

Electoral Area H

Official Community Plan Review



Summary of Proposed Changes in Draft Official Community Plan Version 2

May, 2017

Section 1 – Introduction and Purpose

This section includes background information and demographics as well as the Community Values Statement which functions as a “vision” for the document, or “guiding principles”. The overall direction for this Plan as captured in the Community Values Statement is confirmed through this review process, to continue to be relevant.

- New reference to Qualicum First Nation reserve in description of the area
- Reference to the 2016/17 update to the Plan and description of the process
- Updated population growth to include recent Census data and growth projections
- New information on significant aging of the population over time
- Updated Community Values Statement #11 regarding First Nations consultation

Section 2 – The Natural Environment

Community input identified a few key priorities for this section: ongoing and enhanced understanding and protection of aquifers, reducing the proliferation of seawalls and riprap on the marine coast, improved protection of the coastal and marine environment, and addressing climate change. OCP updates in the Draft reflect these priorities as well as others listed below:

- Changed title from Environmentally Sensitive Areas to Sensitive Ecosystems to broaden scope
- Previous section 2.5 Protection of Wildlife and Native Plants is now incorporated into section 2.1
- New “advocacy policy” sub-heading to group policies that are outside the ability of the RDN to directly implement (added throughout the Plan)
- Objectives and policies directly related to surface and groundwater protection are merged with to section 2.3 Freshwater Resources to reduce duplication
- New background information about the coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone
- New references to climate change and associated impacts
- Updated references to “best practice interface building and landscaping techniques” to refer to “FireSmart” (updated throughout the Plan)
- New policy for protection of aquifer recharge areas, particularly well head capture areas of water improvement districts



- New map of groundwater features
- Section 2.4 Coastal Zone Management re-titled to “Marine Environment” to reflect current terminology
- New background information on characteristics of the marine coastline to support new policies for protection of coastal processes and natural shorelines
- New objective and policies for protection of marine ecosystems and natural coastal processes including new policy that structural modification to the shoreline such as with sea walls and rip rap will only be permitted when a Green Shores (softer) approach is not a practical alternative
- New policy to not support encroachment permits on public beach access rights-of-way
- New advocacy policy encouraging the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to consult with local residents and the RDN prior to issuing any new or amended licenses for seaweed harvesting, and to encourage them to communicate about the harvest and to continue to conduct scientific research
- New section 2.5 Climate Change and Energy moved from section 6 in current OCP and significantly re-worded to reflect actions already undertaken and to be consistent with the format of the rest of the OCP where each section has an introduction, objectives, and policies.
- In addition, development permit areas (Section 8) for the protection of the natural environment have been revised and updated to reflect community input.

Section 3 – Natural Resource Management

A key focus of updates to this section is on agriculture and the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). To respond to concerns of ALR property owners, as part of this OCP Review the RDN contracted an agrologist to review the boundary of the ALR and make recommendations for amendments. The Final Report and Existing Conditions Report on that study can be found on the [project website](#).

- Section 3.1 “Agriculture” title amended to “Agriculture and Aquaculture” to reflect recommendations in the 2012 RDN Agriculture Area Plan for OCPs to better support agriculture, including aquaculture.
- Add reference to local food system to reflect current views of and priorities for food security
- Add background on ALR designation and 1987 boundary review in Area ‘H’
- Add background on shellfish aquaculture industry and objective to support it
- Revised Objective 2 to improve support for aquaculture industry.
- New Objective 3 to recognize the potential conflict between residential and agriculture/aquaculture uses at the interface between the two.
- New Policy 4 to support applications for non-farm use or exclusion of land from the ALR where an essential community service is provided that outweighs the loss to agriculture.
- New Policy 5 to support land-based components of aquaculture.
- New Policy 7 to introduce a development permit area for subdivision on lands adjacent to the ALR (not on the ALR lands themselves) to reduce future conflicts between agricultural uses and other adjacent uses.
- New Policy 8 for agrology reports submitted in support of subdivision within or exclusion of land from the ALR to fully consider non-soil based farming activities. As the Agricultural Land Commission considers this a significant factor in their decisions, requiring that agrology reports



include this is consideration is hoped to assist owners of ALR land in considering other options, and assist the AAC in making their recommendations.

- Add advocacy policy encouraging the Ministry of Agriculture and local farm organizations to assist and support owners of agricultural land will options and opportunities related to all aspects of farming.
- To the Forestry section, add reference to the Coastal Douglas Fir Land Use Order protection area established in 2010, and update percentage land cover statistics

Section 4 – Community Resources

Key updates to the Community Resources section reflect park acquisition priorities accomplished and new priorities set, creation of an Active Transportation Plan, wellhead protection plans created by Improvement Districts, the future of rail service on the E&N railway being uncertain, and a new RDN Transit service to Area H. In particular, the following updates are included in the Draft OCP:

- Revised introductory text in 4.1 Parks and Open Space for clarity and to reduce duplication with Section 2.1 Sensitive Ecosystems
- New references to Active Transportation Plan for Area 'H' in order to assist in its implementation. The Active Transportation Plan can be found on the [project website](#).
- New reference to informal trail systems to acknowledge the full extent of trails in the area regardless of whether or not the RDN manages them
- Updated accomplishments such as Henry Morgan Park and current work on Dunsmuir Park
- New policy on RDN considerations for review of road closure applications to ensure that their value as public land for active transportation and recreation is considered and to not support road closure applications if retaining the right-of-way will benefit future parks and trails development. This responds to concern that in recent years, at least one right-of-way was eliminated that reduces the ability to establish a future trail in a key location.
- Updated references to Community Parks and Trails Strategy and Regional Parks and Trails Plan
- Clarified policy for park dedication at time of subdivision for ease of interpretation
- Updated parkland acquisition priorities and consolidated into one policy to assist in implementation
- New policy to support creation of a regional parks development cost charge bylaw
- Add background on well head protection plans for the three water improvement districts and policy to protect through land use regulation and development permit area
- Add policy supportive of community sewer outside of village centres where there is a threat to public health
- Add policy supportive of community sewer outside of village centres to achieve other objectives of this Plan related to alternative forms of rural development (this has be supported by an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy before it can be implemented).
- Add reference to active transportation as part of the overall transportation network and requirement that facilities be considered for community amenity contributions at the time of rezoning
- Add objective for second access to neighbourhoods with only one way in and one way out



- Strengthened advocacy policies for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and wayfinding and tourist attraction signage.
- Add advocacy policy to encourage BC Transit and the Comox Valley Regional District to work with the RDN to develop a public transportation connection between Deep Bay and transit in the Comox Valley Regional District
- Add advocacy policy to encourage the Deep Bay Harbour Authority to provide additional off-street parking
- Add policy to support new boat launches

Section 5—The Development Strategy

The Development Strategy includes objectives and policies for each of the land use designations found on Map No. 5.

The broad community input guiding changes to this section is to encourage growth in Village Centres and keep the rural lands rural, but consider some development in key locations that meet specific conditions. A number of changes address this feedback including policies supporting rezoning in the Rural designation for tourist commercial and service commercial uses, allowing temporary use permits which were not previously available, and adding one lot from the Bowser Village Centre “future use area” into the Village Centre to provide road access to the proposed Bowser Seniors Housing Society development. A new section on Alternative Forms of Rural Development opens opportunity for creativity and flexibility in subdivision design without increasing the overall development potential outside the Growth Containment Boundary.

There are three significant, potential changes to the development strategy that are subject to further community input prior to recommendation from the RDN in the form of draft OCP language: development at Deep Bay Southwest (Baynes Sound Investments), two lots at Faye Road, and commercial development at the Horne Lake and Highway 19A intersection.

5.1 Development Guideline Criteria:

- #4 expanded for clarity of when a hydro-geological study is required and terminology updated.
- #7 new to reflect integration of the Climate Change and Energy OCP section throughout.
- #9 changes the term “stormwater” management to “rainwater” management to reflect current terminology.
- Shortened and revised some wording
- Revised for clarity how confirmation of quality and quantity of water is confirmed when within a community water service area. Will be by referral from the RDN to the Improvement District which is consistent the process for RDN-operated water systems.
- Expanded section on development approval information – technical addition

5.2 Resource:

- Added mention of aquaculture
- New Objective 5 to encourage farm activities on productive agricultural lands moved from the Rural designation



- New Objective 6 to protect agricultural lands for present and future food production.
- In Policy 2, creation of new land use designation for ALR lands called “Resource – Agricultural”. This will be shown on Map No. 5 – Land Use Designations
- Working Group feedback included suggestion of setting a maximum house size in the ALR to reduce likelihood of estate development instead of farming. This question will be put to further public consultation along with the question noted in the draft of section 5.2: if Policy 3 should be removed that supports subdivision into lots smaller than 8 ha if supported by the current zoning bylaw.

5.3 Rural:

- New Objective 3 to encourage alternative subdivision design to help limit sprawl, reduce fragmentation of ecological systems, and create more sustainable land use patterns. This objective is implemented through new Section 5.10.
- New Objective 4 to support tourist commercial and service commercial development that is compatible with the local area and adjacent properties. This is in response to community input asking for more flexibility in the OCP to support new business ideas and initiatives in these areas.
- New Policies 4 and 5 to implement Objective 4 related to supporting tourist commercial and service commercial development
- New Policy 3 to recognize support for secondary suites that were previously permitted through another RDN project that amended the zoning bylaw.
- Removed former Policy 4 that supported consideration of rezoning to a 2.0 hectare minimum parcel size (lower than the 4.0 hectare size in the overall policies for this land use designation) if a list of criteria were met. Instead, smaller minimum parcel sizes are supported through a new section 5.10 of this OCP called “Alternative Forms of Rural Development”.
- Two potential site-specific OCP amendments in the Rural designation have been identified and the OCP Draft Version 2 includes two notes to refer to the locations: the intersection of Horne Lake Road and Highway 19, and lots 6 and 7 on Faye Road near the school. A separate document will describe options for addressing these proposals for which there has been support from the Community Working Group.

5.4 Rural Residential:

- New Objective 4 to encourage alternative subdivision design to help limit sprawl, reduce fragmentation of ecological systems, and create more sustainable land use patterns. This objective is implemented through new Section 5.10.

5.5 Rural Village Centres

- Additional text in the Introduction to describe the distinct characteristics of Qualicum Bay and Dunsmuir Village Centres. (The Bowser Village Plan, adopted in 2010, provides objectives and policies specific to Bowser).
- New Objective 7 and Policy 4 encouraging a range of housing types including affordable housing.
- New Policies 5 and 6 to provide direction to rezoning proposals.



- New Policy 7 supporting a future review of this Plan to consider reducing the area of Qualicum Bay and Dunsmuir Village Centres and re-designating them as Local Service Areas in order to focus the commercial mixed-use centre of the area in Bowser, and encourage local services or tourist commercial uses in the other two Village Centres.

5.6 Tourist Commercial

- Name of this land use designation changed from Resort Commercial to Tourist Commercial to more broadly refer to the type of development supported in this designation.
- Revised policy 4 to add consideration of scale and make terminology more consistent with other policies of the Plan.
- Revised Policy 3 to provide more guidance for consideration of rezoning applications for new tourist commercial uses
- New Policy 5 to consider providing staff housing on site of new or expanded tourist commercial accommodation.

5.7 Recreation

- New Objective 3 to consider conditions under which Horne Lake Strata could be re-designated for residential use.
- New Policy 2 to outline conditions under which the OCP would support re-designation of the Horne Lake Strata properties to residential use.

Park Land Use Designation

- This designation was removed from Section 5 of the OCP as the objectives and policies are adequately covered in Section 4.1 Parks and Open Space.

5.8 Deep Bay

- New land use designation to reflect community input that there should be specific objectives and policies for the area to reflect unique issues and opportunities. This section was developed in consideration of input received throughout the OCP Review so far include a workshop on Deep Bay specifically.
- A potential site-specific OCP amendment in the Deep Bay area (Rural designation) has been identified and the OCP Draft Version 2 includes a note to refer to this. These lands have recently been known as the "Baynes Sound Investment" lands and are being referred to in this project as Deep Bay Southwest to remove attachment to a particular owner in the name. A separate document will describe options for policies on these lands which the Working Group has had extensive discussion on and there are a variety of views.

5.9 Affordable and Accessible Housing

- New section to reflect community input regarding the need to address housing affordability, and to implement the 2010 Affordable Housing Action Plan of the RDN that made recommendations for OCPs.



5.10 Alternative Forms of Rural Development

- New section. In order to encourage more sustainable forms of rural development outside the Growth Containment Boundary (Rural Village Centres), this section provides opportunities for flexibility in minimum lot size and for transfer of potential dwelling units where the overall number of potential dwelling units does not increase outside the Rural Village Centres.
- Learn more about flexibility in minimum lot sizes with the [Alternative Subdivision Design information sheet](#).

5.11 Temporary Use Permits

- New Section that allows the RDN Board to issue a permit that allows commercial or industrial activities to take place under conditions, for a period of up to three years and subject to renewal.
- This is a standard section in many Official Community Plans and is a tool for local governments to encourage economic development.

Map No. 5 – Land Use Designations

- New “Institutional” designation added that includes the Vancouver Island University Marine Station and Bowser Elementary to ensure that these locations remain as Institutional use
- Revised Tourist Commercial / Rural Residential boundary at the Deep Bay Campground and adjacent properties to remove designations split across lots that were adopted in the past when a subdivision along those lines was anticipated.
- New “Resource – Agricultural” designation for land in the Agricultural Land Reserve
- Designation changed from Resource to Rural on the lot including addresses 850, 860, 870 Spider Lake Road as it was excluded from the Agricultural Land Reserve

Section 6—First Nations and Reconciliation

New section recognizing the partnerships and economic opportunities currently existing and aimed for with the First Nations who have interest in the Plan Area, and including objectives and policies for protection of heritage sites (which includes archaeological sites).

Section 7 – Implementation

- The table of implementation actions is updated to reflect the changes in the draft OCP
- New Community Amenity Contribution section to provide clarity for developers and stronger assurance for the community that desired amenities identified through this OCP Review will be obtained when the opportunity arises through development.

Section 8 – Development Permit Areas

Development permit areas are a tool used by local government to regulate certain aspects of development that are not directly addressed in the zoning or building bylaw, and where there are special conditions such as environmentally sensitive areas, hazardous lands, or objectives for the form and



character of a commercial area. The development permit areas in this OCP were thoroughly reviewed and revised as follows:

- Removing the need for a development permit where a building permit is required – the current development permit areas were adopted before there was building inspection in the Plan Area.
- Clarifying language where use of these development permits over time has shown areas that lack clarity
- Adding more preamble to provide clarity for property owners, consultants, and the RDN on what are the objectives of the development permit area and what is trying to be achieved.
- Adding more exemptions wherever possible for small/minor developments that are unlikely to impact the objectives of the development permit area.

A list of specific changes to each development permit area will be outlined in an updated version of this document when the draft development permit areas are distributed to the public.