreshore

”

Views

The Seawalk is a uniquely Crofton feature providing unobstructed ocean vistas, bordered by seaside forest and the Crofton Harbour.

Crofton Seawalk



Osborne Bay



Crofton Harbour

“

The sea walk is the best view of the bay.

The park and boardwalk looking at the water provide the best views.

”

Thinking Forward - Resident's Perspectives

Crofton's crowning jewel is the waterfront easily accessed and enjoyed along the Seawalk and park. Improvements to the wharf and marina infrastructure would enhance the existing waterfront, as would improved access to the Seawalk. Improved pedestrian infrastructure overall would support the walkable nature of Crofton as would additional local retail. Improved access to transit would benefit the community as would a diversity of housing forms that would support aging in place for seniors. Older buildings like Twin Gables and the motel, as well as vacant and neglected residential lots would benefit from revitalization or redevelopment.

Heavy industrial uses take away from the quaint community character and has the potential to negatively impact the surrounding environment.

Waterfront Boardwalk



Firehall

“

Some buildings are old and unsafe and need to be updated

Crofton could be improved by more useable waterfront,
pedestrian areas, cafes, shop.

”



RURAL

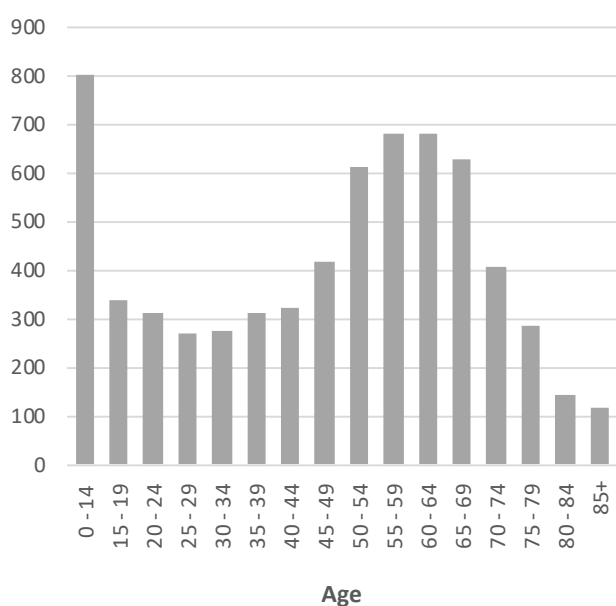
COMMUNITY CHARACTER PROFILE

Introduction

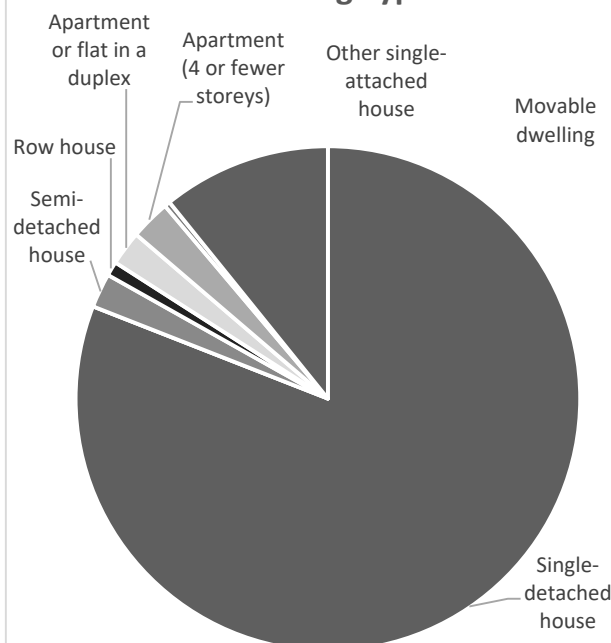
The rural areas of North Cowichan comprise the majority of North Cowichan's substantial land base of food, forestry and recreation. Approximately 25% of the land in all of North Cowichan is located in the agricultural land reserve and 25% is located in the Municipal Forest Reserve. Other forestry, farming, park, low-density suburban and industrial uses, makes up the balance in the rural areas. Communities identified include Vimy, Stony Hill, Westholme and Somenos among others.

The total population of the Rural area is 6,690 people with the median age being 51.8 years. 81% of the dwelling type here are single-detached homes, while the remaining 19% consists of semi-detached houses, row houses, apartments or flat in a duplex, apartments (4 or fewer storeys), other single-attached houses, movable dwellings.

Rural Community Demographics -
Age



Rural Community Demographics -
Dwelling Type



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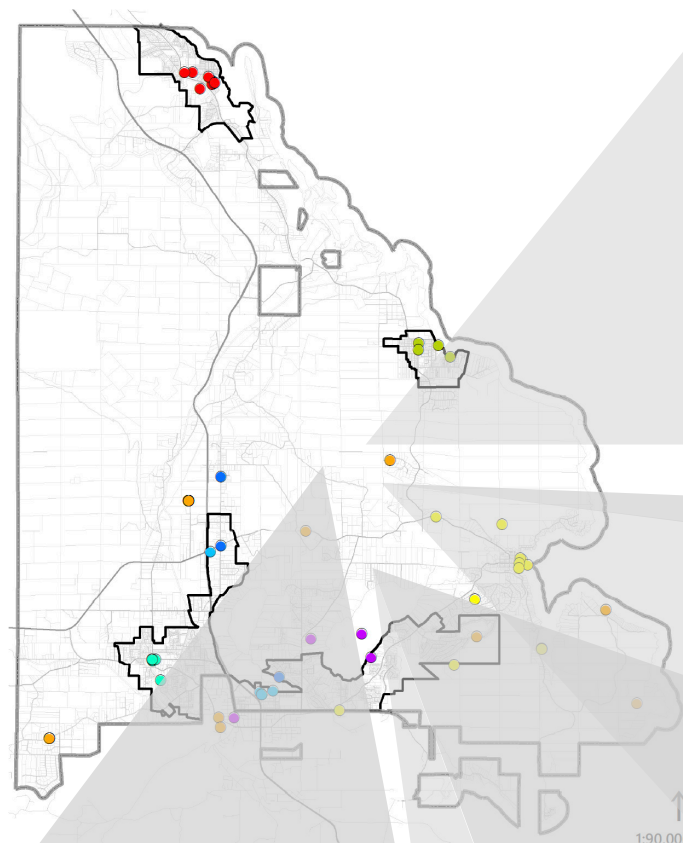
Local Planning Context

A number of plans provide guidance on development, as well as extensive policy statements about rural, agricultural, and forestry lands in the 2011 Official Community Plan. These include the 2001 Strategic Agricultural Plan (an update is anticipated to begin in 2022), and Forest Management Plans.



The Heart of the Rural North Cowichan

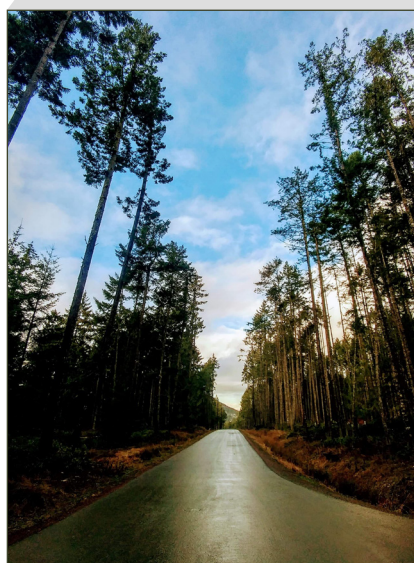
As part of the OCP update, we asked community members to indicate on a map what they considered the heart or centre (their favourite places) of their rural community. The map below details the locations that community members chose. Community halls and gathering spaces were identified as the heart for many, with Vimy Hall frequently mentioned as an important centre of their community. Some felt that the shared space between neighbours was at the heart of their community and others felt they had "arrived" on trails and along the Cowichan River. Some felt that there was no definitive heart in these areas.



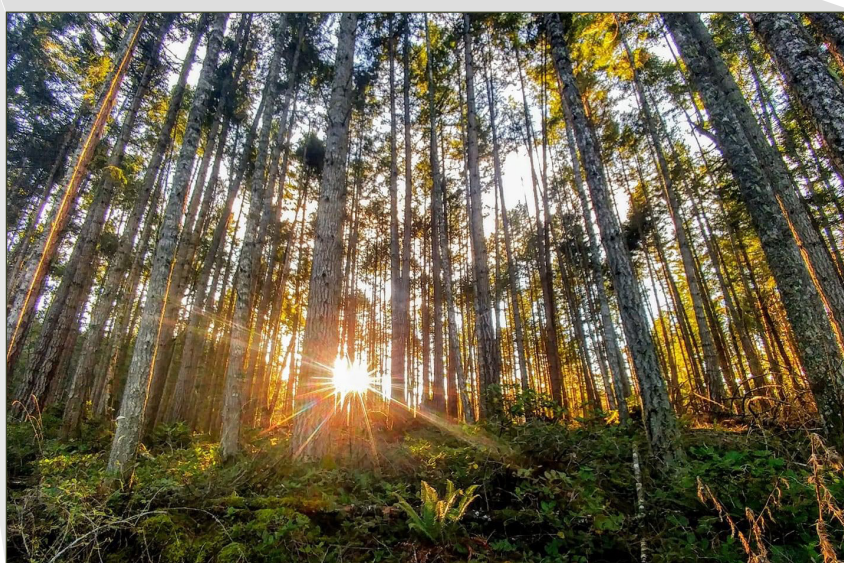
Vimy Hall



Equestrian



Scenic Rural



Forested Lands

Buildings

Rural homes in North Cowichan typically sit on large lots, set back deeply from the roadway. Modestly sized, simple dwellings make use of timber and muted palettes, fitting into the natural topography of the land and giving way to stands of trees and other natural features. Farm houses and buildings are evidence of the local food production systems and contribute the bucolic character of the landscape.

Acreage with Hobby Farm



Vineyard



Single-Family Home



Handdrawn Home on the Cowichan River Near Totem Pole



Farm Building



Single-Family Home



Vimy Hall



“

The rural character is historic, human scaled, respects surroundings.

I like the mature trees, nature, quiet, spread of houses.

”

Streets and Pathways

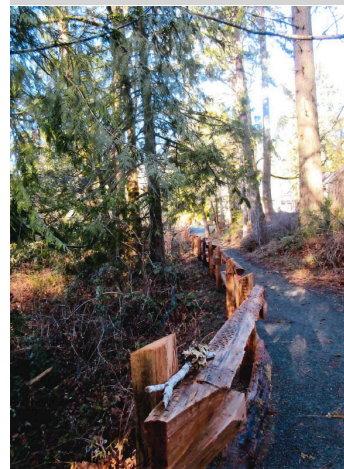
Scenic corridors through expansive agricultural lands and forested mountains are characteristics of rural North Cowichan. Sidewalks and bike paths are scarce along roadways, but trails are plentiful.

The rural areas of North Cowichan are arranged in scattered dispersed settlements patterns, as a result of the agricultural lands that define this area. Some residential pockets feature a loop and cul-de-sac pattern. Major roadways may feature a paved shoulder on one or both sides, a gravel shoulder, or no shoulder at all. Local roads range from paved to gravel and sidewalks are few, even adjacent to key, rural community hubs like Vimy Hall along Gibbins Road.

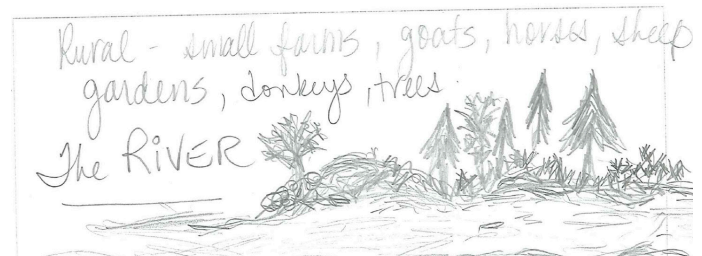
Van Koy Road



Trail



Rural Road



Handdrawn Rural Landscape



Pedestrian Track



Gibbins Road



Tree-lined Road

Community Spaces

Gathering spaces that welcome people from across communities and provide a variety of events and opportunities to socialize and connect are crucial in an areas characterized by large properties and a dearth of central activity. Vimy and Somenos Halls foster community connections yet more intentional programming could activate these spaces. Parks and village centres are replaced by trails and rolling hills, leading to mountains, rivers and dense forest. Community connection may be more spontaneous in rural areas, an encounter with a neighbour grocery shopping or at a local café.

Forest



Fishbowl Cafe



Vimy Hall

Salish Sea and Gulf Islands



Escarpment Trail



Cowichan River

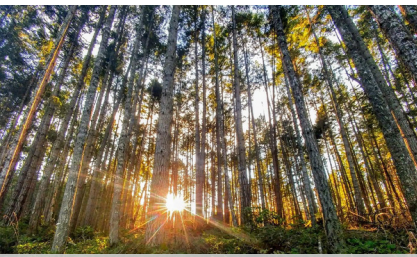
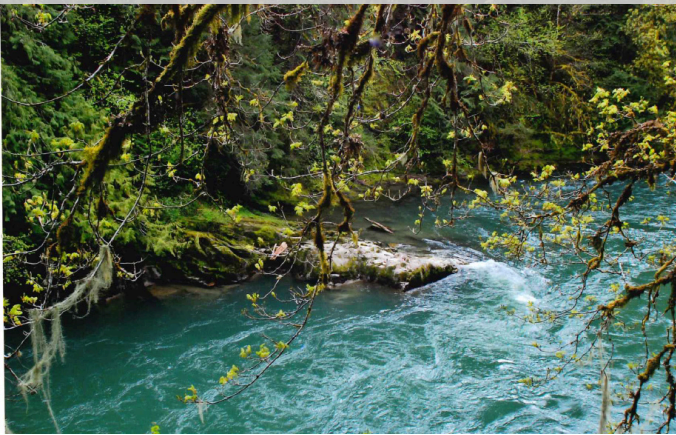
“ Vimy Hall represents 100 years of community connection.

The sights and sounds of nature are central to us. There are no parks or plazas here ”

Natural Places

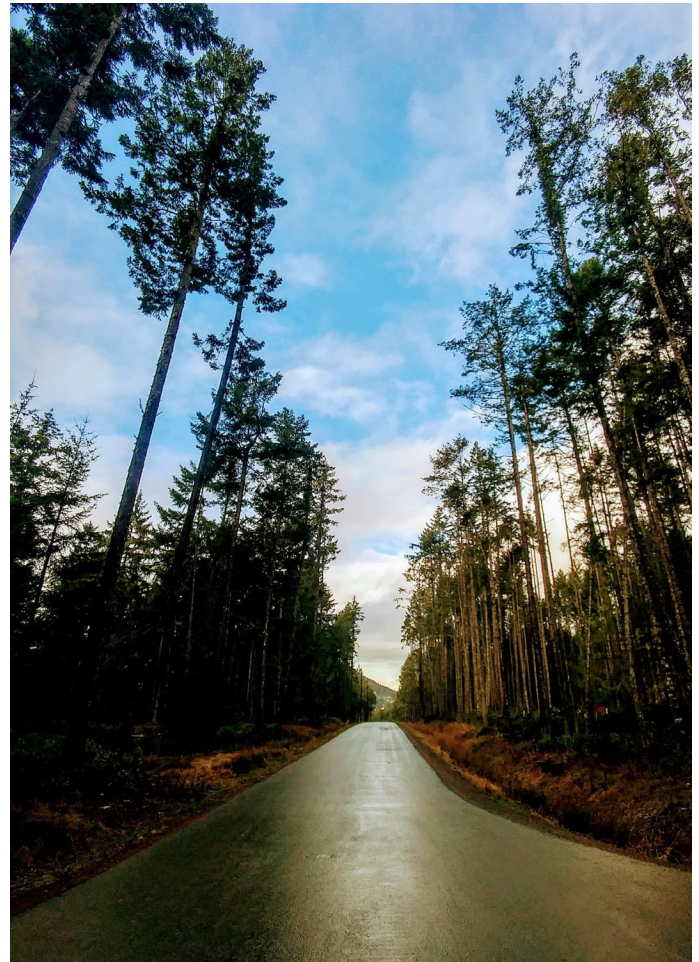
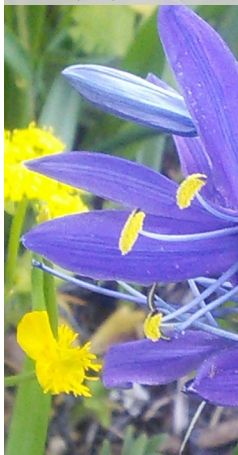
A network of trails and walking paths offer convenient backyard access to surrounding agricultural lands, forest and mountains. Lakes, rivers and beaches are equally accessible by trail, either on foot or by bike, offering peace, solace and connection to the natural world. In rural North Cowichan, nature abounds at every turn.

Cowichan River



Forest

Local Flora



Tree-lined Road



Cowichan River

“ I'm connected to nature everywhere in my area.

I can walk from home and find peaceful, spiritual
connection to nature. ”

“ I love being surrounded by the mountains, lakes and rivers. ”

Views

Unobstructed views of Mount Prevost, Mount Tzouhalem and Stoney Hill can be seen across the rural landscape, in particular on Gibbins Road. Views from the coastline stretch towards the Gulf Island and Salish Sea.

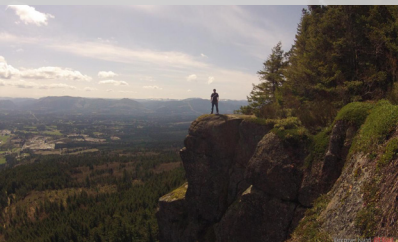
Natural Viewscapes



Farmland Views



Mount Prevost



Natural Viewscapes



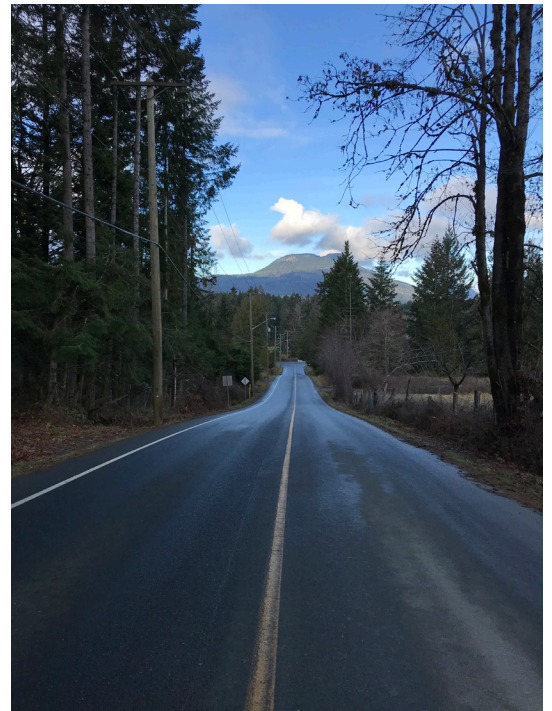
“

My Favourite view
is Mount Prevost,
sacred birth site of
Cowichan people.

”



View Towards the Gulf Islands



Mount Prevost seen from Vimy Road

Thinking Forward

The rural area of North Cowichan is a serene haven consisting of working farms, natural landscapes and scenic corridors. Preservation of nature and the rural landscape is integral to the retention of community character. Respect for the natural world, ecological integrity and Indigenous knowledge that have stewarded these lands since time immemorial must be safeguarded.

Tree retention, in particular on mountainside slopes is imperative for environmental health and visual appeal. Key waterways like the Cowichan River should be protected for human enjoyment and watershed health. As these epicenters for outdoor recreation grow in popularity, vehicle traffic and speed should be addressed along major roadways and trailhead parking lots. Consideration needs to be given for safe pedestrian routes along these scenic corridors.

Existing gathering spaces are well-loved and would benefit from additional outdoor amenities to welcome all ages and broaden activity and entertainment offerings.

Covered Park Space



Outdoor Gathering Space



“ We need a place where people can gather and talk and relax

What hopefully could be created over time is a renewed trail system to once again enable the community access to Paradise Pools and the Cowichan River trails.

”



Nature Play Area



Greenhouse

“

We need a nature play park & picnic shelter at Vimy Hall

”

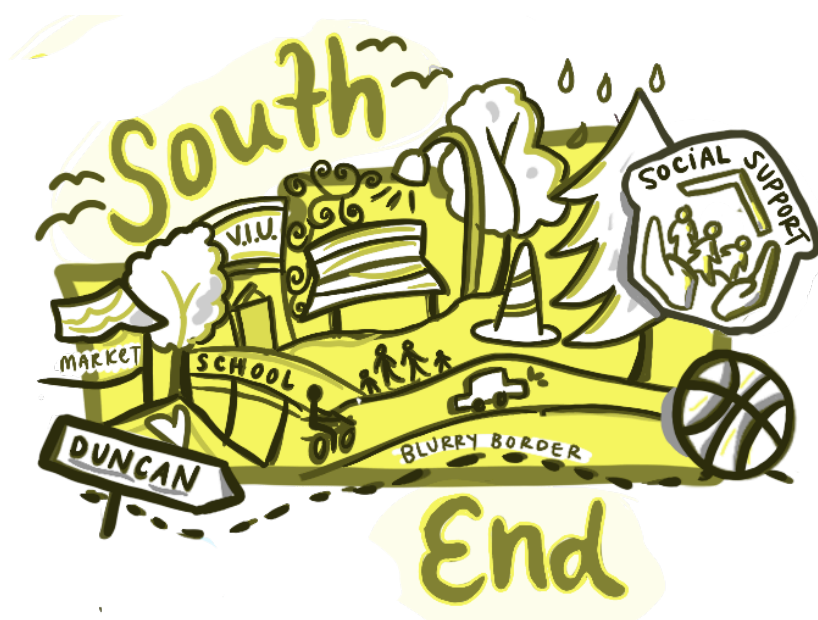
SOUTH END

COMMUNITY CHARACTER PROFILE

Introduction

South End Centre incorporates the central areas of Quamichan Heights, Timbercrest, Beverly/Alexander and University Village, which are contiguous to the City of Duncan, and to the south west shore of Quamichan Lake.

The South End Centre is within the urban containment boundary identified in the 2011 Official Community Plan. The 2015 University Village Local Area Plan covers a portion of this area and provides a vision and policy framework that is still relevant today.

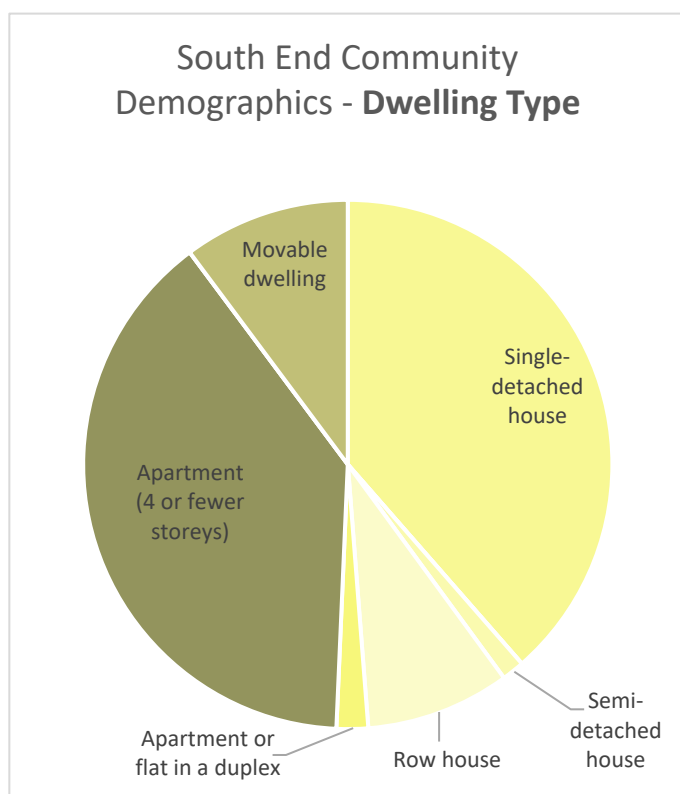
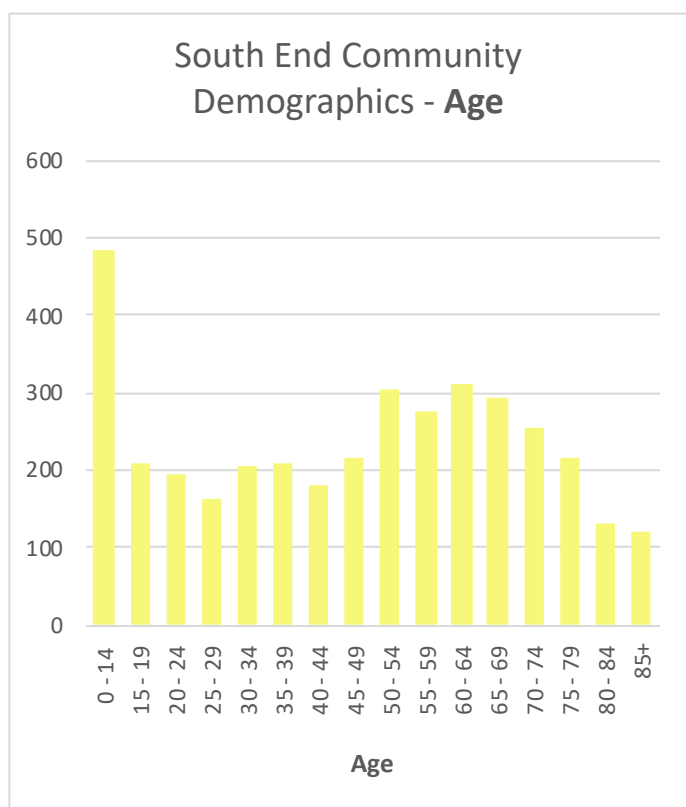


The vision is:

An inclusive community that provides opportunities for a good quality of life reflective of a healthy and safe environment. It will provide affordable housing and alternative modes of transport with good access to the natural environment, recreation, education, employment and services will contribute to a balanced community.

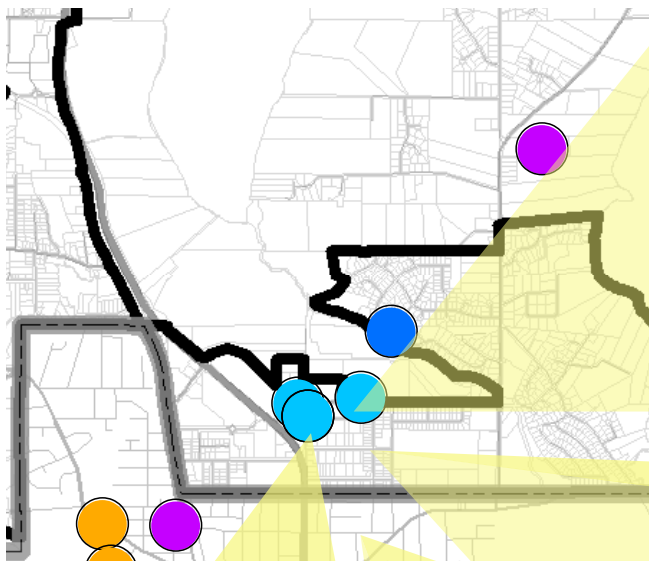
During the 2020/21 Official Community Plan update process, community members generously took time to take photos and talk about the character of the natural and built environment of their community and how this character might evolve over time. This profile compiles this rich and informative community perspective.

The total population of South End is 3,770 people with the median age being 51.6 years. Single-detached homes and apartments (4 or fewer storeys) make up 39% of the dwelling type each, while movable dwelling and row houses come in at a close second with 10% and 9% respectively. The remaining 3% comprise of semi-detached homes and apartments or flats in a duplex.



The Heart of the South End

As part of the OCP update process, we asked community members to indicate on a map what they considered the heart or centre (their favourite places) of the South End. The map below details the locations that community members chose. Many indicated that the downtown Duncan area is the centre of this community, abuzz with activity. For others, Beverley Street is the heart of the South End as it connects key activity centres like Vancouver Island University (VIU), the community centre, schools, and Beverley Corners.



Community



Roads



Community Centre

Community Centre

Buildings

The South End is mix of functional aesthetic and rural appeal. Newer buildings like VIU make use of cedar and clean lines, using available space efficiently while incorporating urban greenery. Larger lots contain older single-family homes and contribute to the rural charm and history of the area. Low-rise buildings provide a diversity of inclusive housing options for all.

Seniors' Housing on York Street



School



“Westcoast updates are appealing.”



All the photos included in this Community profile have been provided by the community members.

Streets and Pathways

The walkable, human scale of the South End is exemplified by a grid pattern in the centre, and low-speed narrow streets in outer suburbs, pedestrian infrastructure and urban trees. Trails, bike paths and the dike provide additional avenues to traverse the area.

The South End features more conventional cul-de-sacs towards the east, along Lakes Road, while the area south of Beverly Street exhibits an irregular grid pattern. Sidewalks exist along at least one side of major roadways, with some featuring road verges. Sidewalks are also present in some residential areas, with and without road verges. Cycling infrastructure exists along upgraded sections of Beverly Street and paved shoulders are bordered by gravel shoulders along Lake Road.

Low-Speed Street



Residential Trail

“ The South
End
character
is: Human
scale.
Tactile.
Rustic. ”

Community Spaces

Designated gathering places in the South End include the areas surrounding the south end as well and provides opportunities to interact and build community. The Friendship Trail, the Somenos dog park and Art Mann park foster enjoyment of nature as well as social wellbeing.

Art Mann Park



Somenos Creek Dog Park

“

Friendship Trail and dike help people run into each other and have unintended interactions.

”

Natural Places

Gravel trails extending through nearby rural landscapes offer solace from the urban area and are conveniently located nearby.

Somenos Creek



Trail



Nature

Views

Views in the South End range from the nearby Somenos Marsh and dike to the top of Mount Prevost. Wherever you are, the trees, waterways and community landmarks are easily visible.

Somenos Creek Dike



“

Mount Prevost
has the best view,
I see trees and
creek.

”

Thinking Forward

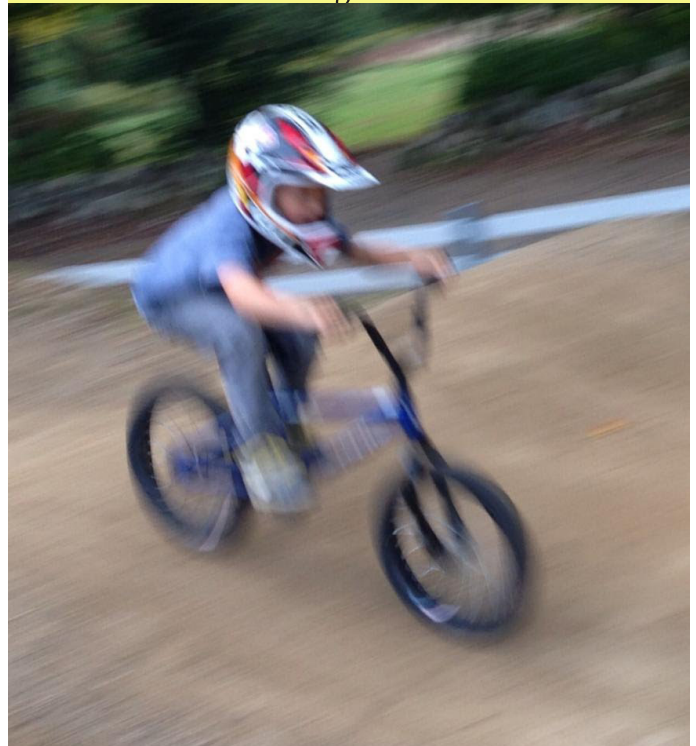
The South End is endowed with many historical character owing to heritage opportunities. As the South End Centre evolves, enhanced walkability should be pursued through pedestrian infrastructure, trail connectivity, as well as controlled densification. Mixed use buildings that offer a blend of local shops, housing and social services would aid in meeting the diverse needs of this area.

Retention of green space and urban trees is important to preserve the natural beauty and visual appeal of this area. New gathering places should prioritize accessibility and personal safety, acting as a welcoming space for all. Safety and cleanliness of existing formal and informal gathering places should be addressed to improve visual appeal and encourage use.

Separated Cycling Lane and Sidewalk



Youth Mountain Biking



“ I'd love to see more bike lanes and facilities

Linking trail system throughout community is important to me.

”