

# Report

Date December 1, 2021  
Subject Draft Official Community Plan Public Consultation

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File: SPP00040

## PURPOSE

To update Council on the draft Official Community Plan (“OCP”) public engagement process and provide options for extending the current public consultation period.

## BACKGROUND

The draft OCP was presented to the public via a webinar on Monday, November 8, 2021, approximately 150 people at peak attended. This launched a 30-day period for people to review the document and provide their comments and input, as per the project plan. This period ends on December 8, 2021. Comments can be provided by:

1. Utilizing the “Konveio” software platform hosted by the consultants (MODUS), to provide feedback by responding directly to various prompts throughout the draft OCP;
2. Downloading, completing and returning an MS Word version of the feedback survey; or,
3. Submission of written comments in email or paper format.

There have been some requests to staff and Council for this period to be extended, noting the impact of the November 15, 2021 flood disruption on people’s priorities.

## DISCUSSION

### Draft OCP Consultation

To date, despite a reasonably significant number of OCP downloads (~380), few responses have been received. Approximately 30 individuals and groups have submitted feedback thus far. Interest in the OCP remains high, so presumably due to its size and complexity it is taking people some time to complete their feedback. However, the flood events are likely also contributing to the low response rate. It is unclear when the response rate may increase, particularly with the current issues of flood cleanup, travel and supply chain disruption, and gas limitations occupying people’s time and attention. However, a more significant number of responses might be expected to be received closer to the deadline.

### Post Consultation Process

While the primary mechanism for responses is via an online platform (“Konveio” - hosted by MODUS but accessed through the Municipality’s website), people remain able to submit comments by email or in writing, preferably using the downloadable survey Pro-forma. Once the consultation period closes, staff and consultants both need to consolidate and analyze a potentially large volume of information, distil the key messages/themes for Council, and identify any further potential edits to the draft OCP.

Post-consultation, there will be two types of update edits to the current draft OCP:

1. Administrative: Correction of formatting inconsistencies, typos, and edits relating to style, clarification, organization, or simplification. Some of this editing is already taking place as issues and improvements are pointed out.
2. Substantive: policy-based amendments for Council's consideration, reflecting public, stakeholder and internal departmental input. This would include any changes to the land use designations map.

At this stage, it is not possible to predict how significant type 2 edits will be since we do not yet have sufficient input to determine the direction of opinion. Should public feedback suggest substantial changes in direction be considered, this may necessitate further decisions and directions from Council prior to the finalization of the draft OCP for first reading.

The likely subsequent approach would be to present Council with a consultation summary report, containing a revised draft OCP plus a schedule of any type 2 edits recommended. Council can then consider giving first reading to this draft "as amended" as Council sees fit, or direct further changes be made.

Some First Nations have requested an extension to the December 15 referral deadline but have not specified how much additional time they require. The recent flood event will likely make it more difficult for local First Nations to prioritize the OCP referral and respond within the requested time. There also remains the issue of the government to government meeting with Cowichan Tribes as per the resolution from the October 20, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting, and how Council wants to integrate this into the process (noting that as of November 26, 2021, a date has not yet been set for the joint meeting). Invitations have also been extended to meet with other local First Nations. Should these meetings take place after first reading, it remains possible for amendments to be made to the OCP in response to the outcomes of the First Nation meetings.

## OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council direct staff to extend the Draft OCP Public Consultation period by 14 days to December 22, 2021.
  - Extending the consultation period to December 22 (an additional two weeks) would compress the time available for summarizing responses and editing, exacerbated by MODUS staff availability over the Christmas period. Therefore, the subsequent Council report would be pushed out by at least another meeting cycle, targeting February for consideration of first reading.
2. THAT Council endorse the Draft OCP Public Consultation period to close by December 8, 2021.
  - Consultation closes on December 8, with staff and MODUS needing to summarize/analyze the input with the aim of reporting out to Council on January 19, 2022 (noting Council meeting dates are not yet approved for 2022 at the time of drafting). This would include the next draft

OCP plus a schedule of amendments. Council would have the option of giving first reading to the OCP bylaw at that point

3. THAT Council direct staff to extend the Draft OCP Public Consultation period by 30 days or more.
  - Extending across the Christmas period and into mid-January while providing ample time for public input, an extension of this magnitude will have a correspondingly significant impact on timelines and push first reading deeper into the election year.

## IMPLICATIONS

To maintain progress according to the timelines previously presented to Council, public consultation on the draft OCP would need to be substantially complete by the advertised date of December 8, 2021. However, Council may opt to provide additional time for people to review and respond, noting the associated impact on timelines for preparation of the subsequent amended draft OCP for consideration of first reading.

Whichever option is chosen, staff will continue with ongoing advertising through various methods and issuing email/social media prompts to encourage as much participation as possible.

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to extend the Draft OCP Public Consultation period by 14 days to December 22, 2021.

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**Approved to be forwarded to Council:**



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Attachment(s): None