A Shared Community Vision

After considerable input from the community including advice from 14 dedicated members of the volunteer Electoral Area ‘A’ OCP Citizens’ Committee a new Official Community Plan is nearing completion. Titled A Shared Community Vision, this Plan reflects a balance between a diverse range of interests, beliefs, and community opinions, and shapes the way our Electoral Area will evolve and sustain itself in the coming years. The Draft OCP is focused on a set of sustainability principles which provide guidance for making sound decisions and form the foundation for the goals, objectives, and policies of the Official Community Plan.

In response to community input, the draft OCP addresses many topics related to economic, environmental, and social sustainability. This has resulted in a more comprehensive Plan which provides more certainty to the community and proposes a higher level of protection for our most sensitive ecosystems and features. The draft OCP seeks to protect our rural character by supporting limits on rural growth, and recognizes the desire of local residents to support agriculture and local food production. In response to significant community interest, it emphasizes the importance of ground water protection and includes a number of policies and Development Permit Area Guidelines.

The members of the Electoral Area A Citizens’ Committee devoted a tremendous amount of time to this OCP Review Process, and I would like to share some of their comments on the experience. Devon Wyatt, who represented the construction industry on the committee, had this to say:

“For anyone not involved in this process they should understand that it was difficult at times. This policy document defines much of what is envisioned for the future generations of Area A and it should be embraced as a positive plan. Granted there are always differences of opinion but in general, I think we nailed it. The Area A OCP does a very reasonable job at looking at sustainability in its entirety. One must fully recognize that sustainability isn’t all about the environment these days but moreover, relates to Social, Economic and

Electoral Area A Official Community Plan Review Citizen’s Committee member Bert Vermaskari works on the blueprint for A Shared Community Vision.
Environmental factors throughout each key item. Cedar resident Jack Anderson shared this comment: “This OCP process provided an extensive opportunity for community input, serving to galvanize the Area A citizens around key issues of appropriate development, protection of our valued resources and the nature of sustainability so we preserve this area for future generations.”

Local farmer Garry Laird represented agricultural interests on the committee and summed the experience up this way:

“Over the past two and a half years the RDN Planning Staff and the Citizen’s Committee have worked diligently to incorporate the important values and wishes of the citizens of Area A into the draft OCP. There have been times when this has seemed like a daunting task given the size and challenges of Area A and the diverse and varied needs and interests of its citizens. The draft OCP is an extensive document which incorporates some innovative and unique approaches to deal with anticipated future challenges for Area A. Hopefully, we have been successful in developing a balanced approach to achieving the future vision for Area A that our citizens can support.”

Producing A Shared Community Vision has truly been a shared community experience, and I would like to thank all of the members of the Electoral Area A OCP Citizens’ Committee for your dedication to this project. Your efforts will be appreciated for many years to come.

Draft Regional Growth Strategy

The Regional District of Nanaimo wants to hear what residents think about the new policies on food security, water conservation, transportation, economic development, affordable housing and climate change included in its Draft Regional Growth Strategy. To view the Draft RGS and learn more about how it will encourage sustainability in the region, visit www.ShapingOurFuture.ca. Hard copies can be viewed at the RDN Administration Building, all regional libraries, and municipal offices in the RDN. A survey is also available on the site, and those who complete it by May 27 will be entered to win $400 towards food from a grocery store of their choice. Other prizes include transit and recreation passes.

In addition to the survey, residents can provide feedback by sending an e-mail or writing a letter.

The RGS was adopted in 1997 and was last reviewed in 2003. It represents the RDN Board’s commitment to shaping a more sustainable pattern of population growth and development in the region’s rural Electoral Areas and four municipalities over a 25-year period. For more information, email growthmanagement@rdn.bc.ca or call 250-390-6510.

Drinking Water/Watershed Protection Update

The RDN’s Drinking Water Watershed Protection Program is learning more about water in the Region through collaboration with local environmental groups, government agencies and residents. The work done through this important program is assisting the RDN Board in making well-informed land use decisions that protect our environment.

Cassidy/South Wellington Ground Water Quality Survey

The Cassidy/South Wellington Ground Water Quality Survey is currently underway. Working in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment, the DWWPP is testing approximately 60 sites as part of the survey. Participants receive a full water test valued at $150. When the testing is complete, the Ministry will review the results and produce a report on the findings that will be made available to the public.

Watershed Snapshot Report

The DWWPP will present the Watershed Snapshot Report to the RDN Board in May. This extensive report was carried out to determine the state of water resources in the RDN, and involved consultation with the public, hydrogeologists, biologists, well drillers, planners, and local and provincial government. A web-accessible WaterMap and report database is available now at www.rdn.bc.ca and includes reports from a variety of sources associated with water resources, and all of the information gathered as part of the Watershed Snapshot Report process. This is the most comprehensive source of water resource information available in the Region.

For more information about DWWPP activities, visit www.rdn.bc.ca.

Animal Control

Animal control enforcement within the RDN pertains only to dogs, and regulations differ by Electoral Area. In Area A, dog licences are not required and animal control officers respond to vicious dog complaints and requests to pick up confined strays (this means that if you see a stray dog and bring it home, an animal control officer will pick it up from you). Animal control officers do not capture or patrol for stray dogs. For more information or to make a complaint, call the RDN Animal Control Officers directly at 1-888-754-1397.

contacts

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