

4.0 PART II – “THE PLAN”

To help achieve the overall vision, each major section of “Part II - The Plan” is separated into Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions. This helps to communicate the vision for the particular section and to then facilitate action at a policy level towards achieving the stated goals.

4.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT (RCS)

Local planning and land use policies link with and work towards the goals and objectives established in the Capital Regional District’s Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The RGS was approved for the Capital Regional District (CRD) by the Board for the Capital Region in August 2003 and was reaffirmed in the RGS State of the Region report of 2008. The growth management strategy defines areas where different types of land uses and development growth will be focused as well as areas where development will be controlled. Member municipalities must therefore create a ‘Regional Context Statement’ in their Official Community Plans which indicate how the goals of their OCP meet the objectives of the RGS.

The District of Sooke will be proactive in addressing growth, rather than reactive, through policy and regulatory amendments, and through the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw. Infrastructure servicing will not be used as a growth control mechanism, but rather to support growth initiatives in targeted locations, promote better environmental stewardship (e.g. water quality of the harbor and basin), and to better the health and safety of residents. Growth management, environmental issues, and land use designations will guide planning and decisions about development intensity. Within this context, site specific land use and density will be determined in the creation of a new zoning bylaw after District of Sooke Council adopts this OCP.

It is the District of Sooke Regional Context Statement which links the OCP land use goals to the RGS. The OCP envisions development that shall strengthen and diversify the local economy and community; however the District of Sooke shall strive to ensure that such growth is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, so as to protect and enhance community liveability and support efficient infrastructure, all of which are goals of the RGS.

Though supportive of managed growth, Sooke will continue to examine the full and long term economic costs of infrastructure, the employment relationship the community has with surrounding areas, the lack of available local work due to the absence of a commercial core and its associated jobs, and the loss of its traditional and local natural resource-based economy as it has currently defined Sooke as a bedroom community to other member municipalities. The connections between development, quality of life, sustainability, and complete communities have to be continually re-examined and

redefined in an appropriate and tailored way specific to Sooke. Residents must have more options to “live, work and play” in Sooke.

As the RGS notes, a regional urban containment and servicing area has not been defined for Sooke; the intent was for the CRD and the District of Sooke to develop an urban containment and servicing boundary as an OCP is being updated. The RGS also states that the District of Sooke should grow moderately, enhance its role as a regional centre for nearby smaller communities, and that the CRD and the District of Sooke are to work together to find ways to expand and diversify the economy of the area. This OCP meets these common goals as well as the strategic initiatives embodied in the RGS as explained in detail in the chart below.

Furthermore, since the District of Sooke is significantly separated from the rest of the developed areas of the Capital Regional District, the community wishes to retain its mostly rural, forested and oceanside natural setting as its greatest natural attribute, which sets it apart from all other municipalities within the CRD. It is therefore imperative for the District of Sooke to build the community in a more sustainable manner in terms of healthy buildings with less reliance on traditional municipal infrastructure. To this end, Sooke shall combine smart growth initiatives, a green building checklist, and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) & LEED-ND (Neighbourhood Development), to create a sustainable development checklist for all development and building applications with implementation occurring through Development Permit Area (DPA) requirements and changes to the Building Regulation Bylaw.

All proposed land use designations in this OCP include goals, objectives and policies that support the above vision as well as the RGS’s eight strategic initiatives and the recently released State of the Region report and summary requirements. The RGS strategic initiatives are woven into the entire OCP and can be linked explicitly to specific OCP sections as explained in the following Regional Context Statement:

RGS Strategic Initiative	Sooke OCP Section	Comments
Keep Urban Settlement Compact	Section 4.7 Housing; Section 5.0 Land Use Designations	The Schedule “A” Land Use Map of the OCP designates areas where growth is intended, controlled, or limited to ensure a compact community design. Intended growth areas include a range of land use designations, specifically the Town Centre and Comprehensive Development designations, where Sooke envisions the majority of higher density residential to be focused. Creating a compact settlement pattern through these designations is necessary as the District expects to absorb a small portion of the overall growth that will come from the population increases that are expected for the West Shore of the CRD.
		There are two main boundary areas of this Official

Community Plan, shown on the Schedule "A" Land Use Map, which impact directly upon the long term growth and desired compact settlement pattern and sustainability of the District of Sooke, and the OCP's compliance with the RGS:

1. Urban Growth Area (UGA) – The Urban Growth Area (UGA) encapsulates the entire area of the District of Sooke and follows the municipality's boundary. The intent of having a UGA around the entire District is to indicate a long term intention to provide clean and treated drinking water to all residents of Sooke as there are existing water problems in several rural areas of the District. The UGA does not define the future 'development area' of the District.
2. Community Growth Area (CGA) – In order to keep urban settlement compact, the District of Sooke will direct development and density growth to the CGA. Within the CGA the long term goal is to provide water and sewer services to all properties. There shall be no increase in development capacity in areas outside of the CGA boundary beyond that existing at the time of the adoption of this OCP. To meet this goal of a compact and sustainable community, the CGA will make up only 29% of the District's overall land base (Community Residential, Comprehensive Development Areas, Town Centre, and Gateway Residential) while primary area for residential and commercial development will total only 23% (Community Residential, Comprehensive Development Areas, and Town Centre).

New proposed development shall not be allowed to target land uses where they are not intended on the land use map. It is the District of Sooke's intention to revitalize the Town Centre area, targeting growth in the form of higher residential density and commercial land uses, in order to reduce sprawl and commercial strip development. Infrastructure improvements as proposed in this OCP are not to be used as justification for future growth outside of the CGA. Furthermore, a fiscal and strategic analysis is necessary of the proposed infrastructure within the CGA so as to target those in highest need of services while still being cost effective to the District and CRD. Agreements for water infrastructure and distribution between the District of Sooke, the CRD and developers shall be considered to minimize costs now and in the future to the District and CRD.

Due to the environmental sensitivity of the Sooke Harbour and Basin, developments in the Community Growth area shall be required to be connected to the municipal sewage service in order to clean-up the many lands containing failing septic systems and to make sure that new development occurs in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Development incentives such as density bonusing and development fee reductions (e.g. building permits) to densify and build LEED accredited, or similar, buildings in the Town Centre are already available and continue to be supported by this OCP in order to meet the vision to have a compact and walkable community.

Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities

Section 5.3 Rural Community Residential; Section 5.7 Agriculture; Section 7.0 Development Permit Areas

The land use mix, locations, and densification in the OCP support the integrity of Sooke as a primarily rural community but also as a regional centre as noted in the RGS. To this end, over 66% of the District of Sooke is designated as agriculture (i.e. ALR), rural residential, and park and therefore it is not supported under the policies of this OCP to have density increases beyond which currently exists in these areas. Future population and development growth must occur only within the confines of the CGA, primarily the Town Centre and Comprehensive Development Areas. The geography of the District and geotechnical aspects of development in the community make many areas difficult to build on and costly to extend services therefore aiding in the protection of rural areas from development and keeping the urban areas compact. These rural lands also significantly buffer the Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands from adjacent residential development as the minimum lot size noted in the OCP for these lands is 4ha.

Furthermore, development permits are required for most development within the District of Sooke unless the purpose is to build one single-family dwelling or duplex, a farm building, is a subdivision that creates four lots or less, is for structural changes that fit within the existing building footprint, or is for minor exterior finishing or similar minor changes. Development must fit within the rural character of the area and in these rural areas, not substantially impact upon the surrounding environment thus wildlife studies, traffic impact analysis, wildfire hazard assessment, environmental reports, geotechnical reports for any properties with slopes over 30%, and possibly other information may be required by the District for consideration of the DP application.

Protect Regional Green and Blue Spaces

Sections 4.10
Environment & 4.12
Parks and Trails

The District recently completed its first Parks and Trails Master Plan (2009) which addresses existing and proposed protected spaces as well as proposed trail network within the District over the next 20 years. CRD Parks was a stakeholder in the planning process and the plan recognizes as an opportunity Sooke's proximity to the Sea-to-Sea Green Blue/Belt and the long term recreational possibilities for those areas. The Crown lands included in the 'Unprotected Green Space Policy Area' of the Sea-to-Sea Green/Blue Belt in Sooke (i.e. Broom Hill lands) is currently under treaty negotiation therefore the Parks & Trails Master Plan has made working with the T-Sou-ke Nation, CRD and stakeholder groups a Class "A" priority in the plan so as to determine trail connections to the area and future recreational use of those lands. The OCP has adopted these and all other recommendations of the Parks & Trails Master Plan which provides planning direction to protect environmentally sensitive areas as public open space while still providing opportunities for residents to recreate.

Furthermore, this OCP supports the vision of the CRD's Sea to Sea Green/Blue Belt by designating the Capital Green Lands as 'Park' in the District, e.g. the Harbourview/Sea to Sea Regional Park area. The District will continue to work collaboratively with the CRD in regards to linking the parks and trails system of the Sea to Sea Regional Park to Sooke and discussing partnerships for stewardship programs and opportunities to complete an integrated local/regional trail network. For example, currently underway is a District of Sooke/CRD Parks planning partnership to link the Galloping Goose Regional Trail to the Town Centre of Sooke.

Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably

Section 4.9
Infrastructure;
Section 4.10
Environment

As required by the RGS, the District of Sooke will complete shortly its first Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) for both rainwater and sanitary. The OCP supports the LWMP recommendations for implementation. Using an integrated watershed planning approach the LWMP has informed the OCP as to the need for better sewage infrastructure and sustainable and cost effective approaches to rainwater management. The LWMP is soon to be sent to the Ministry of Environment for approval.

The OCP has also incorporated the recommendations from the District's Sustainable Development Strategy (2008). The strategy provides recommendations in

regards to becoming a compact community, providing better transportation alternatives, 'green' building and low impact development, protection of agricultural land, and encouraging local food production.

Some other OCP policies aiding in this initiative include the creation of a 'Sustainability Checklist' for all new development in the community, water reduction strategies, development of an invasive species management plan, a natural areas strategy, incorporate innovative development standards into District of Sooke bylaws, and to create a Green Advisory or Community Sustainability Committee.

Build Complete Communities

Section 3.1 Vision; Section 3.2 Guiding Principles; Section 4.2 Sustainable Land Use Policy; Section 4.4 Economic Development; Section 4.6 Health & Quality of Life; Section 4.7 Housing

This is the overriding theme of the District of Sooke OCP. Criteria and policies to build Sooke as a complete community are noted throughout the OCP as residents greatly desire a 'live, work, play' sustainable community. Starting with the revitalization of the Town Centre as the primary place for business in Sooke, and supplemented by a residentially dense and pedestrian friendly core, residents will be able to live in multiple-family, live/work dwelling, or mixed single-family residential neighbourhood that is within easy walking distance of their job in the Town Centre via an integrated trail, cycle and transit network. Recreational opportunities abound either within neighbourhoods, along the Galloping Goose/Sooke Connector Trail, or in the Town Centre such as the waterfront walkway, green spaces, or cultural facilities.

To build a complete community, the District of Sooke seeks to strengthen its historic role as a regional service centre and rebuild its local employment base. To that end some development and population growth is necessary to create a critical mass upon which sustainable and local economic opportunities can be created.

Improve Housing Affordability

Section 4.7 Housing

The OCP supports the CRD's Regional Housing Affordability Strategy, different forms of affordable housing (e.g. rental, suites, housing agreements), bonus density incentives for affordable housing, and amenity contributions that may be used towards home or land purchase by the District, partnerships with non-profit or governmental organizations, and other incentives for the creation of affordable housing units. Ten percent of all dwelling units above the original base density will be required to be affordable units or the developer must provide cash or land that can be used for such purposes. A \$50,000 Housing Reserve

Fund is an action item of the OCP to jumpstart the operation of a 'Housing Committee or Corporation' and to help leverage funds from other sources to provide affordable housing in Sooke.

The OCP also supports a mix of smaller and larger lot sizes in the Community Residential area in existing and new developments to allow for a variety of dwelling types (e.g. single-family, duplex, suites, townhouse) and sizes that appeal to several demographics and income levels.

Increase Transportation Choice

Section 4.13
Transportation

Since a provincial highway runs through the middle of the Town Centre of Sooke the OCP strongly supports the District working with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) to facilitate improvements to the highway corridor so that pedestrian and cycle travel is accentuated and that a significant share of vehicle traffic is moved to an alternate route away from the Town Centre. The trail network is to lead people to the Town Centre where a major transit hub is located, in addition to the Park and Ride facilities outside of the Town Centre. Implementation of the District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan is a key action item of the OCP.

A 'Pedestrian Network Plan' is also supported which examines all modes of pedestrian travel and associated facilities to help increase this type of travel choice over vehicle use. Walkability and superb transit connections and facilities are key to the necessary reduction of vehicles off of Highway 14. Policies in the OCP supporting much greater density in the Town Centre and a priority on pedestrian modes of travel increases transportation choice while also creating a more compact and complete community.

Strengthen the Regional Economy

Section 4.4
Economic
Development

The long term and sustainable economic growth and job creation possibilities for the District lie in the diversification of the economy in the area. The OCP supports value-added forestry, fishing and agriculture industries and recognizes the potential for education-related employment in these fields, including in tourism, arts and technology trades via a local educational institution. A \$50,000 Sustainable Economic Development Reserve Fund is to be created to aid in such initiatives.

A 'Technical Industrial' designation has also been created to promote a clean and aesthetic business park area to facilitate Sooke's diversification into other economic and employment generators.