

DISTRICT OF SAANICH

Report To: MAYOR AND COUNCIL
Date: FEBRUARY 28, 2007
From: RUSS FUOCO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
Subject: OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW • WORK SCHEDULE

Background

The purpose of this report is to outline a focused and progressive approach to the review of Saanich's Official Community Plan (OCP) during 2007. This initiative is part of the 2007 Strategic Plan work program (Initiative SE-C3-a).

The Official Community Plan is the principal policy document that Council uses to make decisions on matters such as: land use; growth management; protection of the environment; transportation and mobility; economic development; infrastructure; and housing needs.

Periodically the Official Community Plan needs to be reviewed with Council, the public, staff and other key stakeholders, to determine if the vision, goals and objectives of the document are still valid, and where the document might need to be altered to reflect changes in our community. In addition, the Official Community Plan needs to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects current practices, policies and procedures that have been mandated: Provincially; Regionally; and Municipally (eg. the Provincial streamside protection regulations, the Regional Growth Strategy, and Saanich's green building policy).

Saanich's OCP was last reviewed in a comprehensive manner in 1993. Since that time:

- Saanich's population has increased by approximately 16,000 residents;
- Growth rates while not as significant as 20-30 years ago, still continue to exert pressure on Saanich, and the Capital Regional District in terms of land use and infrastructure planning;
- Saanich's population has continued to age, with approximately 1 in 3 people in Saanich being over the age of 55.
- The CRD's Regional Growth Strategy was adopted, including Regional Housing Affordability, and Transportation Strategies. In addition, Saanich completed a Regional Context Statement which outlines what additional work is required to align our OCP with the general objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy;
- The average price of a single family house has gone from \$257,320 in 1993, to \$539,459 in 2006;
- New environmental legislation has been adopted such as the streamside protection regulations; and green building policy;
- Climate change is becoming an increasingly important issue affecting policy and decision making at all levels of government; and
- Saanich's Strategic (Corporate) Plan and monitoring program was adopted and implemented.

Saanich's Official Community Plan is composed of; the General Plan which is the paramount policy document, along with 12 Local Area Plans, 9 Action Plans and the Development Permit (DP) Guidelines. The proposed review of the Official Community Plan would focus specifically on the General Plan. The General Plan provides the over-riding policy framework from a general municipal perspective, whereas the Local Area Plans are more detailed neighbourhood focused policy documents.

Legislative Authority

Local Government Act

The "Local Government Act" outlines requirements and regulations in regard to the development of and amendment to Official Community Plans. In general, an official community plan is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on a range of planning issues and land use management. An official community plan should also work towards the purpose and goals of any relevant Regional Growth Strategy.

An official community plan must include policies on the following subject matter:

- residential development required to meet anticipated need over at least a 5 year period;
- the approximate location and amount, type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
- the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- restrictions on the use of land subject to hazardous conditions or which is environmentally sensitive;
- the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
- the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites; and
- housing policies respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.

An official community plan may also include policies on the following subject matter:

- social needs, well being and development;
- maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area or designated for farming use; and
- preservation, protection and enhancement of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Discussion

Approach

The review of the Official Community Plan is proposed to take a focused approach. The current Official Community Plan does not require a complete overhaul, but a systematic review. The majority of goals, objectives and policies require no alteration. Accordingly, attention would be focused on areas where external forces (eg. climate change, growth pressures, urban design issues) or policy changes require amendments to the Official Community Plan to better reflect how Saanich sees itself growing and responding to change over the next 15-20 years. In addition, the format of the document would be updated, and photographs and diagrams would be added to better illustrate the plan's objectives.

To ensure that a broad range of citizens can participate in the proposed Official Community Plan review, we are recommending that emphasis be placed on statistically reliable telephone surveys and also focus groups, in addition to the traditional “open house”. Surveys have the benefit of being statistically reliable while focus groups enable further in-depth discussion with a cross section of residents and important segments of our community who can often be overlooked (eg. seniors and youth). In light of the very high rate of computer use by Saanich residents, the survey would be made available on-line, as well as being available at community recreation centers, the municipal hall, and local library branches. The survey would also be used at open houses to collect people’s thoughts and ideas on community issues.

Review Process

The proposed Official Community Plan review process is based on the goals of obtaining statistically reliable input from a broad cross section of Saanich citizens; and completing the review in a timely manner so the goals and objectives of the updated official community plan can be put into action. The general steps or phases of the proposed OCP review are proposed as follows:

1. Report To Council Seeking Approval Of Review & Consultation Process;
2. Background Research & Preparation;
3. Stakeholder Input;
4. Analysis of Stakeholder Input & Drafting Of Document;
5. Presentation & Feedback of Draft Document;
6. Rework Document Based On Feedback; and
7. Present Document to Council for Formal Review and Consideration.

A more detailed work-plan for the OCP review, including a tentative timeline, is outlined below.

2007 – 2008 Time Line	Phase	Activity
March	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report to Council regarding proposed review and consultation process. ▪ Finalise contracts with consultants. ▪ Formalise survey content, focus groups, and open houses. ▪ Address issues related to online survey with the Information Technology Department. ▪ Set up OCP resource webpage.
March - April	Background Research & Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with relevant Committees of Council, SCAN, and other stakeholders to provide overview of process and answer questions. ▪ Preparation of survey. ▪ Preparation for focus groups ▪ Prepare background information and display boards for open houses and send out notification and arrange for newspaper advertisement.
April - May	Stakeholder Input	Obtain public input through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ telephone surveys; ▪ focus groups ▪ online survey; and ▪ open houses.

June - September	Analysis & Drafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation of Draft OCP. ▪ Preliminary referrals sent to external agencies. ▪ Staff Review & reworking of document. ▪ Notification for late September Open Houses.
September - November	Presentation & Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present draft documents at open houses and on-line. ▪ Final External Referrals sent out. ▪ Present OCP to SCAN, and Cmtes. of Council. ▪ Revisions to document based on feedback.
December - January	Rework & Edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rework document based on feedback. ▪ Prepare report to Council.
January - February	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report to Council presenting the Official Community Plan
February - March	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Hearing

Consultation

Consultation requirements for Official Community Plan reviews are laid out in the “Local Government Act”. Specifically, during the development of an OCP, local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected. As well, consideration must be given to how early in the process contact should be made, and whether it should be ongoing throughout the review process.

The following consultation process is proposed:

	Method of Consultation	Target Groups
1	Telephone Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Randomly selected individuals, representing five (5) geographic sub areas of our community to ensure feedback from across the community. ▪ The results would be statistically significant, and be applicable to the community at large.
2	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The focus groups would involve a broad cross section of people (eg. age, culture) from the general population of Saanich.
3	Online Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Available to all residents of Saanich
4	Open Houses & Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Available to all residents of Saanich
5	Meetings with Key Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant Committees of Council ▪ The Business Community ▪ Saanich Neighbourhood Association Network members. ▪ The need to consult other key groups will become evident as we move through the review process.
6	Formal Referrals	<p>Per the requirements of the “Local Government Act” formal referrals would be sent to the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Capital Regional District; ▪ Adjacent Municipalities (Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, View Royal, Highlands and Central Saanich) ; ▪ First Nations;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Districts 61 & 63; ▪ Relevant Provincial Ministries and agencies (eg. Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Community Services, Ministry of Environment, Agricultural Land Commission, etc.); ▪ Relevant Federal Departments/Ministries (eg. Departments of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Defence, etc.); and ▪ Major Institutions (eg. The Observatory, UVIC, Camosun College, etc.).
--	--	--

Summary

The review process and timeline outlined above provides for a focused and progressive updating of the Official Community Plan. Significant amendments to the review process outlined above will impact the timeline for the review.

As previously noted, the current Official Community Plan does not require a complete overhaul, but a systematic review. The majority of the Official Community Plan's goals, objectives and policies require no alteration. Accordingly we are recommending that focused be placed on areas where external forces (ex. climate change, growth pressures, urban design issues) or policy changes, require amendments be made to the Official Community Plan to better reflect how Saanich sees itself growing and responding to change over the next 15-20 years.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Official Community Plan review and consultation process outlined in this report be approved.

Report prepared by:

Sharon Hvozdanski, Supervisor of Strategic Planning

Report reviewed by:

Russ Fuoco, Director of Planning

SJH/vnb

G:\PLANNING\OCP\2007 OCP Review\CORRESPONDENCE\CR Feb 2007 Consultation Process.Doc

cc: T. Wood, Municipal Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS: