



Official Community Plan (OCP) Advisory Committee
Wednesday, November 25, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.
Electronic Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Committee Members Present:

Norman Amirault
Terry Cristall
Steve Grundy
Ellen Lewers
Linda MacMillan
Siomonn Pulla
Helen Ritts
Councillor Al Beddows

Staff:

Matthew Pawlow, Director of Planning
Katherine Lesyshen, Senior Planner
Sarah Temple, Corporate Services Assistant

ITEM

1. Call to Order

Councillor Beddows called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Ministerial Order M192

MOVED BY: Councillor Beddows

THAT the Committee is holding this meeting without members of the public in attendance, in accordance with Ministerial Order M192, as Council Chambers does not have the capacity to safely accommodate the unknown number of public participants wishing to attend; and

THAT the Committee is committed to ensuring openness, transparency, accessibility, and accountability through the submission of written comment, and the provision of opportunity to participate as a pre-registered participant in the electronic meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Approval of the Agenda

MOVED BY: Steve Grundy

THAT the agenda of the November 25, 2020 meeting of the OCP Advisory Committee be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Adoption of Minutes

MOVED BY: Linda MacMillan

THAT the minutes of the October 22, 2020 meeting of the OCP Advisory Committee be

adopted as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Presentation from DIALOG

- “What we heard” report, summarizing first round of engagement

Emily Rennalls and Lucas Ozols-Mongeau, representing DIALOG, gave an overview of the first round of engagement and the “What we heard” report, as follows:

- Various engagement opportunities have been completed, including stakeholder workshops, online survey, print survey, youth survey, pop-up engagements, and community sounding boards.
- Over 500 voices have been captured, and 800 “stickies” placed on sounding boards.
- Some under-represented demographics, including single-parent families and indigenous voices.

Key themes emerging from the community include:

- Eco-resilience
- Increased recreation opportunities
- Preservation of viewscapes
- Develop the local economy
- Diversity in housing options
- Reduced traffic congestion and improved safety. Safe cycling and pedestrian connections.
- Infrastructure and support to age in place
- Renewed relationship with our waterfront, improve public access, connect shops and services. Concern with privatization of waterfront.
- Places for children and youth (engagement is still underway for this demographic, so not yet included in engagement summary.)
- Compassion and Climate Action lens.

Question: Do these themes resonate? Is the list complete?

Committee discussion:

- One stakeholder workshop had strong “stop all growth” sentiment.
- Have heard concerns about diversified local economy, including finding industrial land and support for retail and small businesses. These concerns will tie in with the theme of growing the local economy and matching with skills that are present in Sooke today.
- Local employment should include “value added” aspects in support of farming, forestry, and manufacturing. Agriculture, farming, and food security were talked about more in stakeholder workshops than in broader engagement.
- Burial sites and places for urns, which is a land use issue, should be considered.
- Ensure we don’t cover the waterfront with tall buildings.
- Bowling alley was raised in the last OCP process, and again in this one.
- Clarification that these themes are considered “broad brush strokes” and further details will be included in subsequent reports. The Engagement Summary report will include an appendix with verbatim comments.
- Truth and reconciliation should fit into the OCP. DIALOG has met with the T’Sou-ke nation to discuss participation and will engage with community members accordingly.

6. Emerging Vision and Goals

Jennifer Fix and Lucas Ozols-Mongeau, representing DIALOG, gave an overview of emerging goals and “conversation starters”.

1. Mobilize to address the climate emergency head on. Achieve Net zero emissions by 2050.
2. Strengthen the “town” in Sooke’s small town character.
3. Bolster the town centre, the bustling heart of Sooke.
4. Protect and connect with the waterfront, the soul of Sooke. Keep it public.
5. Protect ecosystems, habitats, and natural areas. Create opportunities to spend more time with them.
6. Keep Sooke affordable. Provide housing choices for all.
7. Reduce car dependency and offer more transportation choices, with priority given to walking, cycling, and transit use.
8. Support existing and new local businesses and foster green economic development that respects the limits of growth.
9. Create a safe and resilient community for all.
10. Support and enjoy local food.
11. Create green infrastructure that is both high-performing and delightful.
12. Treat streets like the places they are. In other words, streets are for public use.
13. Recognize the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent right of indigenous peoples, including their rights to the land, territories, and resources.

Question: Are these resonating? Is this what you have heard? Are these the directions you think we need to move?

Committee discussion:

- Concern that 13 goals is a lot of goals. Possibility of grouping together into something more manageable, such as 3 big goals with each one having 3 subgoals.
- Clarification from DIALOG that the intention is group them together.
- DIALOG will work on consolidating. If members have specific ideas, please email. List will come back to committee once organized.
- Concerns regarding survey questions and ideas for engagement methods can also be emailed to DIALOG.

Question: How can we reach under-represented demographic groups who have not responded to previous engagement methods?

Committee discussion:

- Committee members have reached out to specific groups and individuals by phone. For example, waterfront businesses and institutions were contacted and had not heard about OCP engagement opportunities.
- Concern that while specific groups have been targeted, individuals within those groups have been missed.
- Individual phone calls can extend reach of digital engagement efforts.
- Concern about inability to interact face-to-face, missing opportunity to connect with people during COVID.
- Mayor and Council hear a great deal from community members. Perhaps they should be engaged shortly to ensure they are hearing the same themes.
- **Action:** Councillor Beddows and staff to introduce the idea to Council.
- Reminder that reaching people is not the same as engaging them. People will choose not to engage.
- Concern that “Picture Sooke” branding may be confusing.
- Possibility of using Rotary Club Business Directory.
- New methods of approaching people are required when using the same tools

yields the same results. Repeatedly asking people to fill out a survey is not going to make them fill out a survey.

- DIALOG to investigate hosting focus groups where targeted demographics are compensated for their time and expertise. Lack of time is a barrier that can be overcome this way.
- Putting up more community sounding boards in places where people gather.
- Engaging with individual businesses to learn what is needed to encourage and grow small business in Sooke.

Next steps:

- Committee members to provide further feedback to DIALOG and staff via email.
- DIALOG to organize goals into categories and bring back to committee.
- Continued discussion on various opportunities to reach additional community members.
- DIALOG and staff to develop list of where targeted engagement is required and committee members can make individual contact as appropriate.

Public Input:

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

7. Adjournment

MOVED BY: Terry Cristall

THAT the November 25, 2020 Official Community Plan Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chair

Recorder

Submission by the Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative to the Sooke Official Community Plan (OCP) Review Advisory Committee, November 23, 2020

The Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative asks the OCP Steering Committee to consider the following three recommendations:

1. Attach the Sooke Compassionate Action Plan – Year One Report to the new OCP as a step towards addressing Section 3.2 Guiding Principles, particularly the “Thriveability” principles, in the current OCP. The Year One Report aligns closely with the Guiding Principles and addresses social wellbeing requirements of the community that complement the OCP.
2. Investigate the benefits, and possible funding sources, to holistically and systematically address the economic, social and moral/spiritual development of the community.
3. The current “Picture Sooke OCP” survey states: “At its heart, the OCP document is about managing land use and physical growth of the district.” From the District’s perspective this is its most controllable aspect of the OCP. As the OCP review progresses, it would be worthwhile to consider that “At its heart, the OCP document is about the health and wellbeing of the current and future generations of the citizens of the district.”

The Sooke Compassionate Action Plan – Year One Report is attached to this submission as a background document.

Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative Contact: Mark Ziegler, markziegler@shaw.ca; 250-642-5784

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Building a community that is a haven of unity and compassion

Sooke Compassionate Action Plan

Year One Report - November, 2020

On May 13, 2019 the District of Sooke Council endorsed the Sooke Compassionate Action Plan (CAP) which outlined short and long-term actions to address five major social concerns in the community. (Refer to Appendix 1 for further background information on the CAP).

The Sooke CAP was then submitted to Charter for Compassion International resulting in Sooke's recognition as a Compassionate Community. Our District is now officially part of a worldwide humanitarian movement of citizens in over 400 cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods that are striving for a kinder, better planet.

This report describes how the five areas of focus have been addressed over the first year of the Compassionate Action Plan.

As reported in this document, a number of progressive actions have been taken over the past year in each of the areas identified. Much has been learned, particularly as the result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community, resulting in innovative solutions and a better understanding of the magnitude and complexity of the challenges facing our community and communities throughout the world.

The pandemic highlighted the plight of **homeless** people in our community resulting in the development of a temporary shelter for homeless people. The shelter provides “wrap-around” services in which various health and social service agencies come to the shelter rather than people having to try to visit various services agencies in their offices.

Going forward, two major challenges are: first, to find the necessary funding, location and qualified human resources to continue providing and enhancing the wrap around services required by homeless people and second, to address the underlying causes of homelessness and take preventive measures to avoid people becoming homeless.

Affordability is being addressed through a number of initiatives to provide affordable housing in the coming months and years. The December 2019 Sooke Housing Needs Report outlines the ongoing need for more affordable housing over the long-term.

The critical issue of **social isolation**, particularly among seniors, has been significantly exacerbated due to the pandemic. A number of short-term initiatives have been taken to mitigate this crisis and an elders' drop-in centre, with affordable rental suites for seniors is being planned for Lot A. Over the long-term, finding ways and means to create a more unified, socially integrated community will need to be addressed.

Providing improved **health services** for our growing community presents an ongoing challenge. The expansion of the Westcoast Family Medical Clinic and the provision of five more healthcare professionals for the community will contribute to providing basic medical services to more members of the community.

Recognizing health as much more than the absence of disease, going forward will require a more holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of our community. The material/economic, prosperity and the physical, emotional, mental, moral and spiritual health of individuals and our community needs to be systematically addressed recognizing that, as COVID-19 has shown us, we are not just independent individuals but an interconnected and interdependent community. As Dr. Bonnie Henry has repeatedly reminded us, "we are all in this together."

Integral to this holistic consideration is recognizing that both the material/physical and the moral/spiritual necessities of people need to be met both individually and collectively. The one provides the essential means to live, the other provides a meaningful purpose and direction in one's life that contributes to the wellbeing of the community.

The need for better **awareness, communication and collaboration** across all sectors of our community is becoming ever more evident. Initial steps are being taken through initiatives such as the Sooke Homelessness Coalition, the Sooke Region Communities Health Network's Age-Friendly Committee, and the creation of the District of Sooke's new Community Economic Development Committee.

In our view, the ultimate goal of all of these short-term initiatives and long-term requirements is to create a **prosperous, flourishing community, a haven of unity and compassion, living in harmony with our physical environment.**

Sincerely,

Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative

Sooke Compassionate Action Plan – Year One Report

The five areas of focus in the Sooke CAP are Homelessness, Affordability Crisis, Social Isolation, Inadequate Medical Services and Need for Better Communication/Awareness/Collaboration. Their order of presentation does not indicate their relative importance.

1. Homelessness

Estimates of the number of homeless people in Sooke range from about 35 to more than 100. They are a nearly invisible part of our community. They spend much of each day trying to satisfy basic needs for food, safe shelter and hygiene. Social contact with the larger community is often avoided by these individuals, just as more fortunate residents tend to avoid contact with them. Many homeless people contend with mental illnesses aggravated by addictions to alcohol and street drugs. These challenges become more difficult during our winter months, especially during periods of extreme weather. Some working poor are also homeless due to the lack of affordable housing in Sooke. They may inhabit vehicles and moored boats.

Homelessness: Short-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Designation of safe areas for the homeless with storage lockers, coolers, trash receptacles and access to showers and laundry facilities. Provision of temporary shelters such as tents. Access to a commercial kitchen with food safe certification.

Update: The Sooke Region Communities Health Network, in association with the Sooke Shelter Society, BC Housing, the community paramedic, the Sooke Food Bank and other agencies, addressed Dr. Henry's calls for wrap-around supports and shelter facilities for the homeless with safe, effective temporary shelters at SEAPARC and now in the former Speed Source building in John Phillips Memorial Park. The lease on the current shelter is a short-term one and the search for a next-step solution is a prime focus of SRCHN and the Sooke Homelessness Coalition.

ii). Establish an extreme weather shelter for the homeless (cold temperatures, heavy rains). It would eventually evolve into a seasonal shelter for the October to April period.

Update: The Extreme Weather Shelter in the CRD building at the Sooke Industrial Park in Otter Point was open for a second year over the winter of 2019/20 under the direction of the

Greater Victoria Extreme Weather Response Program. An emergency shelter within or near Sooke's Town Centre remains a top priority, however an exhaustive search for possible

locations came up empty prior to the pandemic. Barring any immediate solutions, local homeless will again need to be driven by Sooke Shelter Society volunteers to Otter Point this winter ahead.

The 2020 Point-In-Time count was held across the capital region on March 11, 2020, a day when the extreme shelter was not required to be open. A report based on the 38 surveys by Sooke homeless individuals can be found on pg. 26 of the final report available online here: <https://communitycouncil.ca/point-in-time-homeless-count-report-2020>

The 38 participants are a partial reflection of homelessness locally. To quote the report: "The PiT count enumeration cannot provide a completely accurate count of the people experiencing homelessness in a region — it is not meant to be a census. People experiencing homelessness may not always identify as homeless, may not access typical shelters or services designed for homeless populations, and may not be at indoor and outdoor survey locations on the day of the PiT project survey activities, making it challenging to reach out to, count, and survey every person experiencing homelessness in the region."

iii). Continue and broaden the ongoing dialogue and joint activities by individuals, groups and agencies to relieve the plight of the homeless residents in Sooke. Examples are the ongoing efforts by the Sooke Shelter Society, Sooke Homelessness Coalition and Sooke Crisis and Referral Society.

Update: The Sooke Homelessness Coalition, chaired by SRCHN's Mary Dunn, met repeatedly over the last year in person and, during the last six months, via Zoom. Participants included a growing number of representatives from multiple groups, among them the Sooke Shelter Society, the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, BC Housing, the T'Sou-ke First Nation, the District of Sooke, the Capital Regional District, AVI Harm Reduction, the RCMP, Our Place Society, the Sooke Rotary Club, the Sooke Lions Club, Sooke Harbourside Lions and the Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative, among others. The group has strong momentum and broad support from service agencies. Engagement by elected officials is recognized and appreciated. The Coalition is to be encouraged in every way possible as it seeks short and longer-term solutions.

Recently, a committee was formed by the Sooke Homeless Coalition to review the purpose and terms of reference of the Coalition. The committee has been consulting with the Greater Victoria Homeless Coalition to learn from its experience and to determine the most effective ways the two coalitions can work together.

Homelessness: Longer-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Establish a seasonal shelter that will provide for homeless residents from October through April.

Update: Working through the Sooke Homelessness Coalition, SRCHN and the Sooke Shelter Society is looking for funding (though the Poverty Reduction program, to cite one example) to provide an ongoing “hub” of services to enable homeless and other compromised individuals to go to one place to get short term assistance and to develop care plans to resolve the issues they are facing. This is all the more essential given the closure of the Sooke Crisis Centre in July, 2020.

ii). Support the purchase of modular housing for homeless Sooke residents (170 units recently purchased for Nanaimo).

Update: Two BC Housing affordable projects under the Regional Housing First Program are scheduled to be built on the east side of the town centre over the next two years. These will provide 244 units of affordable rental housing; 49 of these units will be rented at the BC deep-subsidy shelter rate, while the others will be available at below-market and near-market rates. Construction on the first of these projects is expected to begin late this year or early 2021. Both will be managed by M'akola Housing Society.

BC Housing and M'akola have also partnered on the construction of eight new affordable units at the Hope Centre in the town centre. These will be added to the 25 existing units intended for youth and adults who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness.

The Knox Centre opened on April 1, 2019. The \$11.3 million affordable housing complex includes 42 affordable rental apartments for low-to-moderate income individuals, families and seniors.

BC Housing's second round of funding through the Community Housing Fund (\$1.9 billion over 10 years) is open until mid-January, 2021. The SMBI supports the proposal of the Sooke Region Communities Health Network, its Age-Friendly Committee and the District's Northeast Quadrant Task Force to advance a proposal for four-stories of affordable seniors housing atop a senior/youth community centre on Lot A. This proposal, backed with a letter of understanding from the District and endorsed in principal by Sooke council on Sept. 14, is consistent with the recommendations of the Lot A Masterplan (March, 2019).

2. Affordability Crisis

Sooke is a fast-growing community with an increasing range of goods and services amenities for residents with the required income. It is becoming unaffordable for many households who are struggling to meet the costs of housing, food, childcare and transportation.

The historical view of Sooke as a cheap place to live within Greater Victoria no longer holds. One indicator is the increasing number of individuals and families who use the Sooke Food Bank on a regular basis. Another indicator is the cost of driving to and from Victoria with gasoline prices increasing year over year. Limited bus services within Sooke and between Sooke and Langford/Victoria discourage a shift from private to public transportation.

Canada's Official Poverty Line, across all regions of the country, was \$37,542 for a family with two adults and two children in 2015. It is based on the cost of housing, transportation, nutritious food, clothing and other household requirements.

Perhaps the greatest affordability concern is the cost of housing in Sooke for both potential owners and renters. Local figures are not available but the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reported in January 2017 that the Victoria Region was the least affordable small city in Canada for single family houses: the median price was over eight times the median household income. Rent costs in Greater Victoria increased by 8% between 2015 and 2016.

While vacancy rates have increased somewhat (to 1.6% in 2020), the CHMC notes that rental costs in the region continue to soar: "The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment will rise from \$1,535 in October 2019 to \$1,675 in October 2020 to \$1,829 in October 2021. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment will respectively rise from \$1,175 (2019) to \$1,282 (2020) to \$1,400 (2021)."

The current District of Sooke Official Community Plan (OCP) defines affordable housing as housing that sells or rents at a rate that is affordable (no more than 30% of annual income) to households with the lower half of incomes in Sooke.

Attainable housing refers to the gap in housing and services for people who do qualify for provincially or federally defined affordable housing and yet do not make enough to purchase a home at the market rate.

The Capital Regional District (CRD) in its draft housing affordability study (April 2018) estimates that there is a shortfall of 6,200 affordable rental units in Greater Victoria.

Affordability Crisis: Short-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Broaden the mandate of the District of Sooke’s Affordable Housing Committee to specifically include affordable and attainable housing as defined in the OCP. Consideration would be given to renaming it “the Housing Committee” to reflect this broader mandate.

Update: The District's Affordable Housing Committee held its final meeting on Nov. 28, 2019. Among its recommendations is that "council form a Land Use Committee that includes a specific housing and housing affordability mandate in the Terms of Reference." This request is recognized in the Terms of Reference for the District's new Land Use & Development Committee.

ii). Request the District of Sooke to hold meetings with developers, real estate agents, concerned citizens and other stakeholders to develop policies to increase the availability of affordable and attainable housing Sooke.

Update: We anticipate that this will be discussed in full during the Official Community Plan review-and that policies supporting affordability and attainable housing will emerge in updates to land-use, sub-division and amenity bylaws as well as the Affordable Housing & Social Housing Policy, the Secondary & Small Suites Policy, and the Housing Reserve Establishment Bylaw.

iii). Request the District of Sooke to investigate non-market options to increase the stock of affordable and attainable housing in our community. These options might include the use of District-owned lots with other designations, such as inactive parkland, for the construction of buildings which would be sold or rented at an affordable non-market cost plus a fixed percentage.

Update: The District's Housing Needs Report was presented to council on Dec. 9, 2019. It clearly identifies significant gaps in the following areas: market-rate housing; non-market housing; rental housing; housing affordability; development on vacant lands; and the need to anticipate growth in the number of residents aged 65 and over. The District is encouraged to systematically address the high and medium-priority strategies identified in the report's Housing Action Plan. (pp. 73-86).

Affordability Crisis: Longer-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Lobby both the CRD and the provincial government for increased funding for both affordable housing and attainable housing (alternative structures such as tiny houses) for low to moderate income Sooke residents.

Update: In July, 2020, the District announced that it is initiating discussions with the CRD's Capital Region Housing Corporation to develop, manage and deliver affordable housing in Sooke now that it has launched and is operating rental buildings in the core of Greater Victoria. This partnership may tie in with the latest round of BC Housing funding through the Community Housing Fund.

ii). Work with Sooke Council and developers to make rental suites in private houses more suitable for families, e.g. better sound-proofing.

Update: The District is finalizing a new Building Regulation Bylaw this year. We note that the current draft does not address sound-proofing issues. The 2015 update of the National Building Code introduced new acoustical requirements for sound transmission within adjoining suites. The revised BC Building Code (2018) also features enhanced requirements for floor, ceiling and sidewall construction. Sooke's Building Code will ideally also address these matters in new-build secondary suites, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. At the same time, we recognize that the installation of increased sound-proofing in existing buildings will be expensive and in no way do we wish to see Sooke's inventory of rental accommodations reduced.

iii). Lobby BC Transit for better coverage and increased frequency in bus services both within Sooke and between Sooke and Langford/Victoria. BC Transit's Local Area Plan Consultations are now underway.

Update: The final version of the Sooke Local Area Transit Plan was presented to council by BC Transit in July, 2020. It entails an expanded network and frequency of local services within the District and enhanced regional service taking commuters into the west shore and the City of Victoria.

<https://www.bctransit.com/documents/1529710177752>

iv). Lobby both the CRD and the provincial government for building code exceptions that allow alternative housing structures, such as trailers, recreational vehicles and tiny houses, for marginal-income (homeless, unemployable) and moderate-income Sooke residents.

Update: To be discussed during the OCP review and by the new Land Use & Development Committee.

3. Social Isolation

Some Sooke residents live marginal lives. There are many causes, including mental illnesses, psychological disorders and dementia. Others suffer from chronic physical handicaps and drug/alcohol addictions. Social interaction with the broader population is often limited by communication challenges, behavioural issues and social stigmas/prejudices.

Social isolation is an issue also faced by single people, youth and the elderly. Generally speaking, there is an increasing disconnection in our communities and less opportunities for social interaction.

Social Isolation: Short-Term Compassionate Actions

- i). Expand mental health services in Sooke, including addiction treatment and counselling.
- ii). Establish neighbourhood programs for regular checks on persons with psychological disorders and dementia. An existing example is the Keep in Touch (KIT) program which is run by the RCMP.

Update: The Safe Seniors, Strong Communities program coordinated by SRCHN through the Sooke Region Volunteer Centre launched in the spring of 2020. It is a partnership between the United Way's Better At Home program, bc211 and the BC Ministry of Health. Seniors can request volunteer help with grocery shopping, meal preparation or prescription pick-up. Volunteers will also phone and/or visit on a routine basis as required.

Social Isolation: Longer-Term Compassionate Actions

- i). Increase the number of rooms for persons with dementia at Ayre Manor.

Update: The Sooke Elderly Citizens Society continues to lobby for much-needed expansion of its facilities at Ayre Manor. Development plans call for 58 more beds in a new wing of the building when and if funding through BC Housing is secured.

- ii). Increase the number of easily accessible public spaces in Sooke where people can feel secure and have opportunities for interaction. Such a space might be provided as part of the development of Lot A on Wadams Way in Sooke.

Update: The District's Parks & Trails Masterplan was released in October, 2020. It features a wide variety of promising short, medium and longer term actions, among them the creation of masterplans for John Phillips Memorial Park and Whiffin Spit that will explore future uses of these two leading public spaces. The prospect of a public plaza in the southwest quadrant of Lot A (as identified in the Lot A Masterplan) is also encouraging.

iii). Encourage events and activities that foster intergenerational contact, particularly between seniors and youth.

Update: A SRCHN working group involving representatives from its board, the Age-Friendly Committee and the Sooke Seniors Centre Drop-In Society, continues to focus on plans for an "elders' complex" as part of an seniors' affordable rental housing project in the northeast quadrant of Lot A. On Sept. 14, Sooke council approved a letter of understanding with SRCHN that allowed the working group to proceed with grant applications for the project. A community consultation regarding potential elders and youth programming will take place.

The EMCS Society and SRCHN hosted an "Inter-Generational Valentine's Tea" at Edward Milne Community School in February. Some 20 seniors chatted with just as many students over tea and cookies. Students in the textile class made embroidered hearts for the seniors, and stories/experiences were shared on all sides. Once the pandemic is over, more such events are intended.

iv). Establish a program, possibly through local faith-based groups, that would allow seniors and people with disabilities to rent extra space in their homes to trustworthy individuals. This action would also address the housing affordability concern in Sooke.

4. Inadequate Health Services

The need for additional physicians and a well-equipped medical facility is a long-standing issue in Sooke. This problem is especially acute for persons with physical and mental disabilities and addictions.

Inadequate Health Services: Short-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Support efforts by the Sooke Family Resource Society and Sooke Region Communities Health Network to enhance health services in our community.

ii). Support efforts by the Mayor's Sooke Region Primary Health Care Services Working Group to bring more physicians to Sooke and improve medical facilities.

Update: The expansion of Sooke's West Coast Family Medical Clinic was completed in June, 2020. The new facilities will allow 4,250 more people in Sooke without a family doctor to connect to consistent primary care services. Five new health-care professionals -- two family physicians, two nurses and a nursing practitioner -- are covered through an annual \$1 million commitment by the Ministry of Health.

iii). Explore the importance of spirituality in fostering compassionate action and mental health.

Update: The Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative's organized a four-night speaker series in John Phillips Memorial Park in July and August. All social distancing and COVID-19 protocols were followed. Appreciation to the District for waiving parks fees for this series.

Longer-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Establish a multi-service clinic in Sooke that would provide a whole person approach (physical, psychological, spiritual) to patient care.

ii). Ensure that each resident of Sooke has access to a local physician by 2023.

Update: We acknowledge that this date is overly ambitious. Communities throughout BC face an acute shortage of medical professionals, and Sooke is no different. As the BC Medical Journal noted this spring, "the current family doctor shortage is a crisis." It is encouraging to see the ongoing work done by Sooke's Primary Health Care Services Working Group to improve health care locally.

iii). Establish a respite lodge in Sooke for temporary accommodation for persons requiring homecare. Private caregivers would benefit from the opportunity for a break from their daily responsibilities.

iv). Provide independent multi-belief spiritual development space integrated with the multi-service clinic in Sooke

v). Sponsor a public parade for peace/climate/community development to involve the whole community and to demonstrate implementation of the Sooke Compassionate Action Plan.

5. Need for Better Communication/Awareness/Collaboration

Participants at the October Sooke CAP Workshop exchanged a great deal of useful information about their respective concerns, current activities and aspirations on a broad number of issues. It was an awareness-building event that will hopefully lead to further alliances and partnership between individuals, service groups, agencies and local government. The success of the Sooke CAP will depend on this communication and collaboration.

A network for regular communication between individuals, service groups and agencies would allow compassionate actions in the above four areas of focus to be monitored and, where possible, measured.

This network would also have an advocacy role. Parties who are striving for the same goals would jointly press for needed changes in our community.

Collaboration: Short-Term Compassionate Actions

i). Foster alliances and partnerships between individuals, service groups, agencies and local government.

Update: The Sooke Homelessness Coalition is a prime example of the possibilities when government, multiple service agencies and interest groups work together in addressing social issues.

The Sooke Communities Health Network (SRCHN) is endeavoring to fulfill this role through networking with other social services organizations and government agencies to coordinate the delivery of services to meet individual needs.

The current provision of temporary shelter for homeless individuals has included “wrap around” services which has various aid agencies coming to the shelter to assist individuals rather than homeless people attempting to navigate through the various agencies. This has been a successful model that other municipalities are interested in.

SRCHN's Age-Friendly Committee with representatives from the District of Sooke, the Sooke Family Resource Society, the EMCS Society, Sooke council, local schools and various other social services organizations, meets on a monthly basis nine times a year. It is fostering greater cooperation among individuals and social services organizations.

Recognizing the need for greater collaboration among individuals, volunteer social services organizations, the business community and the many government agencies, the District of Sooke Council recently assigned the Chief Administration Officer to draft the terms of reference for a Community Development Committee along with proposed staffing request. A SRCHN/SMBI representative is involved in this activity which will hopefully include the request for a Community Development facilitator to foster partnerships and alliances among the various actors involved in community development in the District.

ii). Submit the Sooke CAP to the District of Sooke for inclusion in the new Official Community Plan (OCP).

Update: The Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative will ask the Sooke OCP Review Advisory Committee to make the Sooke Compassionate Action Plan part of the appendix to the OCP and that it be updated annually in this fashion.

iii). Further promote the Charter of Compassion, keep a list of members of the community who have signed the Charter and share stories of how the Charter is being applied in the community.

Update: Attempts to track Sooke individuals signing the Charter of Compassion online via the SMBI's home page on the Transition Sooke website have proven impossible due to technological and privacy issues.

iv). Establish a Compassionate Action Registry to record acts of kindness. Hopefully, this recognition will have a “snowball” effect by fostering further good works in our community.

Update: An ongoing record of compassionate actions in Sooke builds daily on the Facebook pages of Sooke Embrace and other local social-media groups.

Collaboration: Longer-Term Actions

i). Establish a communications/advocacy network which would have a triage or “navigation” capability to direct persons with specific needs to the appropriate service providers in an efficient, timely manner.

Update: The lack of grants that cover operational expenses make this a challenge given that a dedicated individual is required for this role.

ii). Monitor progress and prepare an annual public report on implementation of the Sooke CAP.

Update: Annual reviews of the Compassionate Action Plan will continue.

Appendix 1: List of Participants at Sooke CAP Workshop, October 27, 2018

Shirley Alphonse	T'Sou-ke Nation Elder
Sherry Thompson	Sooke Shelter Society, Sooke Homelessness Coalition
Earle Bretherton	Sooke Shelter Society, Sooke Homelessness Coalition
Dale McLean	Sooke Shelter Society
John Ede	Sooke Resident (Homeless Representative)
Jeff Bateman	District of Sooke Councillor, EMCS Society, Sooke Multi-Belief Institute
Tony St-Pierre	District of Sooke Councillor, Cast Iron Farm, Sooke Farmland Trust Society
Carolyn Bateman	Transition Sooke
Bernie Klassen	Transition Sooke, Zero Waste Sooke
Michael Tacon	Transition Sooke
Koshin-Moonfist	Sooke Region Multi-Belief Initiative
Jackson Hughes	Sooke Resident
Corporal Sam Haldane	RCMP – Sooke Detachment
Sharon Sterling	Team Sooke Refugee Sponsorship
Barbara Mitchell	Holy Trinity Anglican Church
Gerry Kusuqak	Sooke Resident
Michael Kusuqak	Sooke Resident
Rick Eby	Minister, Sooke Baptist Church
Maddi Prinn	Youth Worker, Sooke Baptist Church
Josh Fast	Youth for Christ, Victoria
Les Haddad	Sooke Chamber of Commerce, Baha'i Faith
Bernie Klasschuk	Sooke Resident
Christine Brown	Baha'i Faith
Elaine McMath	Sooke Resident
Neil Poirier	Sooke Resident

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Sheila Wallace	Sooke Country Market
Frederique Philip	Sooke Resident
Joanne Scholten	Sooke Resident (Allies, Alliances)
Ted Mehler	Sooke Resident
Loretta Deutscher	Sooke Resident
Jen Wilde	Greater Victoria Extreme Weather Shelters
Britt Santowski	Sooke Pocket News
Shayna Chamitoff	Women Care (?) Group, SFA
Pauline Kissinger-Hamilton	Sooke Resident
Maxine Medhurst	Sooke Resident
Nicky Logins	Sooke Family Resource Society, Sooke Region Communities Health Network, District of Sooke Affordable Housing Committee, Sooke Homelessness Coalition
Jonny Morris	BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Kim Kaldal	Sooke Food Bank
Christina Brown	Big House Breakfast
Ron Ramsey	Sooke Region Resident
Melody Kimmel	Sooke Region Resident
Caroline Hudson	Sooke Food CHI
Sean Brown	Sooke Resident
Tracy Ewert	Public Health Nurse, Island Health Authority
Don Brown	Sooke Region Multi-Belief Initiative, Baha'i Faith
E.M. Anderson	Sooke Region Multi-Belief Initiative
Phil Rossner	Sooke Region Multi-Belief Initiative, Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants & Refugees
Mark Ziegler	Sooke Region Multi-Belief Initiative, Rotary Club of Sooke