



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

Electoral Area F

# OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Update



## Phase 2: Engage - Final Engagement Summary and Recommendations

June 2022

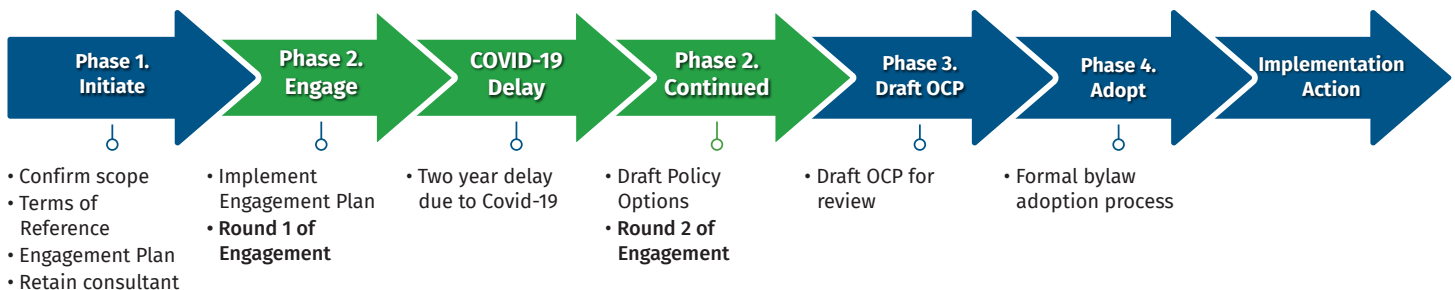
# PHASE 2: ENGAGE - FINAL ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Project Overview

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is updating the Electoral Area F Official Community Plan (OCP). Electoral Area F includes the communities of Coombs, Hilliers, Errington, Meadowood, Whiskey Creek, and the surrounding rural areas. The Area F OCP update process includes completing best practices research, reviewing technical information, reviewing existing RDN policies and strategies, and gathering information and feedback from community members.

## Engagement Overview

As part of the OCP Update process, a comprehensive engagement approach was developed to provide opportunities for community members to learn about the project and share their ideas and perspectives at key milestones throughout the duration of the project. **In Phase 2: Engage** of the OCP Update process, two rounds of engagement were implemented.



## ROUND 1

The **first round of engagement** was held in February and March 2020. It was designed to raise awareness about the project, gather input from community members and stakeholders, check in with the community about the OCP Community Values created 20 years ago, and ask what has been working or not working with the current OCP. Engagement was structured around the topic areas of Growth Management, Employment and Economy, Climate Change Preparedness, Environment, Housing, and Mobility, Health, and Well-Being.

Community members were asked to review the current OCP Community Values and provide feedback on whether the values were still relevant or how they could be improved. Community members were also asked to provide feedback on challenges they are experiencing or opportunities they see for the future.

## ROUND 2

The **second round of engagement** was then put on-hold in March 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 related in-person gathering restrictions. The second round of engagement resumed in February 2022, following an update to the RDN Board approved engagement plan which shifted all in-person events to be held by virtual means.

The second round of engagement occurred between February and March 2022 and several opportunities were provided for community members to review and share feedback on OCP Policy Options and draft Community Values. The OCP Policy Options and draft Community Values were developed based on the feedback received in February and March 2020 as part of the first round of engagement.

Community members were asked to review the revisions to the Community Values, including current Values recommended to remain the same, Values recommended to be revised, Values recommended to be deleted, and new Values recommended to be added. Community members were also asked to provide feedback on a number of topic areas and associated policy options under each of the three main themes of Growth, Character, and Resilience to identify whether they reflect the current vision and values of the community.

## FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

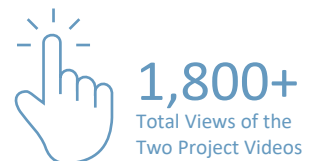
The following First Nations were identified as having an interest in the OCP Area: Snaw-naw-as First Nation, Qualicum First Nation, K'ómoks First Nation, We-Wai-Kai Nation, Tseshah First Nation, Hupacasath First Nation, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and Stz'uminus First Nation. As part of the engagement process, First Nations identified to have an interest in the Plan Area were sent referral letters in February 2020 and February 2022 that introduced the project and invited them to meet with the project team to discuss their interests in the OCP Update. Follow-up phone calls took place to confirm the information was received and to provide an opportunity for the project team to answer any questions or organize meetings as necessary.

## ON-GOING ENGAGEMENT

In addition to formal engagement opportunities provided in Round 1 and Round 2 of engagement, community members were encouraged to connect with the project team to provide feedback or ask questions throughout the process. Several options were provided for community members to contact the team:

- Project office hours by appointment
- Question and Answer section on the project website
- Project email and toll-free telephone number
- Direct communication with the Area F Director and RDN Planning staff

### OCP Engagement by the Numbers



## Communications Overview

During both rounds of engagement, project information and opportunities to get involved in the project and provide feedback were advertised and promoted through several methods:



- Project website: [www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/areafocp](http://www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/areafocp)
  - » Project videos hosted on the project website and circulated via social media
  - » Direct emails to project subscribers
- Posters placed in key locations throughout Area F
- Postcards mailed to all community members in Area F
- Social media posts via Facebook and Twitter
- Multiple project advertisements placed in the Parksville Qualicum Beach News
- RDN monthly ads placed in the Parksville Qualicum Beach News
- Project news release posted on the RDN website, emailed to those that signed-up to receive news releases from the RDN website, and published in the Parksville Qualicum Beach News and Oceanside News
- Direct letters sent to identified First Nations and project stakeholders

Additional information on the engagement process and feedback shared throughout both rounds of engagement can be found in the detailed **Round 1 Engagement Summary Report** and **Round 2 Engagement Summary Report** available on the [project website](http://www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/areafocp).

## Electoral Area F OCP Update Recommendations

Recommendations on how the OCP could be updated have been developed based on community feedback shared through both rounds of engagement implemented in **Phase 2** of the OCP Update. The recommendations provided below are informed by the key takeaways that emerged from community members' input on the Community Values, challenges and opportunities, and Policy Options only, and do not consider technical constraints and opportunities, or planning best practices.

Recommendations are grouped based on the four theme areas where feedback was sought in Round 2: Community Values, Growth, Character, and Resilience. Based on community input, there were additional revisions identified that should be considered in the updates to the OCP's Community Values and to OCP policies.

### COMMUNITY VALUES

#### Stay the Same:

Based on feedback from Round 1 of engagement, 14 existing Community Values were recommended to stay the same. Additional input was shared by community members on how those Values might be further refined. A recommendation is provided only where community members shared feedback on a specific existing Community Value that was recommended to stay the same.

The complete listing of the Community Values discussed below can be viewed in the Community Value workbook located [here](#).

- Community Value #1 should stay the same; however, a revision could include that businesses would only be supported if they do not negatively impact the environment.
- Community Value #2 should stay the same.
- Community Value #4 should stay the same.
- Community Value #6 should stay the same.
- Community Value #7 should stay the same.
- Community Value #8 should stay the same.
- Community Value #9 should emphasize connectivity to village centres through trails.
- Community Value #10 should stay the same.
- Community Value #11 should stay the same, potentially with the addition of alternative methods of transportation.
- Community Value #12 should stay the same.
- Community Value #14 should be included in the OCP, but 'quality of life' could be further defined to incorporate Area F community members' values, including quietness, dark skies, low traffic, and low levels of regulation.

## Update:

- Community Value #15 should be revised to consider the addition of regulations, enforcement, and clear, simple guidelines and bylaws where good neighbour practices are not enough, while generally maintaining relatively low levels of regulation.
- Community Value #16 should be revised to consider the preservation of the rural character of Area F, while supporting a mix of housing types.
- Community Value #17 should be revised to add clarification that sprawl will be avoided outside the Growth Containment Boundary.
- Community Value #18 should remain as proposed.

## New:

- Community Value #21 should remain as proposed, potentially with additional specific actions as to how it would be achieved.
- Community Value #22 should be revised to further define 'appropriately zoned,' to reflect community members' concerns for potential environmental impacts from commercial development.
- Community Value #23 should be revised to add additional clarification of the phrase 'local economic development' and consideration that all types of agriculture should be supported.

## Remove:

While there was confusion as to how to answer the question related to the Community Values that were recommended for removal, based on the comments provided, the following two values could be removed from the OCP as the potential land use conflicts they created at the time when the OCP was first adopted have been resolved and the Community Values are no longer relevant:

- Support for a more self-sufficient use of land, where more than one land use activity is conducted on any parcel.
- Support for existing businesses that located in the Plan Area under pre-official community plan circumstances and regulations.

## GROWTH

### Growth Management and Servicing

- Additional growth should be contained in the existing Growth Containment Boundary areas, provided that any new development reflects the character of Area F, incompatible uses are avoided, the environment is protected, and impacts to rainwater run-off are minimized. Existing minimum parcel size and density requirements should continue as they are now.
- Where additional growth is supported in Area F, alternative servicing technologies should be used to minimize environmental impacts; however, the use of servicing technologies should recognize the rural character of Area F.
- Some or all of the Rural Village Centres should be reclassified to Local Service Centres to reflect current and future servicing constraints that limits their evolution into mixed use centres.
- Community members expressed concerns with policies encouraging alternative forms of rural development, such as transfer of dwelling unit potential and flexibility in minimum lot size due to concerns about the environmental impacts of increased density. Additional information and further community discussion is recommended to better understand environmental implications and objectives prior to a final decision on including in the updated OCP.
- Community members should be given additional clarification and detail on what a review of the current Area F boundary and potential restructure would involve, prior to undertaking an electoral area boundary assessment.
- Policies encouraging education and strategies for stormwater management should be included in the OCP update. The use of greywater should also be considered.

### Land Use

- The OCP should include additional clarification for the Bellevue-Church Road Rural Separation Area to provide direction for future development and limit potential for incompatible land uses.
- Commercial/industrial development should be located in the Bellevue/Church Road area, provided separation is maintained from residential and agricultural uses, watersheds, and forested areas, and impacts to Area F's water supply are minimized.

- Education and good neighbour practices should be recognized in the OCP as primary methods of protecting the environment and mitigating land use conflicts; however, additional regulations and tools may be needed where these methods are not effective enough to address areas of concern. Enforcement of current regulations and additional regulations should be a priority.
- Current minimum lot size and density requirements should be maintained in order to reduce environmental impacts and maintain the rural character of Area F.

### Protecting the Natural Environment

- Policies should be included in the OCP to protect environmentally sensitive areas, surface and groundwater, and natural eco assets.

### Resource Management

- Policies encouraging the protection of existing industrial lands should be included in the OCP, provided they don't limit opportunity for economic diversification and industrial uses are separated from residential areas and environmentally sensitive features.
- Policies supporting cooperation between all parties related to forest lands should be included in the OCP, provided environmental and watershed impacts are considered.
- Enforcement of environmentally responsible approaches, regulations related to setbacks and impacts to ecosystems and groundwater, and consideration of potential financial impacts to landowners if strict restrictions are applied are necessary if resource extraction is to be supported in the OCP.

### Recreation Amenities

- Policies supporting the preservation of existing parks and trail systems and the creation of new parks and trail systems, particularly near and connecting between village centres, should be included in the OCP, provided impacts to the environment are considered and they are not located within smaller, privately owned lands.



## CHARACTER

### Housing

- Policies encouraging alternative and diverse forms of housing should be included in the OCP to increase the availability of affordable housing and rentals, provided that capacity of water and septic systems, the look and feel of housing forms, and environmental impacts are taken into account.
- Minimum lot size should be maintained to preserve rural character and to keep density within the servicing limitations of Area F.
- Policies encouraging secondary suites should be included in the OCP, as they provide more housing with minimal servicing requirements, as long as potential impacts to water and septic systems are considered.
- Building stratas for single family dwellings should not be encouraged in the OCP, as they may not address affordable housing, could result in negative impacts to groundwater supply/quality and the environment, the loss of agricultural lands, and there are servicing capacity limitations. If necessary, building stratas could be restricted to designated areas, like village centres, to mitigate potential negative impacts.

### Employment and Economy

- Policies that encourage and support a diversity of local businesses should be included in the OCP to support existing businesses and provide additional employment opportunities in the area. Regulations to ensure businesses are located in appropriate areas and respect the environment should be included, as long as they are not overly prescriptive.
- Policies supporting increased tourism opportunities should be included in the OCP, provided that traffic and parking concerns are addressed, and impacts to the environment are mitigated.
- The OCP should include policies that support and encourage home-based businesses, as they are integral to the character of Area F; regulations should only be considered to minimize negative impacts to the environment and neighbouring properties.

- The OCP should continue to support all forms of agriculture in Area F and no additional regulations from RDN are needed.
- Policies balancing support for the sustainable harvesting of forest lands to protect local jobs while minimizing environmental impacts and land use conflicts should be included in the OCP.
- Policies encouraging advocacy to other levels of government for reducing the time and effort to go through approvals processes, such as subdivisions and re-zoning, should be included in the OCP.

### Arts, Culture and Heritage

- Policies that support partnerships for additional arts and culture programming and efforts to promote awareness of archaeological sites could be included in the OCP, as they were generally supported, but many community members feel that they are not necessarily needed in the OCP itself, as they are the responsibility of other levels of governments.
- Policies that support advancing reconciliation should be included in the OCP.

### Health and Wellbeing

- Policies that support working with community partners to address public safety and barriers to childcare and health services should be included in the OCP, but clarification is needed on what role the RDN will play in addressing these areas of concern.
- The OCP should encourage the use of education and community facilities in Area F to provide additional programming (educational, recreational, social, cultural etc.) for various groups.



## RESILIENCE

### Climate Adaptation

- Development permit areas should be used to protect natural areas, including trees and aquifers.
- Policies in the OCP addressing climate change, including the setting of targets, should be based on science and consideration of how community design and sprawl impacts climate change.
- Electric vehicle charging stations should be installed in the future on either privately owned lands at the cost of home and business owners, or in village centres with government funding, provided there is sufficient community demand and risks of vandalism are considered.
- Policies supporting waste and recycling education campaigns, local curbside recycling pick-up, and collaboration between adjacent governments to expand recycling services should be included in the OCP, provided costs of services are considered.
- Development incentives should be included in the OCP to encourage sustainable building practices and alternative modes of transportation, but it is important that development does not become too over-regulated.
- There was mixed feedback on whether regulations should be implemented to increase community resilience. If regulations are introduced in the OCP, they should be combined with educational programs on fire safety and hazard awareness.

### Hazard Planning

- Policies supporting initiatives aimed at reducing wildfire risk, including FireSmart practices, education, increased access points and evacuation routes, incorporation of Indigenous fire management practices, and discouraging development that increases wildfire risk, should be included in the OCP, with consideration for costs of implementation and potential impacts to individual landowners.
- Slope hazard areas should be identified in the OCP, but clarification is needed on who would be responsible for the costs associated with assessment services by an engineer.
- Policies supporting practices that mitigate flood risk, such as restricting development on flood plains, use of the Sustainable Site Guide, and First Nations methods of flood mitigation, should be included in the OCP.

- Development Permit Areas for hazard lands in Area F should be created to address areas of concern and help mitigate the need for future emergency management approaches. Additionally, policies encouraging community stewardship and education should be included in the OCP to address issues related to development in areas subject to hazards.

### Food Systems

- Policies that encourage local food production, innovative farming technologies, community gardens, and other agriculture approaches, including the preservation of land for food production, should be included in the OCP.

### Transportation

- Alternative transportation options, such as public transit, trails, and other active transportation routes, should be recognized in the OCP, if and where feasible. Based on community members' feedback, it is essential to examine the costs vs. benefits of implementing alternative forms of transportation prior to implementation.
- Policies encouraging advocacy to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to address concerns such as traffic speed, congestion, parking, safety on roads, and general, on-going maintenance, in the Coombs area and Errington Road in particular, should be included in the OCP.

### Sustainable Site Development

- The Sustainable Site Planning checklist should be included in relevant sections of the OCP, but there needs to be consideration of costs associated. Additionally, the Sustainable Site Planning checklist should reference landscaping and tree management policies and management of stormwater on-site, post-development.
- Policies that support energy efficient development should be included in the OCP, provided that they are not overly prescriptive or burdensome to community members and landowners who wish to develop.
- Educational campaigns to promote rebates and incentives for sustainable building practices are encouraged to support energy efficient development.

## Next Steps

The Electoral Area F OCP will be updated based on feedback shared by community members through both rounds of engagement in **Phase 2: Engage** of the OCP Update process, as well as technical studies and best practices. The updated draft OCP will be shared with Area F community members for review and comment in Round 3 of engagement as part of **Phase 3: Draft OCP**. Phase 4: Adoption will take place once Round 3 of engagement has concluded and the Draft OCP has been updated and finalized. This final phase includes the legislated bylaw adoption process including a public hearing.