



WHAT WE HEARD: OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (OCP) BYLAW NO. 800

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENCE
SINCE APRIL 11, 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The District of Sooke is in the process of updating its Official Community Plan (OCP) bylaw, with the objective of managing Sooke's growth and community character until 2050. Such a vital plan for the community's future requires a fulsome public engagement process, which has been carried out by Sooke staff and a consulting team under the District's direction. Since the OCP update process formally began in Summer 2020, thousands of community members and stakeholders have guided each step of the OCP's direction with their feedback and involvement.

Prior to the OCP's second reading to Council in September 2022, the District has retained Urban Systems to prepare final edits to its draft OCP document, and to create a summary document of recent correspondence between community members and Mayor and Council. This document represents the latter of these efforts.

1.1 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This "What We Heard" report provides a summary of public input received by the District about the OCP bylaw update. This summary represents only the correspondence provided to Urban Systems, approximately **168** email threads dated between April 2022 and July 2022. Each email has been reviewed and subsequently categorized by their key messages.

It should be noted that Urban Systems was not involved in Sooke's OCP update until August 2022, so the following summary has been done with the understanding and context provided by the District of Sooke staff.

Verbatim comments from email threads have been compiled by Urban Systems in a separate, available to the District as required for reference or archival purposes.

2.0 COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENCE SINCE APRIL 11, 2022

The District of Sooke received approximately **168** pieces of email correspondence between April and July 2022. These emails were often prompted by the most recent draft of the OCP, recent public engagement experiences, or other opportunities to volunteer their feedback and expertise to the OCP.

There were approximately 70 unique key messages that were identified in these emails, and those messages have been grouped into three tables: Areas of Concern, Areas of Support, and Requests for Amendments. If a key message has been addressed or resolved by a subsequent version of the OCP, this is shown in the “Addressed by Edits” column. Please note that this determination has been made by Urban Systems based on edits to the OCP document provided by District of Sooke staff and should be reviewed by staff for further confirmation and in relation to earlier versions of the Plan.

2.1 AREAS OF CONCERN

Figure 1 shows the instances where community members expressed concern or opposition to existing content of the OCP. It is important to note that some emails were in response to items that have since been addressed by Council and Staff, most notably the proposed 30m setback requirement for waterfront development. Key messages are summarized in further detail below.

Figure 1

Area of OCP	Area of Concern	Number of Mentions	Addressed by Edits
7.4.5	Opposed to 30-metre setback requirement for waterfront development	53	Yes. This requirement has been removed from the OCP.
7.4	Opposed to restrictions for waterfront property owners, related to DPA 3 - Foreshore Area	19	No change.
Part 7	General concern for increased costs and processing for any new development permits	17	No change.
6.1	General concern for taxpayers' costs of fully implementing the OCP	10	No change.
7.5	Opposed to additional restrictions for property owners, related to DPA 4 - Riparian Area	6	No change.

Figure 6	General concern for 'Town Centre' land use designation north of Sooke Rd.	4	No change.
3.1	General concern for density increases	4	No change.
4.5.2.1	Opposed to sewer expansion in the Kaltasin / Whiffin Spit neighbourhoods	3	No change.
4.4.2.1	Opposed to the requirement for new builds to use exclusively electric systems	3	No change.
7.6	Opposed to DPA 5 - Steep Slopes overlapping with current CRD requirements	2	No change.
7.9	Opposed to DPA 8 - Intensive Residential	2	No change.
4.2.2.5	Oppose tree management bylaw	2	Yes. Language has been updated to refer to policy as opposed to the bylaw.
4.2.1.4	Oppose natural environment policy	1	No change.
7.2	Opposed to DPA 1 - Energy and Water Conservation Guidelines	1	No change.
Figure 6	Opposed to redesignation of Farrell Estates	1	No change.
7.8	Opposed to DPA 7 - Waterfront	1	No change.
7.10	Oppose to DPA 9 - Neighbourhood Commercial	1	No change.
3.1	Opposed to low-density residential development	1	No change.
7.3	Opposed to DPA 2 - General Environmental Protection	1	No change.
7.11	Opposed to DPA 10 - Employment Lands	1	No change.
3.1	Opposed to development in outlying areas	1	No change.

SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES:

30-Metre Foreshore Setback

With 53 mentions, the proposed 30-metre setback was by far the most popular theme of the email correspondence. The concern came primarily from waterfront property owners as well as other residents in the community, who were opposed to the negative ramifications it might have on property owners.

Residents felt that the setback would prevent them from adding structures on their property, rebuilding their residences in the event of a fire, or acquire insurance for previously built structures that are non-conforming.

On March 28, 2022, Sooke Council unanimously voted to maintain the existing 15-metre setback after receiving vocal feedback from community members.

Waterfront Development Restrictions

With 19 mentions, there were further objections related to DPA 3 – Foreshore Area expressed by community members. The chief concerns were related to the professional assessment requirements for new developments within this new DPA. In multiple emails, community members felt that this created undue or excessive costs for property owners, on top of their existing property taxes.

Costs and Delays from Development Permitting

There were 17 mentions of concern against the development permitting process outlined in the OCP, suggesting that it creates additional time and money for new development within Sooke. Community members working in construction/development noted that these additional costs would need to be passed onto customers, which they see as a barrier to affordable housing and local housing supply.

Cost of Implementing the OCP

Ten different people expressed their general concern for the total cost the OCP would relay to taxpayers.

2.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT – KEY MESSAGES

Figure 2 shows the instances where community members expressed support or appreciation for existing content in the OCP. Key messages are summarized in further detail below.

Figure 2

Area of OCP	Area of Support	Number of Mentions	Addressed by Edits
	General support for passing the OCP in Fall 2022	6	No change.
7.4.5	Support for the 15m setback requirement for waterfront development	3	15 metre setback included.
7.4.5	Support for 30m setback requirement for waterfront development	2	15 metre setback included.
4.5.2.1	Support sewer extension	1	No change.
1.3	Support for the OCP engagement process	1	No change.
4.9.3	Support for encouraging affordable housing	1	No change.
Part 7	General support for the proposed Development Permit Areas	1	No change.
7.3	Support for DPA 2 – General Environmental Protection	1	No change.
2.2	General support for Sooke's net-zero vision	1	No change.
7.8	Support for DPA 7 – Waterfront	1	No change.
7.7	Support for DPA 6 – Town Centre	1	No change.
7.6	Support for DPA 5 – Steep Slopes	1	No change.
7.5	Support for DPA 4 – Riparian Area	1	No change.
7.10	Support for DPA 9 – Neighbourhood Commercial	1	No change.

7.9	Support for DPA 8 – Intensive Residential	1	No change.
7.3	Support for DPA 2 – General Environmental Protection	1	No change.
7.2	Support for DPA 1 – Energy and Water Conservation Guidelines	1	No change.
7.11	Support for DPA 10 – Employment Lands	1	No change.
3.1	General support for community growth	1	No change.
4.1.1.2	General support for improved active transportation facilities	1	No change.

SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES:

Support for Passing the OCP in 2022

There were six messages expressing their support for passing the OCP this fall, before the municipal election. There was general approval for the OCP at its current stage, appreciation for the hard work of the OCP teams, and recognition of the significant costs involved with waiting after the election.

Support for the 15-Metre Setback

Three community members expressed their support for the existing 15-metre foreshore setback, feeling that it balances environmental protection with enjoyment of property.

Support for the 30-Metre Setback

Two community members supported the proposed 30-metre setback, citing climate change and storm protection as the primary factors for increasing the distance. Both comments were in agreement that a 30-metre setback would be more resilient to future climate events and norms.

2.3 REQUESTS FOR OCP ADDITIONS – KEY MESSAGES

Figure 3 shows the instances where community members requested a change or identified missing content in the OCP. It is important to note that some emails are in response to an issue that has since been addressed by Council and Staff, notably the redesignation of the West Ridge Trails development. Key messages are summarized in further detail below

Figure 3

Area of OCP	Requested Item	Number of Mentions	Addressed by Edits
4.1	Requests for clarity or emphasis on alleviating traffic issues	12	Yes. Additions made to consider a secondary route across the Sooke River.
4.4.2.1 Table 4 (p. 33)	Requests for language changes	5	No change. Primarily related to language around “new systems” and Farrell Estates. This language is not included in the OCP document.
Figure 6	Request land use designation change from community growth area to rural residential	2	No change.
	Request for action related to employment/job creation	2	No change.
	Requests for waterfront access improvements	2	No change.
	Request for a traffic light	1	No change.
Figure 6	Request clarification regarding land use designation of Whiffin Spit	1	No change.
7.4.4	Request bylaw amendment to clarify exemptions for existing resort development permits within 15m of the foreshore area.	1	No change.
	Request for infrastructure plan	1	No change.
	Request for action related to health care	1	No change.
	Request for emergency management plan	1	No change.

	Request for action related to small business prioritization	1	No change.
	Request for action related to tourism	1	No change.
	Request for park improvements	1	No change.
	Request for action related to economic development	1	No change.
	Request for action related to affordable housing	1	No change.

Alleviating Traffic Issues

There were 12 emails requesting more clarity on how to relieve traffic in the OCP. Many of these emails point to infrastructure improvements, such as a second bridge, as a solution ease traffic flow.

Requests for Language/Zoning Changes

There were five written requests to make language changes in the OCP, all of which are related to easing development. One request was related to building only low-carbon electrical systems, and some others related to building new service systems in undeveloped areas.

There were also two requests to amend Land Use Designations in the OCP: one for the West Ridge Trails development and the other for Nagle and Gillespie Roads. On March 28, 2022, Council voted to change the designation of the West Ridge Trails development from Rural Residential to Community Residential

Request for Waterfront Access Improvements

Two community members wrote in requests for improving access points to Sooke’s waterfront, citing it as an opportunity to improve recreation and tourism for the area.

Request for Job Creation/Employment

There were two requests for providing actions related to job creation and employment for Sooke locals.