

WELCOME

To the Regional District of Nanaimo
Electoral Area 'A' OCP Review,
Community Forum

May 10, 2008



OBJECTIVES

- ⇒ To kick off the OCP review process and raise awareness.
- ⇒ To share information about and discuss sustainability and community planning.
- ⇒ To provide an overview of the current OCP.
- ⇒ To determine what the community would like to see included in the OCP review.
- ⇒ To obtain input on how the community would like to be involved in the OCP review.
- ⇒ To determine suitable methods informing the community on progress and upcoming events related to the OCP review.

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1:00-2:30 | Introductions and Community Presentations on Sustainability |
| 2:30-2:45 | Break |
| 2:45 - 3:15 | Presentation - Community Planning 101 |
| 3:15-3:45 | Overview of the Existing OCP |
| 3:45-4:45 | Small group discussions on what to include in the OCP review, methods for community involvement, and effective methods to reach the community |
| 4:45-5:00 | Discussion and closing remarks |

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)?

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is an agreement between the RDN and its member municipalities on how growth and development will be managed and planned for on a region-wide basis.

What is an Official Community Plan (OCP)?

An OCP is a planning policy document that provides direction on how an area should grow and change over time. An OCP typically includes the goals and objectives of the community as well as the policies, which help shape the community. Generally speaking, the lifespan of an Official Community Plan ranges from 5-10 years. The Official Community Plan must be consistent with and work towards the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Once an OCP is adopted, a Local Government can not approve a bylaw or undertake any works that are contrary to the Official Community Plan.

What is Zoning?

Zoning is the legal mechanism by which Local Governments regulate current land use (i.e residential, industrial, commercial, etc) including parameters of development such as maximum height, minimum setback requirements, and parcel coverage. Zoning also controls the minimum parcel size.

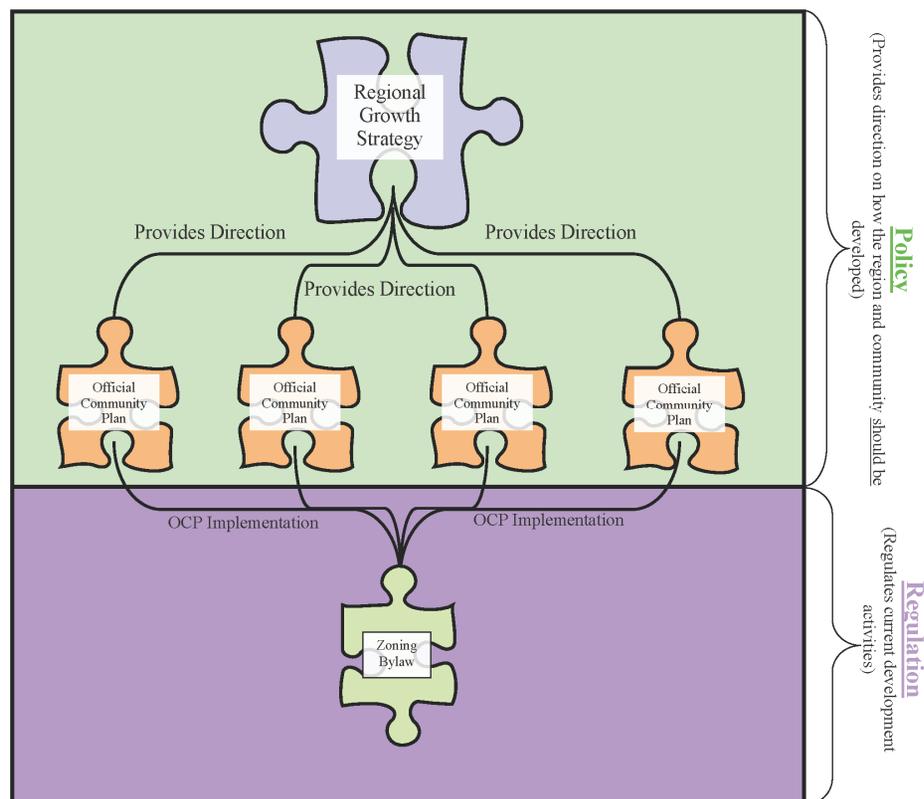
Zoning Bylaws are the primary means of implementing the policies contained in an Official Community Plan.

All proposed developments must be consistent with the Zoning Bylaw.

What is an Official Community Plan land use designation?

Land use designations are included within an Official Community Plan (OCP) and are intended to specify the communities desire's with respect to future land use in a given area. A land use designation include *policies* which assist the Regional District of Nanaimo and the community in working towards the desired future outcome. The policies contained in a land use designation may not accurately reflect the current zoning of a property. However, all changes in zoning must be consistent with the policies contained in the OCP land use designation. Otherwise an amendment to the OCP is required.

Relationship between the RGS, the Official Community Plan, and the Zoning Bylaw



What is a Development Permit Area?

The purpose of a Development Permit Area is to make sure that the potential impacts of a development are addressed and ensure that development within a specified area is conducted in a responsible manner. This is especially important in areas that are environmentally sensitive and/or subject to hazardous conditions.

Most developments proposed within a Development Permit Area must obtain a Development Permit prior to commencement. Development applications are reviewed to ensure that the proposal is consistent with the Development Permit Area Guidelines. In some cases, a report from a professional biologist or engineer may be required to assist staff in evaluating an application. The OCP specifies the information required in order to submit a Development Permit application.

A common misconception about Development Permit Areas is that they are setbacks or “no-go” buffer zones. **This is incorrect.** Development may occur within a Development Permit Area provided the proposal satisfies the Development Permit Area Guidelines.

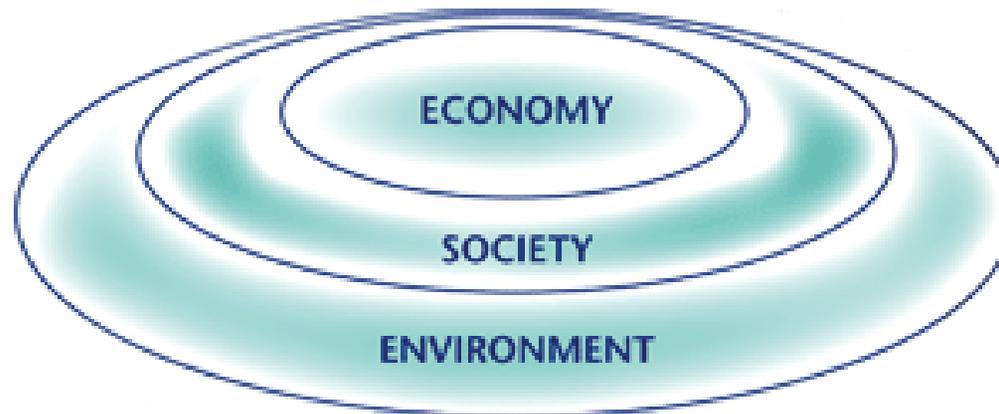
The word sustainability is just one word and yet there are so many definitions.

"Living and managing activities in a way that balances social, economic, environmental and institutional considerations to meet our needs and those of future generations."

- Fraser Basin Council

"Sustainability is about recognizing the inter-relationships between our environment, our society, and our economy. It is about recognizing that people are part of the ecosystem, and that the economic and social lives of people should be integrated into the environment in ways that maintain or enhance the environment, rather than degrade or destroy it. Put another way, sustainability seems to be about recognizing that our economy exists within society, that society is much more than economy, that society exists within the environment, and that the environment surrounds society as illustrated in the below diagram."

- Regional District of Nanaimo Strategic Plan 2006-2009



"Sustainability is a condition of existence which enables the present generation of humans and other species to enjoy social well-being, a vibrant economy and a healthy environment, and to experience fulfillment, beauty and joy, without compromising the ability of future generations of humans and other species to enjoy the same."

- BC Sustainable energy Association.

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- United Nations Brundtland Report



Summary of Regional District of Nanaimo Sustainability Initiatives

Drinking Water Protection

Access to safe and adequate water allows us to make the most of our lives, promotes healthy communities and, if managed properly, preserves the environment in which we live. The Regional District has developed a Drinking Water – Watershed Protection Action Plan aimed at improving our understanding of the region’s watersheds and leading to increased protection of the ground and surface water resources that sustain our communities.

This November the Regional District will be asking residents if they are in favour of establishing a service area for this purpose.

Green Buildings

Green buildings are buildings that require less energy to operate, contribute fewer emissions to the environment, conserve water, generate less solid waste, and provide more comfortable and productive environments for their inhabitants. The RDN has a number of initiatives underway to support the construction of green buildings.

State of Sustainability Project -

The State of Sustainability Project uses 47 indicators to track the region's progress towards sustainability, including energy use, water use, modes of transportation, and environmental impacts. Results and recommendations from this project provide direction on how the region could be more sustainable.

Regional Transit

The Nanaimo Regional Transit System is undertaking initiatives designed to reduce emissions. These include an upcoming biodiesel fuel program, a transit service review and an updated transit business plan. Plans for more frequent service and extended routes are also underway.

Zero Waste

Garbage – we all generate it to varying degrees and most of us are happy to know that someone else will take it off our hands and deal with it. We put it at the curb and away it goes. But changes are happening in how garbage is collected and managed. The RDN is focussing on reducing the region's environmental footprint by minimizing the amount of waste that must be landfilled through reduction, reuse, recycling, redesign, composting, and other actions.

The Regional Landfill has a methane gas collection system in place. This network of pipes and wells under the landfill channels the gas to a facility which currently flares the gas (burns it off) thereby reducing the greenhouse gas effects. By summer 2008 this system will be generating electricity, turning our waste into energy.

And keeping with turning waste into something useful; almost 2,000 homes in the Regional District are separating their kitchen food scraps and compostable waste. It is collected weekly and sent to a composting facility where it is processed into useful fertiliser and compost. The 2,000 homes on the trial project are keeping 20 tonnes of material out of the landfill per month, and giving staff and politicians plenty of information to consider regarding including more homes on the compost collection.

Action on Climate Change

The RDN and its member municipalities have voluntarily embraced developing climate change and energy plans for their respective operations and the region-wide community. These initiatives reflect an integrated approach to environmental protection and sustainability. They emphasize the linkages and coordination of regional and municipal services and the role of local governments in reducing GHG emissions through:

- Land-use, energy and transportation planning
- Infrastructure design
- Purchase and use of sustainable products and services
- Building retrofits
- Water conservation
- Solid waste diversion
- Use of renewable energy

The RDN and its member municipalities have adopted, or are in the process of adopting corporate climate change programs. A draft community climate change program is expected to be presented to the community this fall.

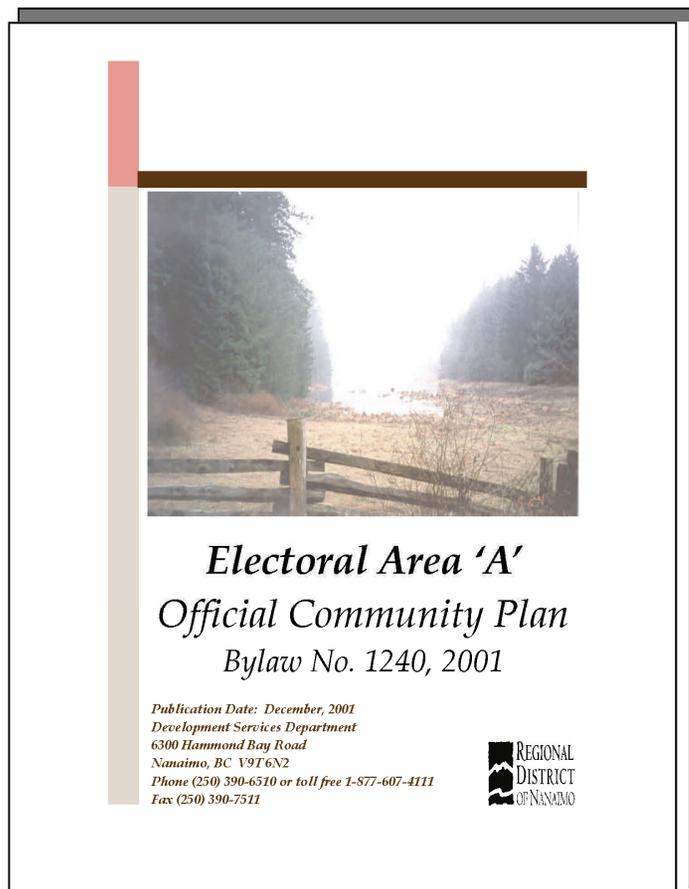
Sustainable Future Awards

The RDN Sustainable Future Awards Program is a program to acknowledge the good work being done in the region, to raise public awareness on sustainability, and to inspire citizens to contribute to the sustainability of the region.

The Regional District of Nanaimo is in the process of establishing a Sustainable Future Awards Advisory Committee to coordinate the program. More information is available at the RDN administration building located at 6300 Hammond Bay Road in Nanaimo or on our website at www.rdn.bc.ca.



Summary of the Current Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan



SECTION 1 - Containing Urban Sprawl and Creating Complete Communities

- The Plan designates two Urban Containment Boundaries— One which is centred around the Cedar Village Centre, but also includes the Suburban Residential Land Use Designation and the other which is surrounding the Cassidy Village Centre.
- The Plan recognizes the Cedar Village Centre as the primary service centre in Electoral Area 'A'.
- The Plan supports in principle the provision of full community water and sewer servicing to lands located within the Urban Containment Boundary and discourages servicing outside of the Urban Containment Boundary except for special cases involving health and environmental concerns.
- The Plan supports a 2000 m² minimum parcel size (maximum density of 5 dwellings per ha) within the Suburban Residential land use designation (which is inside the Urban Containment Boundary).
- The Plan recognizes the Cassidy Village Centre as a local neighbourhood service centre for the Plan Area.

SECTION 2 - Protecting Rural Integrity

The Plan supports the protection of the rural atmosphere of the Plan Area.
The plan designates the following rural land use designations:

Rural Residential Lands: are primarily located within established rural residential areas and acts as a buffer between more intensive agricultural operations and residential neighbourhoods and village centres. The minimum parcel size supported by this designation is 1.0 hectare and the maximum residential density is 1 dwelling unit per hectare. The Plan also support maintaining current parcel sizes which are as small as 2000 m².

Rural Lands: This designation generally includes lots greater than 2 hectares in area which are not located in the Agricultural Land Reserve. While the Plan recognizes existing parcels that are less than 2.0 hectares in area, the minimum parcel size supported by this land use designation is 2.0 hectares. The maximum residential density for lots which existed prior to the adoption of the Official Community Plan is 1 dwelling unit per hectare to a maximum of two per lot. The maximum residential density for lots created after the Official Community Plan was adopted is 1 dwelling unit per hectare to a maximum of 2 per parcel for the parent parcel and a maximum of 1 dwelling unit per parcel for each subsequent lot being created.

Rural Resource Lands: These lands are valued for their resource uses such as agriculture, forestry, and natural resource extraction. This designation supports a minimum parcel size of 50.0 hectares, except that an 8.0 hectare minimum parcel size is supported for lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Maximum residential density is one dwelling unit per hectare to a maximum of 2 dwelling units per parcel.

Summary of the Current Electoral Area ‘A’ Official Community Plan

SECTION 3 -Protecting the Natural Environment

- The Plan identifies a number of environmentally sensitive features including the Nanaimo River and its floodplain, aquifers, coastal areas, streams and other watercourses, eagle and heron nesting trees located within the Plan Area.
- The Plan contains a number of environmental protection policies that encourage the subdivision approving officer to consider the impacts of subdivision on the natural environment.
- The Plan also designates Development Permit Areas for the protection of the natural environment including streams subject to the Riparian Areas Regulations, other select streams, wetlands, lakes and ponds, the Nanaimo River Floodplain, Eagle and Heron nesting trees, and aquifers.

SECTION 4 - Improving Mobility

Since the Regional District of Nanaimo does not have jurisdiction over public roadways, the Official Community Plan must only contain the broad objectives and policies of the Regional District of Nanaimo with respect to roadways. This section of the Plan outlines the broad objectives of the Regional District of Nanaimo and the community with respect to roadways and improving mobility.

SECTION 5 - Creating a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy

This section of the Plan contains policies on various economic drivers within the community including home based business, resource activities, the South Wellington Industrial - Commercial Area, the Cassidy Light Industrial - Commercial Area, Commercial Lands, Industrial Lands, and the Nanaimo Regional Airport. The following summarizes each topic.

Home Based Business: The Plan supports home based businesses that are compatible with surrounding uses, do not negatively affect ground water, and are accessory to the principle residential use of the property.

Resource Activities: This section recognizes that a portion of the Plan area is used for resource activities that are an important part of the local economy. This section contains policies that work towards reducing the impacts of resource uses.

South Wellington Industrial - Commercial Area: The Plan supports an industrial and highway commercial area along the Trans Canada Highway.

Cassidy Light Industrial - Commercial Area: This land use designation is an area of mixed use light industrial and commercial land uses. This section identifies that there is concern with the Cassidy Aquifer, lack of community services, poor highway access, and small parcel sizes.

Commercial Lands: This section designates commercial areas and does not generally support expansions to this designation. This section also supports the rezoning of commercial lands to a rural zoning provided the minimum parcel size is 1.0 hectare and the use is compatible with surrounding uses.

Industrial Lands: This designation applies to most industrial properties within the Plan Area. Expansions to this designation are not supported. The Plan support rezoning lands within this designation to a rural zone. The Plan does not support the future subdivision of land within this designation.

Nanaimo Regional Airport: This section contains a number of policies with respect to the Airport. The Plan recognizes the existing and future aviation-related uses located on the airport lands.

Summary of the Current Electoral Area ‘A’ Official Community Plan

SECTION 6 –Improving Service Efficiency and Resource Use

This section deals with parks and recreation services, education, and water and sewer. The following provides a brief summary of each topic:

Parks and Recreation: This section outlines a strategy for parks and recreation within the Plan Area. The Plan supports the acquisition of parks anywhere within the plan area at the time of subdivision provided the land in question works towards achieving certain community objectives. The Plan also gives the Regional District of Nanaimo the choice of accepting land, cash, or a combination of land and cash.

Education: The Plan supports the development of new school facilities and encourages them to be located on lands within the Urban Containment Boundary.

Water and Sewer: The Plan designates a community sewer service area that coincides with the Urban Containment Boundary. The Plan does not support the extension of sewer servicing to properties located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary except to address health and environmental concerns and not to facilitate additional development. This section recognizes the North Cedar Improvement District as the primary water service provider in the area.

SECTION 7 - Co-operation Among Jurisdictions

This section outlines a strategy and provides some guidance on how the Regional District of Nanaimo should consult with other jurisdiction when dealing with interjurisdictional issues.

Appendix A - Implementation Strategy

This section identifies actions that the Regional District of Nanaimo should consider in implementing the policies contained in the Official Community Plan and prioritizes them as being immediate, short term, long term, or ongoing.

Appendix B - Development Permit Areas

This section contains the Development Permit Area Guidelines which are applicable to each Development Permit Area designated by the Plan. The Plan contains Development Permit Areas for the protection of the environment, protection from hazardous conditions, and form and character of multi-residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Instructions:

Select one person from the group to be the official recorder and another to be the facilitator. Next, discuss each of the questions below and record the groups response on the paper provided. Please refer to the background information provided in this handout to assist you in answering each question.

Time		Questions
20 Minutes	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. After reviewing the summary of the current Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan, please discuss what you would like to see included in the Official Community Plan review. b. To what extent do you think the Official Community Plan should be reviewed? i.e. do you think that it needs a complete overhaul or just a tune up?
30 Minutes	2	<p>It is important to ensure that the Official Community Plan process meets the needs of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How should the Regional District of Nanaimo obtain input from the community? b. How should the Official Community Plan review process be structured to encourage participation from a broad spectrum of Plan Area residents?
10 minutes	3	<p>The efficient flow of information between the Regional District of Nanaimo and community is vital to the success of the Official Community Plan review. One of our goals is to ensure that every Plan Area resident is well informed about the Official Community Plan review.</p> <p>What are the most appropriate methods of sharing information about the Official Community Plan review and how can we (the RDN and the community) best ensure that all Plan Area residents are informed of Official Community Plan related activities?</p>

Background information for question 1

In reviewing the Official Community Plan, we have flexibility in designing a review process that addresses an appropriate depth of review that meets the needs of the community and is required to achieve the community's vision. For example, the Official Community Plan could be completely overhauled or simply "Tuned-up" depending on how the community feels about the existing Official Community Plan. Alternatively, the Official Community Plan may need some major revisions, but you may be happy with its general layout and intent.

Definitions:

Official Community Plan Overhaul: means that the Official Community Plan process would start from scratch by creating a new community vision, identifying community objectives, establishing goals, and drafting policies that reflect the goals and objectives.

Official Community Plan Tune-up: means that the existing Official Community Plan would be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in community priorities and objectives, and changes in legislation.

The following is a sample of some topics that could be included in an Official Community Plan review if the community felt it is important. The following list is by no means an exhaustive list. The topics in blue represent required content in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum density for development both within and outside of the Urban Containment Boundary• Environmental Protection• Transportation and Mobility• Affordable Housing• Parks and recreation• Opportunities for economic development• Sustainable Agriculture• Climate change• Guidelines for future development• Community sustainability• Community water and sewer servicing• Groundwater protection• Protecting rural values• Public Transit• Resource Uses | <p style="text-align: right;">Required Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location, amount, type, and density of residential development• Restrictions on the use of land that is hazardous or environmentally sensitive.• Location and phasing of major roads, sewer and water systems.• Location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses.• Location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction.• Location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites.• Targets for reduction of Green House Gases and policies and actions to achieve those targets. |
|---|--|

Background information for question 2

Effective public participation is important because it acknowledges the desire for community members to participate in the decisions that affect them. There are many different methods of public participation that may be appropriate for this Official Community Plan review. It is important that we understand how the community would like to be involved in the process so we can select appropriate public participation activities that would best address the needs of the community.

Below are some samples of different public participation strategies that could be used in an Official Community Plan Review process and some of their advantages and disadvantages.

Public Participation Techniques	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Steering Committees	A group of community members chosen from a pool of applicants who overall reflect a good cross section of the community form an Official Community Plan Steering Committee. The purpose of the committee is to assist Regional District of Nanaimo staff in drafting a plan that reflects the communities vision. A steering committee does not replace but, rather compliments other public participation methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as a sounding board for proposed Official Community Plan policies. Provides another level of community representation and key points of contact within the community. Allows for in-depth discussion of complex community issues. 	Committee member selection is critical in ensuring equal representation of the different interests in the community.
Community Surveys	A set of questions addressing particular issues is put together to poll the community. The survey could be presented on line, by telephone, or in person. The results are then used in drafting the Official Community Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can obtain responses from a representative sample of the community relatively quickly and accurately. 	The crafting of the survey questions is critical. It does not allow for two way dialogue between community members and/or Regional District of Nanaimo staff.
Workshops	A workshop brings different segments of the community together to identify and work towards solutions on complex community issues. It is usually a one day event that usually includes small groups working through various activities geared towards identifying and resolving community issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a good environment for working through complex community issues. Allows for in-depth discussion amongst community members and Regional District of Nanaimo staff. Allows all participants an equal opportunity to participate. 	Require a significant amount of Regional District of Nanaimo resources. Relies on a good cross section from the community participating.
Coffee Table Meetings	Regional District of Nanaimo staff go out in the community to various community member's houses or significant places within the community and hold small informal meetings to obtain input on specific issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an opportunity for one-on-one in-depth discussion about community issues. It is more personal and allows for discussions about issues that might not otherwise get raised. Encourages people to participate who are not comfortable speaking in a large group setting. 	If not carefully thought out may not result in equal representation.

Background information for question 2

Public Participation Techniques	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Open Houses	Information on the topic is displayed at the venue. There are opportunities for one on one discussion with Regional District of Nanaimo staff, other community members, and stakeholders. An Open House is self paced and allows participants to focus on what is important to them. An Open House usually runs throughout the day allowing people to come and go as their own schedule permits. Comments on the topic are collected in various means such as through exit surveys, staff who record notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an opportunity to discuss the issues with a wide cross section of the community. • Usually provides an environment that fosters more in-depth one on one discussions that some of the other methods. • More opportunity for problem solving and learning rather than just hearing about community concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Houses require more Regional District of Nanaimo resources than some of the other techniques.
Picnic Lunch Meeting/ Pot luck	The community is invited to potluck and all of the participants bring their favourite dish. Activities are provided which allow for issues to be discussed in a small group setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and less formal • Provides an opportunity to discuss community issues in-depth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has to be somewhat structured to keep on task.
Focus Groups	After identifying the key issues in the community. Small groups comprised of various stakeholders are brought together to discuss specific topics in depth. It is similar to conducting an interview but for 6-12 people at the same time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well suited to in-depth discussion on complex community issues • Good for probing peoples views on new ideas, issues, and policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult where there a strong personal agendas. • May be difficult to get people to participate.
Design Charrette	An event where the community is lead through an activity that is geared towards identifying a shared vision and establishing specific design criteria for an area. Usually an architect or other design professional assists to visually capture the communities comments and suggestions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for diverse input and involvement' • Creates a shared vision • Encourages cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited in scope.
Public Meetings	A public meeting relies on the Regional District of Nanaimo or other community group or stakeholder making a presentation to a large number of community members on a particular issue in order to obtain input on that issue. Following the presentation, participants are provided an opportunity to ask questions and/or voice their concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings can provide information to a relatively large group at once. • It is less of a time commitment than some of the other methods. • It is possible to hear some other perspectives in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to discuss and resolve issues and therefore tend to be less productive than other methods. • Has the potential to become confrontational rather than cooperative. • Community members who feel uncomfortable speaking in front of a crowd tend not to participate to the level they would like. • Does not foster an environment well suited to resolving complex community issues.

Background information for question 3

We want to ensure that we are effective in getting information about the Official Community Plan review out to the community. Every community is a little bit different when it comes to how and where it likes to receive information.

Below is a list of potential methods and ideas of how information could be made available to Plan Area residents throughout the Official Community Plan review process.

Advertisements in the Take 5 Magazine

The Regional District of Nanaimo website www.rdn.bc.ca

Advertisements in other newspapers that circulate within the community such as the Nanaimo Daily News, the Nanaimo News Bulletin, etc.

Posting notices in key locations within the Plan Area

The use of email lists for email notification

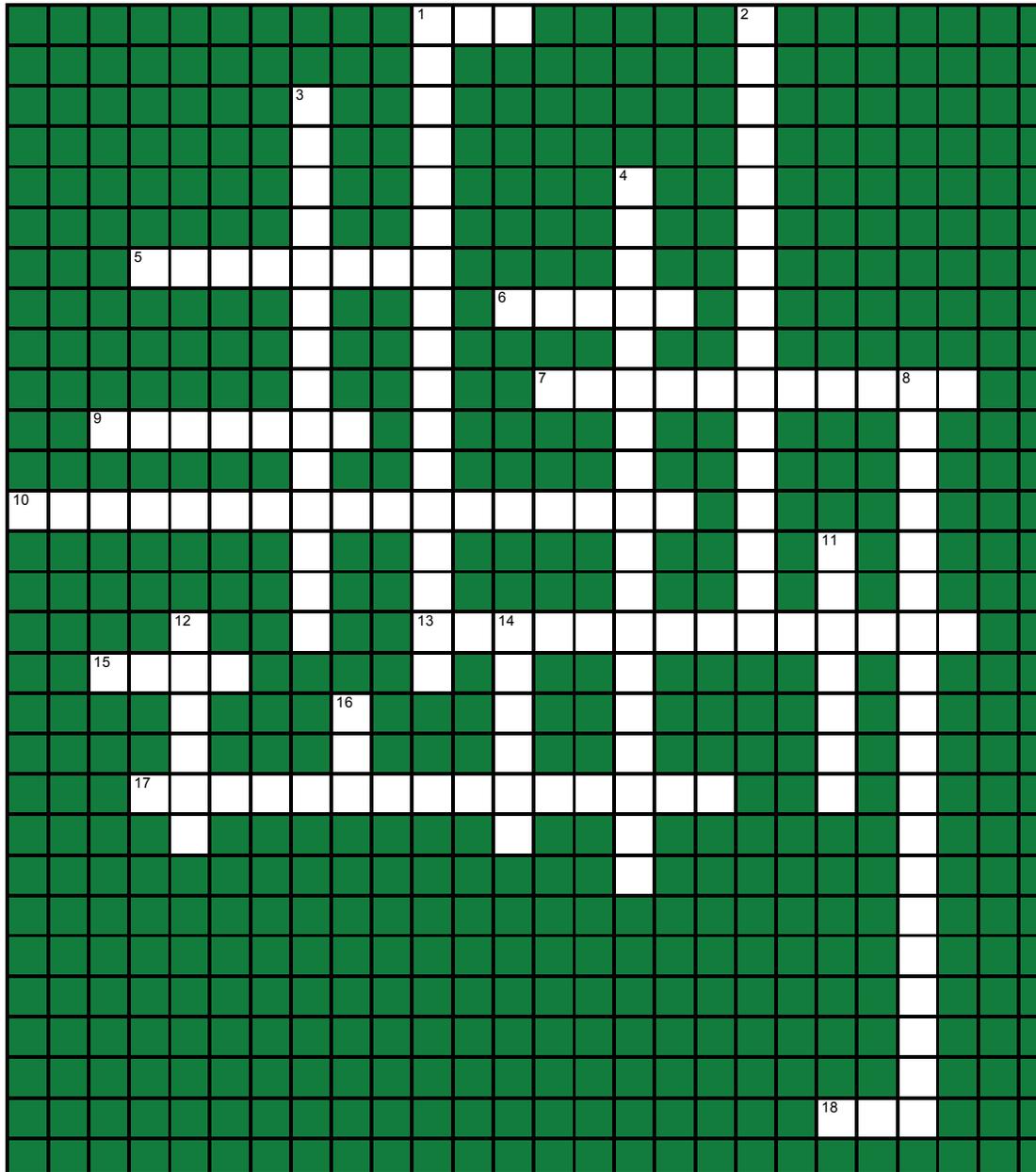
Direct mail outs to all Plan Area residents

Radio and other media announcements

Periodic Newsletters

When answering this question please think about which newspapers you read, what radio station you listen to for local news, where would you naturally look within the community for community announcements.

Community Planning Crossword



Across

- 1 Abbreviation - Development Variance Permit (3)
- 5 One means of obtaining community input. (8)
- 6 Opposite of urban. (5)
- 7 Legal restrictions by which developments must abide. (11)
- 9 A measure of the number of dwelling units in a given area, usually per hectare. (7)
- 10 Provincial Ministry responsible for approving an OCP after 3rd reading. (9,8)
- 13 Process of putting OCP policies in to action. (14)
- 15 Number of readings required to adopt a bylaw. (4)
- 17 Federal Department responsible for aviation. (9,6)
- 18 One of 2 things that a Development Variance Permit can not vary. (The other is density)(3)

Down

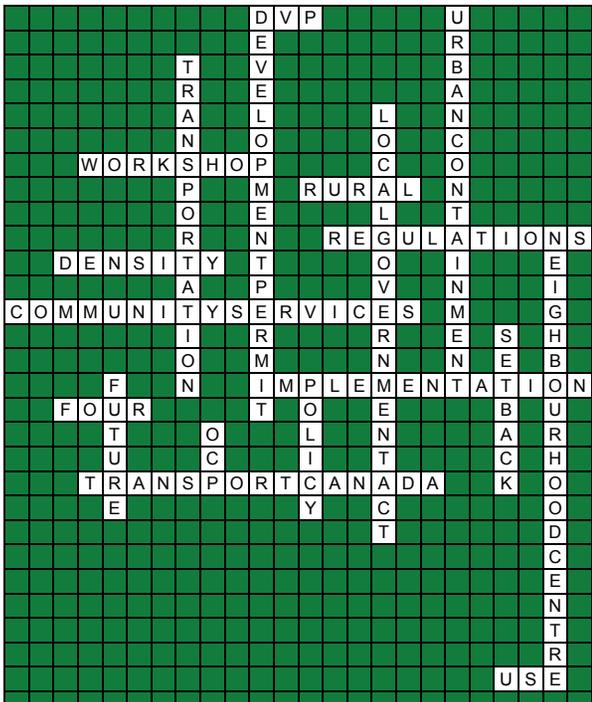
- 1 Used to ensure the impacts of developments are minimized. (11,6)
- 2 Opposite of urban sprawl. (5,11)
- 3 The Provincial Ministry responsible for subdivision and public roads in the RDN. (14)
- 4 Local Government enabling legislation. (5,10,3)
- 8 A place within the community which supports a mix of uses including places to live, work, learn, play, shop, and access services. (13,6)
- 11 Distance from a building or structure to a property line or water feature. (7)
- 12 Planning is a _____ oriented action. (6)
- 14 Guides Decisions to work towards achievable rational outcome's). (6)

What is the Next Step?

Following the community forum, Regional District of Nanaimo staff will compile the community input and begin the process of designing an Official Community Plan review process that reflects the input received at the community forum.

During the summer staff will be busy drafting a technical background report in order to inventory and analyse the current land use policies and regulations within the Plan Area. In addition, a Terms of reference will also be drafted and presented to the Board outlining a proposed Official Community Plan review process. It is anticipated that regardless of what public participation methods are involved in the Official Community Plan process, that activities would begin sometime in late summer or early fall of 2008.

Crossword Solution



For more information or if you have any questions about the material presented at the Community Forum or within this program, please contact the Regional District of Nanaimo Planning Department at:
(250) 390-6510
or go to the Regional District of Nanaimo website at:
www.rdn.bc.ca