



District of Sooke **design guidelines**



Final Report

prepared for:
on:

by:

District of Sooke
June 30, 2006

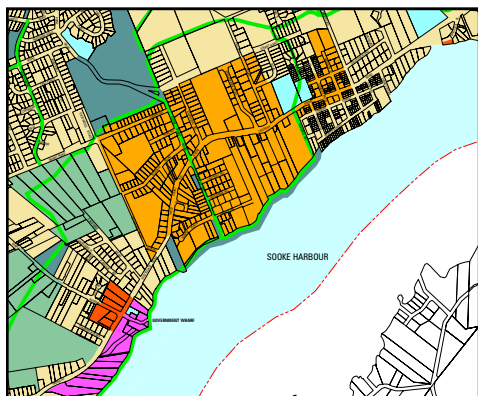
Zeidler Partnership
Boulevard Transportation Group

Executive Summary

Mission Statement:

To provide Sooke with a set of design recommendations that will guide future private and public development of the downtown core, resulting in a strong and healthy community.

Source: Map 2 Land Use, OCP 2001



- Downtown Core
- Parks & Open Space
- Agriculture
- Residential
- Institutional
- Commercial (outside of downtown)
- Destination Resort



Downtown Sooke currently supports a diverse range of land uses, including commercial, institutional, office, residential, parks, and transportation. Sooke Road is the main traffic corridor through the area, with Otter Point Road and Church Road as secondary, well-traveled routes that intersect Sooke Road. The historically and naturally significant Sooke Harbour is a landmark in the area, amidst the attractive rural setting.

Sooke has some components of a downtown core (including local services) however, there are currently several under utilized parcels of land within the downtown precinct. For an improved downtown core to come to fruition, this mixed-use core requires a strong economic foundation with further municipal and community support.

In December 2004, the District of Sooke retained the consulting team of Zeidler Partnership and Boulevard Transportation Group to develop design guidelines for Downtown Sooke. This was in response to the 2001 Official Community Plan mandate to prepare design guidelines as long term planning objectives, by utilizing community collaboration. To achieve this goal a ten person steering committee entitled the "Downtown Sooke Revitalization Committee" was formed and comprised of residents, business stakeholders, and District of Sooke staff. They participated fully and enthusiastically throughout the life of the project.

In 2004, the consulting team was involved in the preliminary design assignment for Highway 14. The roadway corridor analysis was expanded upon to include a thorough site investigation of downtown Sooke (including inventory and analysis of physical features, topography, local pedestrian and vehicle traffic patterns, existing vegetation, existing buildings and businesses, Sooke Harbour edge conditions, transit nodes and key public destinations within Downtown Sooke.)

To generate key concerns from local stakeholders, a comprehensive public process was undertaken, which involved a survey of local residents, landowners, and business operators. Additionally, the Revitalization Committee, consultants, and District staff embarked on a field trip to gentrified local and regional townscape. Regular committee meetings were advertised and held, with the public invited. A public workshop was planned, however, had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. The Revitalization Committee then volunteered to make conceptual planning ideas and additional surveys available to the public by setting up streetside booths over three consecutive weekends. All of the above actions were integral to the process and development of design guidelines for the area.

Transportation was studied by the consulting team for these guidelines. Previously in 2004, existing and future projected traffic volume numbers were collected and analyzed. Suggestions for improving safety, traffic flow, parking configurations, and cycling/pedestrian crossings/connections were presented to the District, with several options for consideration. Additionally, streetscape upgrades to improve the overall pedestrian experience and safety were proposed. An analysis of Sooke's existing buildings was completed and guideline suggestions made for improvements to infill development, scale, and form.

These design guidelines are based upon three key planning areas, which are Mobility, Built Form, and Streetscape/Open Space. Through the public input process undertaken, three main ideas or 'visions' emerged for Sooke, being "The Town Square", "Harbour Walk", and "Greenways and Green Streets", which are all explained and illustrated in greater detail within this report. Inevitably, land parcels will continue to develop over time, however, with these broad planning principles and supportive design guidelines in place, the types of development, their siting, mass, and scale will be guided in the right direction and fit for Downtown Sooke.

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1.1 Project Background



The District of Sooke adopted an Official Community Plan (OCP) in 2001 outlining long-term planning policies and objectives. The document highlights economic development and includes 'big picture' ideas, such as establishing a stronger community identity through improving the character of downtown Sooke. Main strategies identified in the OCP were:

- to better define the boundaries of the downtown core;
- to make stronger connections to the waterfront; and
- to build more, high quality, mixed-use developments that fill in and densify downtown Sooke.

In addition to the OCP 2001, several transportation studies were conducted to improve mobility and safety in downtown Sooke. After the incorporation of the District of Sooke in 2000, Boulevard Transportation Group (formally GMK 2000) was retained to develop a transportation plan for the District. The District identified traffic management as an integral part of developing a "smart growth" strategy and appointed a traffic steering committee to work with GMK 2000. The Official Community Plan 1998 and the Sooke Local Area Plan 1999 were used as guides in examining the road and traffic systems within Sooke, whilst taking into consideration potential growth scenarios. Two main initiatives were proposed by the District of Sooke:

- 1) studying Highway 14 as it passes through the business district; and
- 2) reviewing Sooke's traffic operations.

Public consultation played a considerable role in the process. A steering committee comprised of civic leaders, staff, and residents was established to oversee the process. Open houses and information sessions were held to communicate the process, and a questionnaire was distributed to garner feedback and suggestions.

In addition to these initiatives, GMK 2000 and the steering committee also established three components with regards to the study:

- Make a design recommendation for Highway 14.
- Perform an operational review with accompanying recommendations.
- Suggest a list of supportive transportation policies.

In order for the plan to develop (with respect to the traffic conditions in Sooke) an overall review of vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and parking within the District was completed, as well as, an overall review of Highway 14. Traffic volumes were collected and modelled to determine the need for signals, as well as, examine lane requirements and safety conditions along the corridor. Several options for Highway 14 were reviewed and it was determined that a three lane concept would best suit Highway 14 from Charters Road to Atherly Close. The District approved the concept, as well as the Ministry of Transportation, who approved the three lane concept in principle, as long as a parallel route was developed at the same time.





1.2 Project Intent

What is the purpose of Design Guidelines?

Throughout the process, Sooke was the subject of a pilot project called "A Safer Pedestrian Plan" being developed by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC.) The Pedestrian Plan was a part of a larger project commissioned by ICBC to scan the needs of Transportation and Traffic Engineers in order to provide them with the right tools to implement safe pedestrian facilities within communities. This opportunity was offered to GMK 2000 for application to the preliminary strategy being developed for Sooke to introduce pedestrian facilities into the broader transportation plan. A group of "pedestrian advocates" (i.e. active citizens) from Sooke were involved in the process to act as representatives of Sooke and provide input into local perspective. The Pedestrian Plan illustrated a "walkable" community where pedestrians have priority in the overall transportation hierarchy. The plan focused on the benefits of implementing pedestrian facilities, which would improve the atmosphere of Sooke, as well as increase safety, livability, and improve the overall standard of living for citizens. Furthermore, the plan focused on creating a network of pedestrian pathways that would link major activity centres and destinations.

In 2004, with the announcement of Federal and Provincial infrastructure funds available for the District of Sooke, Boulevard Transportation Group and 1st Team Consulting Ltd. were retained to undertake the preliminary design of Highway 14, with Stantec Consulting undertaking the preliminary designs for a parallel connector road. As the highway corridor serves a variety of users (including trucking, local transit, residents, visitors, cyclists, and pedestrians) design strategies were developed to enhance circulation and access, as well as maintain safety and capacity along the roadway. Throughout the process four open houses were held, offering the public an opportunity to review the designs and comment on whether or not they supported the transportation plans. Unfortunately, a referendum failed to garner support for borrowing the funds required to construct these two infrastructure projects.

From the results of these previous processes, it is clear that the District needs to focus on a transportation plan that the local community can support. The development of these downtown design guidelines is a major step towards establishing an overall vision for the community. Additionally, these guidelines will provide a working document that may be used, to set in motion, the a wide array of design standards aimed at improving downtown Sooke .

The goal of design guidelines are to provide a framework or set of urban design criteria that will guide future redevelopment of Sooke, the project study area. This, in turn, will result in encouraging private investment and creating a stronger image for the area. The design guidelines are a working document that will be flexible enough to allow diversity, whilst at the same time provide a long-term vision, promoting a unique and identifiable town centre. Through information gathering and input from District staff, the revitalization committee, and the public, the study team has set forth design guidelines for new development that will set standards and an image appropriate for the area, resulting in a high quality of living and work environment. The results are to make Sooke a more livable and attractive place to experience on a daily basis.

Community 'livability' is characterized by numerous physical and social planning elements including: public safety, attractiveness, ease of getting around, quality and comfort of public space and general cohesion of the

urban environment. Simply put – 'livable' communities are places people feel good spending time in.

According to the Terms of Reference, the key purposes of this study include:

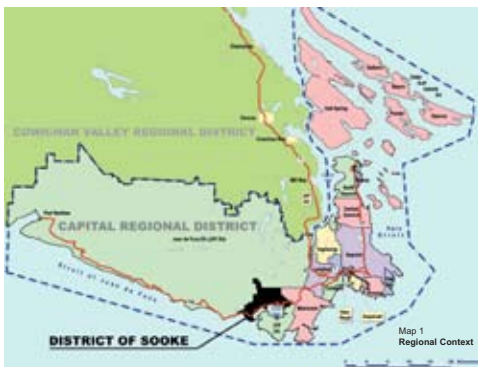
- to support a small town character;
- to enhance Sooke's oceanfront natural setting;
- to stimulate private investment;
- to create strong links to amenities;
- to provide needed infrastructure upgrades for the benefit of both local residents and the tourists; and
- to improve pedestrian safety.

Throughout the public input process there has been general consensus of opinion from local stakeholders and residents about the key issues Sooke faces as a community. Whenever conflicting opinions have arisen, the study team has relied (for resolution) on sound urban planning and design practices that have stood the test of time for communities throughout the world. The purpose of these design guidelines is not to put forward details such as exact locations for redevelopment or building appearances, rather, it should be viewed as a general land use guide for future development.

The Design Guidelines will:

- Identify a vision for future development of Sooke;
- Stimulate investment within a visually identifiable place;
- Enhance and create a safer, livable pedestrian-oriented town centre;
- Provide unity and cohesion between development parcels and land uses that are logical;
- Stipulate clear and concise direction for streetscape design, building character and form, and open space;
- Provide 'green' boulevards, pedestrian gathering areas, and natural edges to soften development and built forms, whilst respecting and preserving the natural environment; and
- Encourage a stronger waterfront focus within the downtown core.

1.3 Project Context



Sooke is located 40 kilometres west of Victoria, with a southeast exposure overlooking the Sooke Harbour. Sooke is undergoing rapid growth and the area is characterized namely by rural and forested lands, institutional (local schools), residential, predominantly single family, and retail/commercial enterprises. The Highway 14 corridor dissects the downtown, then becoming the West Coast Road en route to its terminus in Port Renfrew. While the area has some components of an urban village, including local commercial services and some multi-family housing, there are several significant underutilized land parcels within the study area. Sooke's marine character and its connection to the natural setting requires a vision that is fully supported by the municipality and community.

2.0 Public Input Process

2.1 Revitalization Committee

During fall of 2004, an advertisement was placed by the District of Sooke within the 'Sooke News Mirror' asking for local volunteers to form a steering committee with District of Sooke staff, the Mayor and two council members, in order to provide input and guidance on the project process and development of design guidelines. A committee known as the 'Sooke Downtown Revitalization Committee' was formed and the project start up commenced as of November 30, 2004.

2.2 Revitalization Committee: Community Members

The committee was made up of the following individuals:

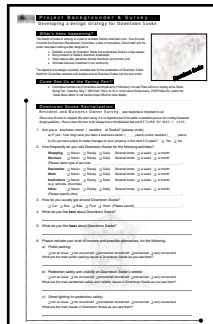


Not shown: Patrick Grove, Dacre Bowen,
District staff and consultants

Mayor
Chair/Councillor
Councillor
Planner
Assistant Planner
Volunteers

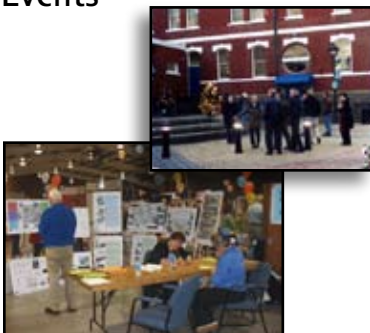
Janet Evans
John Farmer
Lorna Barry
Frank Limshue
Kelly Foisy
Edward Stipp
Jerry Leidtke
James Eaton
Patrick Grove
Vern Moore
Dennis Seed
Dacre Bowen

2.3 Surveys



On January 31, 2005, 800 surveys (see sample in appendix) were mailed out to residents and business owners within Sooke's downtown boundary. Only 34 were returned for a 4% response rate. An additional 300 surveys were distributed by committee members at project information booths over three consecutive weekends at local Sooke shopping locations. Approximately 200 more surveys were completed at the Sooke Rotary Spring Fair in May at the Seaparc Arena.

2.4 Events



A bus tour was conducted in December 2004 visiting local Vancouver Island gentrified townscapes. Revitalization committee members, District staff, and consultants attended and documented the day as inspiration for establishing a unique vision for Sooke.

A public workshop was planned for March 12, 2005 aimed at generating public input for the design guidelines, however, was cancelled due to lack of public response. Instead, throughout April 2005, surveys were distributed by the committee at public venues in downtown Sooke, as well as, a participatory display booth at the Sooke Spring Fair in May 2005.

2.5 Communications



Several announcements and editorials were placed in the 'Sooke News Mirror' between January and May 2005, advertising events and updating the public about the project. These news stories were provided with input from Teri Poirier, a Royal Roads journalism student, and input from the committee and consultants. Final results of the study will be posted on the District of Sooke website (www.district.sooke.bc.ca) over summer 2005.

3.1 Goals based on Identified Issues

3.1.1 Mobility



3.1.2 Built Form



3.1.3 Streetscape/Open Space



3.2 Inventory/Analysis (refer to Appendix for Reference Plans)

The documents produced to date, and public input provided during the life of this study, both suggest the following key issues and corresponding goals, addressed under these broad headings: Mobility, Built Form, and Streetscape/Open Space. It is these issues/goals that the design guidelines are based upon.

- Establish safe pedestrian sidewalks and crossings using creative, pedestrian-friendly solutions.
 - Create traffic calming within the commercial zone of downtown Sooke (i.e. between Church Road and Otter Point Road)
 - Improve pedestrian connections and routes between shopping centres, offices, and residential areas.
 - Improve pedestrian connections to parks and open space systems (i.e. waterfront facilities.)
 - Include cyclist lanes on major routes.
-
- Develop architectural styles specific and acceptable to the character of Sooke and its' seaside setting.
 - Build toward a 'Town Centre' scale and density.
 - Require high architectural design standards that are sensitive to transition zones and streetscape issues.
 - Build mixed-use developments along Sooke Road and Otter Point Road (i.e. commercial, retail, office, and residential combined) to create diversity and a lively downtown precinct.
 - Update land use designations to fit with existing and proposed uses.
-
- Provide appropriate buffers and stronger connections between the commercial town centre and existing neighbourhoods.
 - Generate sign motifs and a wayfinding strategy for downtown Sooke.
 - Improve streetscape appearance and pedestrian experience through upgraded sidewalks, furniture, lighting and landscaping.
 - Announce the "edges" or boundaries of the downtown precinct with gateway (i.e. entry) treatments.
 - Protect and enhance Sooke's natural character.
 - Define an image or motif for Sooke that may be used in signage and streetscape furniture.

An inventory and analysis exercise was conducted by the project team early in the process. The extensive inventory of downtown Sooke included a close look at the opportunities and constraints within the existing land use patterns and pedestrian routes. Existing information on mobility was inventoried during the Highway 14 study and its analysis included in the vehicle traffic analysis of this project. B.C. Transit routes and stops, as well as, cycling patterns were also inventoried in the downtown sector. Existing businesses and institutions were noted and mapped. Pedestrian circulation



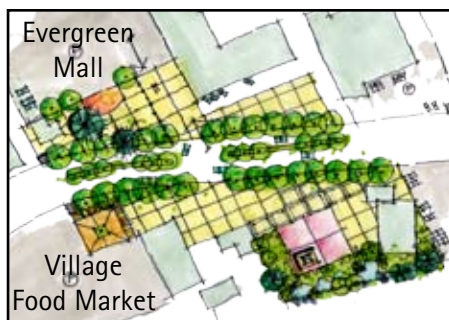
3.3 Basic Assumptions



4.0 The Community 'Ideas':

*A basis for planning principles
(refer to Appendix for
Reference Plans)*

4.1 Town Heart: *The Vision*



patterns were studied and mapped. Data on existing physical features was collected and noted (i.e. foreshore conditions, vegetation, and natural amenity areas.) Parks and trail systems, as well as, the condition of the existing public streetscape (such as planters, light and hydro poles, garbage receptacles, and seating) were noted. The analysis of the study area was generated and presented to the Downtown Sooke Revitalization Committee.

This analysis was important to identify the opportunities and constraints for change in the future.

- Open space or land parcels that won't change or move in the near future (i.e. Municipal Hall, Post Office, Library, Senior's Centre, Churches, Macgregor Park, Sooke Elementary School, Village Food Market and Evergreen Mall)
- The proposed time frame for the life of the design guidelines is ten to fifteen years.
- Specific development priorities are regulatory and will be driven by the District of Sooke policy on public land. It is not the intent of this document to determine development priorities for private land parcels within Sooke.

Through the public consultation process and a series of revitalization committee meetings, three big ideas emerged. These ideas were generally agreed upon by Sooke residents (through the public surveys responses) as distinct design elements upon which to base planning principles for the Sooke Design Guidelines. They make up the urban framework to anchor future development over time. The principles were formulated from input from District staff, business stakeholders, the general public, and the project consulting team's perception of the area from physical, social and economic standpoints.

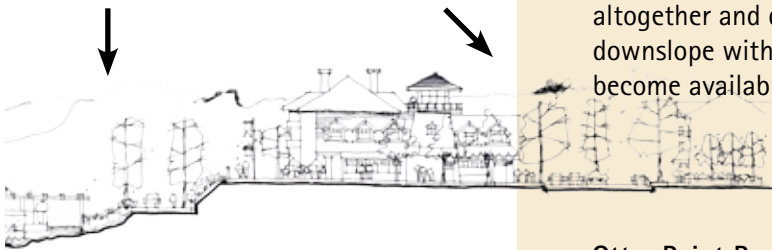
Currently, downtown Sooke is a busy hub of predominantly low-rise commercial/retail and service outlets with community components including the Community Hall, the Library, the Post Office, the Senior's Centre, Macgregor Park, the Chamber of Commerce, and several churches, all within a 4-5 block radius. Sooke's commercial centre has developed from a cluster of small businesses along the Highway 14 corridor into a sprawling auto-oriented series of shopping plazas and mini-malls. The town centre has taken on a strip character with a disorganized appearance and poor pedestrian amenities. Most importantly, this haphazard pattern of development does not provide a social focal point for the community.

To humanize the scale and attractiveness of the town centre and encourage private investment, several steps could be taken. Various sites were noted, by all, as potential public areas that could provide a focal 'town heart' or civic space with feature pedestrian gathering areas and community activities.

- **Town Square** – Centrally located, the Logger Pole site is a versatile venue for events, festivals, art displays and music. It is a walkable destination from all of downtown, the harbour and many nearby neighbourhoods. It has ample parking. It would require a public private land ownership agreement.

Town Square
Option 2

Town Square
Option 1



- A second option would be to keep the Town Square off Sooke Road altogether and develop a civic space away from the highway, downslope with better harbour views, when these tracts of land become available for acquisition.

- **Otter Point Road** – Centrally located with high visibility, this key intersection is well known for direct walking access to the waterfront (MacGregor Pier), and is in the heart of the commercial district. Development of a public civic space on one of the four corners would make a good venue for a civic plaza with some land acquisition and redevelopment of buildings. The Sooke Chamber of Commerce, Seniors Centre and an expanded library/arts centre should be considered for this location as public service amenities and tourist attractors. Parking is limited to off street lots and some limited on street parking on Murray and Otter Point Roads.
- **Sooke Elementary School** – A well known site by all residents, with high visibility at the east end of the commercial core. The site offers considerable open space for redevelopment, should the school be closed in the future, and would offer a generous scale to build an outdoor civic space that would include an outdoor market component and service group events, closer to town than the current venue at the Sooke Seaparc Arena.
- **Town Hall** – Although the site sits outside the OCP downtown boundary, the District Hall offers a potential site for outdoor civic space redevelopment, possibly in the form of an amphitheatre, utilizing the existing sloping topography. The positive aspects of this site are that indoor civic functions could spill out to an open-air venue. There is some limited on site parking, but the location is close to existing and future residential neighbourhoods. Many agree the site is easily walkable from downtown, although the ascent up Otter Point Road may prove difficult for elderly and children in strollers.

4.1.1 Town Square Guidelines

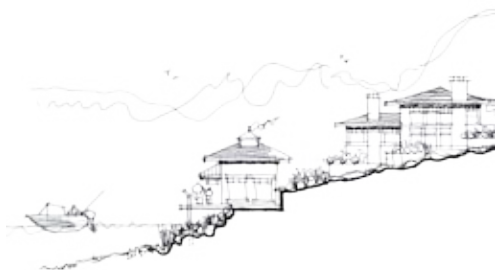


Sooke's Town Square should incorporate "hard" surface areas with "soft" green spaces, which offers a variety of experiences for residents and tourists alike. Future redevelopment of any of the above sites should include an outdoor marketplace with seating, tables and awnings, and shade trees, which could spill across Sooke Road from Evergreen Mall, for example. An active square with a performance stage at the current logger pole location could be accompanied by a quieter gathering area where Seaview Plaza is currently located. This area could become a downtown urban park by including components such as a harbour viewing tower, B.C. native garden, and a water feature.

Generally, institutional buildings within Sooke should be more strongly linked to the pedestrian network of sidewalks and neighbourhood pathways and amenity areas. A Town Square would be one option to improve upon this. As outlined above, the Community Hall would be more strongly linked to a civic square if Otter Point was chosen. The Municipal Hall would be naturally linked to a civic square if located at the hall. Finally, the Sooke



4.2 Harbour Walk: *The Vision*



Harbour would be visually connected with a viewing tower at the Seaview Plaza location.

A funding opportunity for all of the sites explored in this study would be for residents or local businesses to donate or "gift" furniture, pavers, benches, or plants to the Town Square project. This has been a successful venture in other communities and adds a personal touch to the streetscape environment.

Program ideas for this outdoor space would include local events and festivals, public markets, outdoor entertainment, and local celebrations (such as the rebirth of 'All Sooke Days', a winter festival 'light-up', music and art festivals) all of which would enliven the space throughout the year. A transit stop or hub within close proximity to the square should be considered.

The Sooke Harbour has been quoted as Sooke's jewel. A large inlet facing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Sooke's waterfront is primarily lined with residential development, with clusters of commercial marine activities, and some open space and parks. Seaside enclaves within Sooke have been described as charming, small, artsy, heritage, marine and picturesque. The challenge is to maintain this atmosphere and charm whilst improving pedestrian and vehicular circulation. A major improvement to the downtown area would be a public harbour walkway straddling the foreshore. Initial construction could take place once an easement or right-of-way is established by the District. A detailed harbour walk master plan should be initiated prior to building phased segments. Public access to the shoreline via Macgregor Park and Murray Road to the crabbing pier are already established, well-known routes within the downtown area. A trail system linking proposed greenways (refer to OCP map) to the waterfront should be established. East of Murray Road, Felton Lane and Slemko are obvious trail links from a harbour walk to Sooke Road and greenways north of the downtown core. Future road extensions to Lincroft, Goodmere and Horne could terminate in a dual road and pedestrian greenway running north-south intersecting Sooke Road. A trail link from Macgregor Park is already established as a precedent, connecting the upland park to the Pier.

Redesign of the Murray Road cul-de-sac (with improved accommodation for cars and pedestrians) at the harbour edge, with decking, benches and seating steps, will offer views out and over the Sooke Harbour and act as a trailhead terminus, thereby improving this direct route from the commercial core. In addition to a public boardwalk, business enterprises (such as cafes, attractive small shops, marine oriented rentals, and outdoor food kiosks) should be encouraged and will be draw factors to the area. Future private development should be encouraged to provide these Harbour Walk amenities within redevelopment submissions so that, eventually, a public shoreline walk would provide Sooke with an attractive amenity for both walkers and marine users.

Through the addition or renovation of businesses and services (both on the water and land), reconfigured public parking, and public service building relocation, over time, appropriate infill development should provide the "glue" for Sooke's commercial core area. Similar examples of densification around the waterfront in several marine village settings today are Deep Cove of North Vancouver, Fulford Harbour on Saltspring Island, and the Town of Gibsons. These towns all have a strong physical connections to the water and a small but substantial commercial component that supports mariners, locals and visitors, who require services and amenities for brief periods.

4.3 Greenways and Green Streets: *The Vision*



Before the onslaught of suburban sprawl, neighbourhoods were organized around services, activities and traveling distances. Most of a family's daily activities and needs could be met within a reasonable walking distance from home. Such regular interaction within the neighbourhood fostered strong physical and social ties within the community and its residents. The reliance on the automobile changed this decades long social pattern. The turn of the 21st century heralded a new interpretation of this old model – "green" urban villages. Quality of life for humans and their environment is the primary goal.

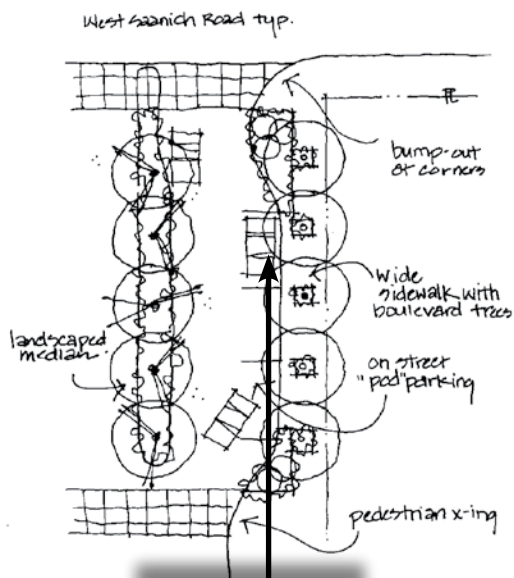
Community livability can be increased through quality open space and streetscape environments with strong connections to local facilities and amenities. Public greenways and greening of our streets is one way to achieve this. The Sooke OCP outlines routes for future greenways in and around its downtown core. It has been determined that a greenway linking system be planned for Sooke, which physically links surrounding neighbourhoods to the commercial area, offering an alternative to the automobile.

Richly textured public spaces can be achieved by offering places for cultural activities to overlap with retail/commercial interests, resulting in an exciting blend of people and movement. Pedestrian mobility occurs predominantly in the realm of the public walkway system or sidewalk streetscape. One of the greatest challenges is to provide for the safe movement of vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians within urban spaces – villages, towns or cities.

Sooke Road, the main artery through the downtown core, should be recognizable and memorable in its overall appearance, achievable through streetscape detailing. This could be in the form of street trees and/or boulevard treatments such as banners, flower baskets, lighting fixtures, or public signage, to name a few. Pedestrian safety and buffering from cars can be achieved with wider separated sidewalks and boulevard trees for instance. Improved sidewalks was sited over and over again in the resident surveys. Planting of street trees along boulevards, and a central median will help 'green' downtown Sooke. Similarly, a green streets program for boulevards, sidewalks and street trees on the secondary roads intersecting Sooke Road, will also serve to enhance the appearance of this mixed residential/commercial area.

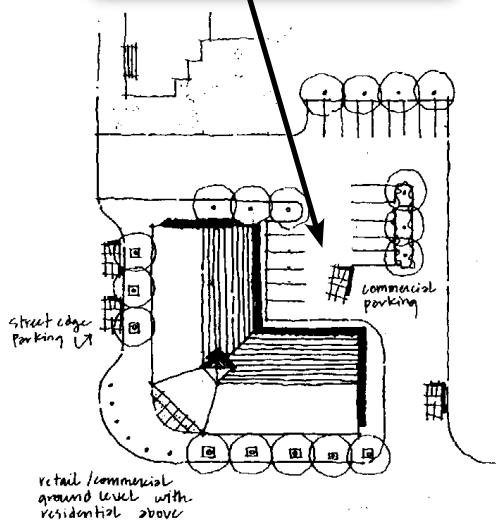
The 'feel' of a street is strongly associated to the buildings that line its edges. The scale, height and massing of Sooke's buildings says a lot about its development patterns over the last few decades. Cook Street and Oak Bay Avenue have a village feel because they include low rise buildings (some turn of the century) of no more than two or three stories. The buildings are built up to the street with little or no parking in front of them, and minimal open spaces or vehicle accesses between. An occasional alleyway with a business side-access is acceptable.

Parking can take up a lot of land as well as require access that exceeds the area of the buildings and the streetscape. Recent history has shown that parking can take over the shape of small town centres if not planned and designed carefully. The scale and tone of downtown Sooke will be enhanced with careful parking allocation, design and management.



pod parking

rear parking



Streets become more livable when parking is provided in small clusters with bump-outs and landscaping in between to break up the sea of asphalt appearance. Parking along Sooke Road is not currently permitted. Future development on Sooke Road should be encouraged to include off street parking to the rear of buildings. Angle parking and parallel parking should be explored on existing and proposed secondary roads within downtown Sooke, where right of way permits width. Additionally, the District might explore purchasing land and providing a municipal parking lot that would serve the walkable commercial area.

5.1 Mobility

Existing Conditions



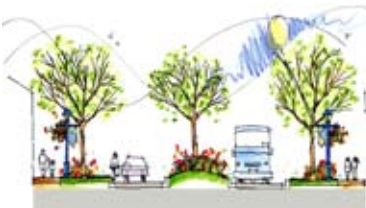
Public Comments



Parking



Traffic Improvements



This section outlines the key design guidelines for Sooke in the form of principles.

Sooke is currently undergoing development opportunities along the Highway 14 corridor and within the designated commercial core area. As these new developments emerge and impact the landscape of downtown Sooke the demand for proper traffic management and design will increase dramatically. Transportation plays a vital role in managing the growth that comes with these developments and through appropriate planning and roadway design the potential traffic problems associated with population growth can be mitigated, whilst increasing mobility and access to services for both residents and visitors of Sooke. Transportation demand management strategies will encourage walking, cycling and transit-use within the district, as well as improve traffic flow within downtown Sooke.

Through the public survey some fundamental needs were identified by the community; primarily the poor sidewalk conditions and unsafe environment for pedestrians in downtown Sooke. All comments have been considered, but some comments are noteworthy, such as the desire for Sooke Road to be two lanes with less visible parking areas, more streetscape, median and boulevard landscaping and designated bike lanes. Lighting and signage were also included as important design elements for pedestrians.

Highway 14 runs through downtown Sooke and is a two-lane road with a shared turning lane. However, the current configuration (within the right-of-way) is wide enough to accommodate five lanes. Presently, the parking situation in the downtown is primarily off-street, with the majority of parking occurring within a number of shopping centre lots. Generally, patrons of the businesses in Sooke are forced to drive to various stores or amenities and park off-street instead of walking. Improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, and medians will impact the accessibility for pedestrians within the Sooke core, allowing for a "park and walk" concept, where patrons can park outside a number of businesses and not feel restricted to shop strictly at those locations. The options for parking within the Sooke core are parallel parking on new road links in the core or angle parking on the district roads (with the exception of Highway 14.)

Highway 14 runs through downtown Sooke and is a two-lane highway with a shared turning lane, however, the current configuration is wide enough to accommodate three lanes in either direction. The sidewalks and footpaths are in poor condition with only an asphalt barrier strip delineating between the road and the pedestrian walkway. There is opportunity for improvements to the traffic flow, as well as the accesses to businesses and residences along the highway. These improvements will also affect pedestrians, cyclists and transit.

The implementation of new medians, boulevards, sidewalks and crosswalks will improve safety and properly manage the traffic. An improved cross-section will accommodate the different right of way widths along the corridor,

Intersections and Signals



as well as increase the flow of traffic through the downtown core. This would be achieved by decreasing the number of potentially dangerous turns and illegal manoeuvres that are currently occurring along the roadway.

The main intersections within the Sooke downtown core are the intersections at Charters, Church and Otter Point Roads (with signalized intersections at Church Road and Otter Point Road only.) At Charters, the existing intersection has a restricted left turn due to poor sight distances. At Church Road, the existing laning is sufficient to handle the current traffic volumes. The intersection at Otter Point Road allows for full movement, and access in both the northbound and southbound conditions (as well as heading eastbound or westbound along Highway 14.) A future signal locations should be considered at Charters Road.

Crosswalks



Due to the lack of on-street parking along Sooke Road, it is necessary to accommodate the patrons who will park and walk to the various businesses within the area. There are currently crosswalks at Sooke Road, Townsend Road, Sooke Elementary School and outside of the Evergreen Mall, as well as crosswalks at the major intersections.

Crosswalks should be implemented along Sooke Road, especially in areas where there is high pedestrian traffic. With the addition of improved sidewalks and medians, new crosswalks will increase pedestrian safety, as well as increase the accessibility for residents and visitors to the surrounding businesses, without having to rely on a vehicle to get to and from their destination.

Consideration should be given to colour, detail, and texture of the pedestrian crosswalks to clearly guide the pedestrians and act as a reminder to the drivers that pedestrians have the right of way.



Crosswalks should be equipped with pedestrian activated flashing beacons mounted on the side of the roadway to provide consistency along the corridor at unsignalized intersections, while providing vehicles with an activated warning system. A vertical marker such as a bollard or a sign post where different driving rules apply or where pedestrians and cars mix.

Crosswalks should be a standard of 3.0m wide, with zebra stripes (official crosswalk markings) at unsignalized locations, and parallel lines at signalized intersections.

Sidewalks

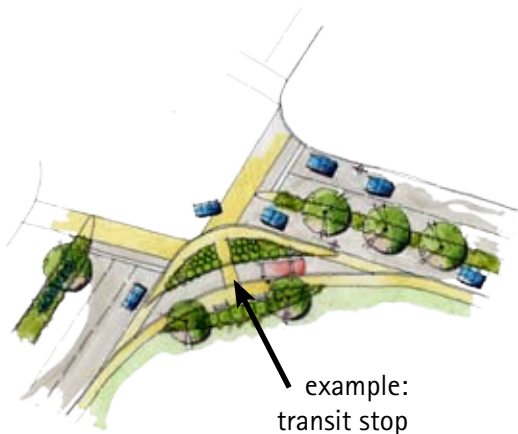


Daily business activity and local tourism will create pedestrian movement within the downtown core area and around the Sooke community. Currently, Sooke's downtown is dominated by the vehicle and pedestrians must make their way along poor makeshift sidewalks, vague open space, and parking lots to reach their destination. Safety is an issue and walking is being discouraged for both residents and visitors to Sooke.

Move away from the emphasis of the automobile by building walkable sidewalks and pedestrian boulevards that encourage people to walk to their destination in the core.



Transit



Access and Route Connections



Sidewalks should be at least 2.0m wide in the core, with boulevards separating pedestrians from the vehicle, and giving the opportunity for landscaping.

Determine the color and texture of the sidewalks to denote them as part of the streetscape. Sidewalk improvements will improve not only the appearance of downtown Sooke but they will also shift the emphasis away from the automobile and back to the pedestrian.

The number 61 bus provides transit between Sooke and downtown Victoria during the day. Service ranges from every 15 minutes to every 2 hours. There are several transit stops within the downtown core, with service commencing at Shields Road and Sooke Road, and continuing east along Sooke Road to Victoria. The stops are currently on the road or shoulder and one stop is a bus bay (or pull-out).

Transit stops should be upgraded to accommodate loading and unloading of special needs passengers, as well as providing a proper pull-out for the bus itself. Sidewalk width should not be compromised, therefore, placement of the bus bays must be well thought out.

A local community bus service will come into effect once transit service to the Sooke area develops, thereby providing a link to residential areas and new developments. These local buses will "meet" with the main service route between Victoria and Sooke at a designated location along Sooke Road. A focal point for transit service (or "downtown terminus") should, therefore, be considered for development. This downtown terminus should be visible to both pedestrians and drivers with a pleasant waiting area for the transit commuters. The addition of these transit links and facilities will benefit both the local and regional transit service.

Landscaping and furniture should be integrated into the waiting area, as well as good lighting to create an enjoyable and safe space within the core.

BC Transit should work with the District of Sooke to encourage ridership within the area, by upgrading current bus stops, and initiating future park and rides within the district itself. Transit Service is a key connection for both residents and tourists to Sooke, and is an important alternate mode to the vehicle.

With new developments increasing within the District of Sooke, there is potential for additional access roads or parallel routes within the downtown core area. To encourage economic activity within the Sooke core, it is essential to tie in the surrounding road network and initiate walkways and connections to the businesses along Highway 14.

The surrounding roads should accommodate both the pedestrian and the vehicle, in an attempt to establish areas in which people can park and walk to their desired destination. Wide sidewalks and boulevards will provide pedestrians with safe walkways, and with additional streetscape furniture and landscaping, the overall enjoyment of the area will improve, allowing for more of a "community" feel for both residents and visitors.



Angled parking should be located along the road network south of Highway 14 on streets that have adequate width; otherwise, parallel parking is the alternative option. Creating parking within this road network will allow for patrons of Sooke businesses to park and walk to a number of destinations, rather than parking outside of an individual business, feeling obligated to shop there, and not leave the vehicle to walk to other shops.

On-street parking will also allow for more parking along the roadways and force drivers to slow down, in an attempt to create a safer environment for both the driver and the pedestrian.

New developments within the area should attempt to create footpaths and walkways to and from the core areas, allowing residents to walk into the town centre, rather than depending on their vehicle. Developers should work with the District to ensure that proper sidewalks and crosswalks create

5.2 Built Form

A Seaside Town: *Unique Character*



Infill Existing Vacant Sites



Create Unique Character

accessibility between new developments and Sooke's commercial centre. Sooke has historically been an economy based upon the resource industries, logging and fishing. Physically, downtown Sooke in many ways has turned its back on its coastal setting. There are many opportunities that could be built upon to improve the ambiance and experience, making Sooke a coastal treasure. Sooke's commercial development has focused on Highway 14 (Sooke Road) the main road, ignoring the harbour a few blocks away. Many of the businesses were planned for automobile orientation, not pedestrian experience of the site or the sea. The domination of the townscape by the automobile is responsible for the present weakness of the downtown. The pedestrian environment is poor, with narrow poorly surfaced sidewalks, or no sidewalks at all, with uninviting pedestrian crosswalks on a fast moving street amidst a myriad of large parking lots.

Despite the town's weak points, the existing pattern of development has a comfortable scale that is appreciated by its residents and has potential to be built upon. Primary guidelines for future development in the town commercial core include:

- Better pedestrian connections between activity areas
- Build new buildings closer to the street
- Avoid over-designed 'themed' architecture
- Be sensitive to sloping topography and views with new development

Overall, there is currently no strong architectural context that might suggest a direction for new buildings, as one finds in an area of strong heritage, such as Old Town Victoria. The few distinctive buildings in downtown Sooke include the Community Hall, and Whiskers + Waggs, representing Sooke's older building style. The Village Foods building and the Child and Youth Family Centre represent examples of contemporary building style and scale appropriate for Sooke. The presence of these buildings in Sooke's townscape should be valued and respected by future development.

A compact centre in the downtown will contribute to the energy, activity, and vitality of the area. Continuity of buildings and businesses will improve the pedestrian shopping experience as well as enhance safety. Encouraging 'denser' development in the downtown will help to redirect the focus of growth away from peripheral sites and help justify improvements in public streetscape amenities.

Encourage the development of existing parking lots for new commercial and residential use.

Consider municipal incentives to boost interest in development in the town centre i.e. gifting programs and Mayor's Focus Groups.

Part of the attraction of a small town centre to residents and visitors is the character or charm of the place. When history and recent development patterns have not in themselves resulted in a specific or unique character, there may be a tendency to create an artificial theme for the town centre. It can be difficult to simulate historic architectural styles using contemporary building materials. The challenge is to foster the development of a unique



Create Mixed-Use Development



Safety and Accessibility



Sustainability: 'Green' Building Design



Barrier Free Sites & Buildings

character based on the qualities of the location, the activities, and the people without resorting to cliché elements.

The town of Sooke should consider a seaside town building palette. This is the most suitable guideline for the architectural theme that will eventually serve to unite the townscape. This is not to say every building should look alike with three colour variations. There should be a richly textured palette of building forms, shapes and floor plans.

Mixing residential and commercial uses in the town centre is one way to enhance 24-hour activity and accompanying security. An increase in local residents means more pedestrian activity and support for town centre businesses.

Encourage residential uses above ground floor commercial or residential buildings as part of larger commercial developments.

Encourage buildings to have more than one type of use, such as mixed use projects, combining retail, office and residential uses.

Civic and community related uses should occupy ground level spaces at key intersections or 'special' central locations downtown.

A safe town centre will free people to fully involve themselves in the life of their community. The ideal is a place where residents and visitors can mix and feel comfortable at any time of the day or night. Design of buildings and sites can be a powerful contributor to security and a sense of safety. Equally important is the need for full accessibility in the public realm and private buildings and sites.

A town that is self-sustaining will achieve an ongoing balance between resources consumed and resources created. Sustainability means that new development will be respectful of the best environmental construction practices and minimize energy consumption. **It includes the reuse of existing buildings and the design of new buildings to have a long and flexible lifespan.** It also expects that development is economically sustainable – that investment in new buildings brings reasonable returns.

The design of new street works, buildings, and sites should be barrier-free to people of all ages and physical capabilities. Accessible design enhances the ability of all individuals to live independently as active members of the community. While not everyone needs aids such as wheelchairs or canes, everyone deserves good design that eases movement and access. "Good design enables, bad design disables."

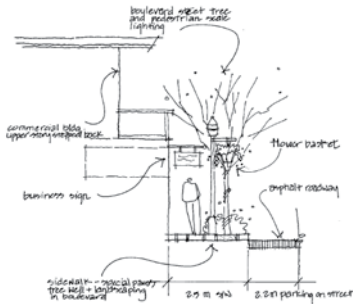
Accessibility features should be integrated into the total design, rather than appearing as add-ons.

Make barrier-free routes obvious and convenient, and ideally the primary route or point of access.

Respect the Local Neighbourhood



Build to the Street



Ensure Pedestrian Development at Street Level



Create Useful Outdoor Space



Buildings that derive their image solely from applied corporate identity treatments should be discouraged. The design of stand alone commercial buildings, gas stations, or convenience stores should respect the existing or planned character of the surrounding neighbourhood area.

The proportion and scale of the street – the 'public realm' – is an important contributor to comfort and enjoyment of a place. Desirable proportions are rarely achieved when low buildings are set well back from the street frontage. A sense of intimacy and small town character will be achieved if buildings are sited near the sidewalk.

Build new buildings to the front property line, or just back from it, as appropriate to ensure useful and comfortable sidewalk space.

Minimize car parking in front of buildings and locate it beside or behind the building.

Treat the street façade as a pedestrian friendly front with a main entrance oriented to the street.

When the goal is a lively and active neighbourhood centre, every part of the street frontage must be used in a meaningful way. Blank walls or main floor uses which are closed to the street interrupt the flow of pedestrian-friendly storefronts and make the walk through downtown less interesting.

Ensure commercial development is visually interesting, active, and scaled to human proportions.

Divide building facades into smaller units by using elements such as narrow storefronts, bays, separated roof forms, and/or repetitive vertical elements.

Careless planning and lack of attention to outdoor use can result in sites containing a lot of unused or unattractive leftover space. Landscaped areas may be attractive but sometimes are not closely related to the function of the building. Ideally, site and building should be considered as completely connected and interrelated.

Building siting and site development should include areas designed and constructed for active use.

Relate useful exterior space to internal ground floor uses of the building; examples include restaurant patios or bicycle parking areas.

Ensure pedestrian access is possible through or around these areas, adjacent to the building and/or the street.

Design outdoor spaces in consideration of neighbouring sites and uses to ensure continuity and mutual benefit.

Encourage Excellence in the Design and Construction of Signs



In a busy commercial centre, signs can be one of the most dominant visual features. The effectiveness of this form of advertising is linked to size and visibility. National restaurant and retail chains often have standards for size, colour, and placement that do not recognize the local context. The proliferation of these standard signs is a major cause of generic strip character across North America. Small businesses may have limited options and budget for their necessary signage, and application of the highest standards may be difficult for them. Creatively designed, constructed and lit signs can make a positive contribution to local character.

Keep sign height in scale with neighbouring buildings.

Discourage free-standing pylon signs; signs should be located on the building façade.

Discourage large areas of back-lit plastic signs or fabric canopy signs. Encourage front-lit signs and neon signs.

Relate signs to downtown Sooke's architecture through the use of complementary materials and details.

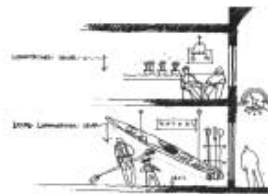
Encourage sign types that include individual letters, hanging signs perpendicular to the building façade, or other creative solutions.

Encourage features such as canopies, awnings and colonnades at the front of commercial buildings.

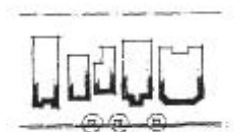
Discourage the illumination of awnings.

5.2.1 Building Scale and Siting: *Downtown Area*

Height



Frontage, Massing



Canopies



Use Quality Construction and Natural Materials

Building height rarely exceeds two stories in downtown Sooke along the commercial frontage. The distance from storefront to street varies, making for an irregular edge. The lack of a long continuous plane of building fronts has added to the informal character.

Some variation in the location of the streetfront with respect to neighbours is encouraged, which will preserve the sense of informality, and allow for the creation of useful outdoor areas facing the street. Careful attention should be paid to the design of cladding and side walls.

Covered 'porches', canopies, or canvas awnings are encouraged. These will provide weather protection and enhance opportunities for outdoor activity, as well as help develop visual detail and a complex appearance for the buildings.

In the future, buildings of the present will form the heritage of Sooke. Building materials should be able to weather gracefully over time, and construction quality should support a long and useful life for the building without dilapidation.

Use exterior building materials that reflect the local character and heritage



Make Landmarks in Appropriate Places



Follow the Local Context



Coordinate Building & Site Design



of the area, particularly along the highway and primary roads, in commercial areas and along the waterfront.

Natural materials such as stone, brick, and wood are desirable, as are colours that harmonize with the colours of the landscape and seaside. Pastel colours of pink or peach are discouraged.

Special attention should be paid to details at the streetfront, entrances, and where people gather. Design of buildings should support the comfort and pleasure of people through the incorporation of weather protection, seating, and accessibility features.

Landmark features of buildings helps indicate important places and relationships in the downtown core, as well as marking the edges of the downtown core. Building design should acknowledge location and siting.

Encourage the development of visual features (e.g. buildings, sculptures, etc.) in the downtown core, at the terminus of views and on the outside of significant curves along Sooke Road.

Encourage buildings at such intersections to be visually prominent. This includes locating them close to the street, developing plazas and/or providing distinctive roof forms and building shapes.

The site design of commercial development is one of the most critical aspects of a successful project. Decisions made at the conceptual design stage have repercussions throughout the design development process.

Proposals should follow local development patterns (i.e. geometry of streets, open space and view corridors, common setbacks, and streetscapes.) The continuation of such patterns should contribute to a unified visual appearance within an area.

Designs should respect the character of neighbouring non-commercial properties to achieve some visual harmony and neighbourliness.

While it is not expected that commercial developments imitate the appearance of local residences, respect should be given to the scale and character of neighbouring properties.

Separate buildings within a larger commercial complex should share similar design characteristics and materials, without being identical throughout.

Use colours, materials and textures that are harmonious throughout the site.

All sides of a building should be consistent in detail and character.

All sites walls, screen walls, pump island canopies or other outdoor covered areas should be architecturally integrated with the buildings by using similar material, colour and detailing.

Share Road Access with Neighbours



Screen Utility Kiosks



The amount of frontage devoted to vehicle access can be significant. Where neighbouring commercial developments each provide their own multiple access points, the street frontage becomes fragmented. This breaks the continuity of the sidewalk or safe pedestrian path along the street, and creates multiple conflict points between cars and pedestrians.

Wherever possible, seek to combine access to main roads with neighbouring commercial property.

Locate utility kiosks and related infrastructure so that they do not reduce visibility for pedestrians or motorists.

Cluster utility structures and screen them to the maximum extent allowed by relevant codes and access requirements.

5.2.2 Building Scale and Siting: Waterfront



At the waterfront, buildings should be small in scale and arranged at irregular angles to suit the shoreline or other aspects of the site and immediate context. Rooflines should be pitched at various angles and directions. At the shoreline and up slope towards Sooke Road, new buildings should be sited with care to ensure views to the water are not totally obscured. View corridors which allow both major views and glimpses of the harbour should be incorporated into site plans.

Height

Attic stories under rooflines with dormers are acceptable, and building function can justify higher buildings, as in the case of a boathouse.

Frontage, Massing



Larger waterfront development should be broken down into smaller components. The image of any new larger building should be as a grouping of smaller pieces, each with its own roof form. Variations in height, angle, or roof form can help create a more picturesque composition.

5.2.3 Make a Strong Connection to the Water's Edge

Physical Connections

The value of a waterfront site is wasted if development does not take advantage of the special characteristics of the site. New development should provide routes and structures as appropriate to connect upland development with waterfront areas, consistent with environmental protection and sensitivity to the natural setting. Blur the edges between ocean and foreshore by encouraging a melding of water related and land based activities.

Visual Connections



Glimpses of the harbour and surrounding forested environment enhances the charm of Sooke. Encourage view corridors over, under and through buildings and developments to the larger landscape.

5.2.4 Appropriate Materials



Colour



Details



*"Where the Rainforest
Meets the Sea"*

- District of Sooke motto

The following palette of materials is appropriate for new and renovated buildings for downtown Sooke in the town centre as well as new development at the waterfront.

- metal roofing and cladding
- wood shingles and wood-like products are for both siding and roofing
- clapboard or board-and-batten siding in either wood or cement fibre siding (vinyl siding is strongly discouraged)
- wood and wood-like products are the preferred material for railings and fences

The character of Sooke will be strongly influenced by the colours people chose for their homes and commercial buildings. Seaside townscapes might be characterized by the use of a variety of bright vibrant colours or the consistent use of a limited palette of white or grey, for example. It is certainly appropriate that buildings be allowed to stand out against the natural colours of the trees, shoreline and ocean. While this guideline is not prescriptive, care and thoughtfulness are encouraged in the selection of paint colours.

Part of Sooke's charm comes from the small details that have been incorporated into various sites and buildings. Examples include the wood benches and sign at Macgregor Park, the lighthouse at the Sooke Museum, chains, ropes and bollards at various waterfront wharves, the "wave" fence at Sooke Harbour House. It is not expected that all sites will incorporate a maritime theme, rather residents are encouraged to continue the use of personal imagination to embellish the downtown.

5.2.5 The Larger Landscape



Sooke is as much about the larger landscape as it is about the immediate area. The commercial core landscape should not be considered in isolation from the larger natural context. The presence and beauty of the natural landforms and vegetation are the stage on which the human activities occur. The native forest was identified as an important part of Sooke's character by its residents.

In Sooke's commercial areas specifically, the dominance of the west coast forest character must be maintained and enhanced. New development should celebrate these natural features, not impose rigid order upon them.

5.2.6 Natural Edges



Natural edges occur due to viewsapes, tidelines, landforms, and forest masses. Natural and cultivated landscapes should intermix freely with the built forms to emphasize informality and an element of discovery and delight. Sooke has evolved as a commercial centre servicing the surrounding rural and suburban residential areas. It has not had severe space constraints of small lots or tight zoning regulations, hence Sooke's downtown has a somewhat spread out feel to it. Its commercial node is centred around the two shopping centres, Village Food Market and Evergreen Mall. The scale of Sooke Road, which was designed to highway standards, gives downtown Sooke an open feel. Due to the vehicle dominance with large parking lots adjacent to Sooke Road, there is a lack of "sense of place" or town centre as noted by many residents. Sooke's land base downtown has potential to be more "built up" and/or be redeveloped into a lively town centre with residential units above retail/service space at street level. There are opportunities to tie the town centre together through built form and streetscape improvements.

5.3 Streetscape & Open Space



Scale

Make Sidewalk Connections



Provide Streetscape Amenities



Open space patterns are the routes people choose to circulate or 'get around' their neighbourhood. Within downtown Sooke, they fall into two types of circulation types: streetscapes and open space. The streetscape/open space pattern will continue much as it currently exists along Sooke Road with the future addition of amenity areas established as stronger connections down Murray Road and up Otter Point Road are built.

Sidewalks and signage need to be constructed on these roads, as well as improvements made to Church Road's sidewalk environment. As land is developed in the future between Sooke Road and the harbour, standard municipal sidewalks will need to be constructed. Traffic calming measures and new parking configurations outlined in the Mobility section are a priority for downtown Sooke.

Several Sooke residents noted a lack of pedestrian crossings or that the existing ones feel unsafe in downtown Sooke. They stated that crossing was especially challenging on foot, and is attributed to the crossing length and intimidating traffic numbers and speeds.

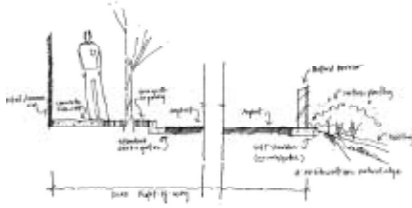
Encourage future roadway design to reduce road lanes widths on Sooke Road and provide an appropriate scale pedestrian refuge within the crosswalk and median.

Provide pedestrian comfort and safety within the boundaries of downtown by providing amenities such as benches, planters, lighting, bicycle racks, pedestrian level signs, and banners which enliven the public realm and make it more habitable during the day and at night.

Develop a palette of streetscape amenities for Sooke that enhances the pedestrian experience and reinforces the image of the 'town heart'.

Consideration should be given to the incorporation of public art into street furniture design. Employ local artists and artisans in the design and construction of such items.

Plant Street Trees to Create a Boulevard



The planting of new street trees along the network of downtown roads and the preservation of existing mature trees will help maintain Sooke's special connection to the regional landscape. A street tree program will add ambiance, scale and unity and improve the overall disjointed appearance that currently exists. Mature street trees also serve to calm traffic. Street trees improve property values of local businesses, reduce storm water run-off, and increase urban wildlife habitat. Most importantly, boulevard shade trees will have a major impact on the quality of life in downtown Sooke.

Plant urban scale tree species along all roads within the downtown OCP boundary. Street trees should be planted to guide people to other important pedestrian destinations such as Macgregor Park, the Town Hall, and the waterfront harbour walkway.

Tree species should be selected and planned ahead of time to offer consistency and unity along Sooke Road, avoiding a patchwork effect. Monocultures are not encouraged; varying tree species to denote minor roadways intersecting Sooke Road is encouraged. Residential street tree species should vary from commercial street tree species.

Street trees should be selected with consideration given to final height and growth habit (canopy shape) so that they won't interfere with traffic sight lines, existing and future built form, business signs and utilities, wherever possible

Carefully Site Parking Areas



Parking can take up a lot of land as well as require access that exceeds the area of the building and streetscape. Recent history has shown that parking can take over the shape of town centers if not planned and designed carefully. The scale and tone of Sooke's town centre would be enhanced with new careful parking allocation, design and management.

Downtown parking should be incorporated in surface lots behind or under buildings or within structures.

Parking lots should be located to the side and rear of buildings to ensure that the Sooke's streetscape is maintained.

Reduce the size and scale of surface parking by breaking into smaller landscaped lots.

Give preference to underground parkades in the future when building densities demand the land base. Visitor and handicapped parking could be allowed above grade for convenience.

Cooperatively Share Parking Lots



Create a "shared" parking lot policy so that larger parking facilities may be utilized more fully at all hours, especially by local business employees. Local parking management may reduce the need for excessive future parking requirements.

Provide Pedestrian Scaled Lighting

Lighting quality has major impact on the character of a place. Harsh light from high-set fixtures has a negative effect and too little light makes a place feel unsafe. The spacing of lights creates a rhythm that may be scaled to the pedestrian, much like the rhythm of building frontages.

Create an Accessible Public Foreshore



Create Opportunities for Public Art



Macgregor Park has an informal walkway extending eastward to Rotary Pier. This is the beginning leg of a harbour walkway for Sooke. Once right-of-way or an easement is acquired, the public walkway should be expanded upon, both in east and west directions. When redevelopment occurs to the north east between Murray and Slemko Roads, a public walkway and boardwalk should be planned to loop back to Sooke Road at several points. The harbour walk will require wayfinding signage from the town centre and may include marine interpretive signage as well. Lots of interesting stopping opportunities should be accommodated along the way including lookouts, public art, and benches.

Sooke has a strong and eager resident art population. Outdoor public art installations can make a vital contribution to the image and enjoyment of Sooke, provided they are handled with restraint and sensitivity to the character of the place. Sooke has already incorporated school childrens' art in many of their public places. Recently, the local art council installed banners in downtown Sooke shopping plazas. Other examples of local public art installations are:

- Macgregor Park tiles
- Anna Marie Road - wall marine figures
- Sooke Sam in Saseenos



The Sooke Community Arts Council Banner project is a good example of a successful idea to improve the appearance of downtown, that was initiated and community driven, and received funding from the BC Arts Council.

Create Entry Features or "Gateways"



Defining where Sooke's downtown begins and ends was discussed during the study. It was decided that the first point to identify Sooke as a town with signage or a landmark feature is where it currently is at Sooke Road and Philips Road adjacent to the Museum. A second smaller entry point for signage to announce the downtown precinct could be at Sooke and Church Road where the main commercial land use begins.

Locating gateway features and signage should be constructed with clear sight lines in mind. The siting and importance of gateway structures should be emphasized with appropriate landscaping and lighting.

Wayfinding Signage



The image a town portrays to its residents and visitors is important both to community spirit and also its economic development. Sooke relies on tourist expenditures and local business investment as a significant component of the local economy. Communities which present a friendly, welcoming and safe image are not only pleasant places to live but also to visit and invest. Environmental graphics, known as "signage" play a significant role in setting the tone and character of a community. Successful signage programs play an important role in guiding and encouraging visitors and residents to explore a community and help instill memorable impressions of their time spent in a new place.

The purpose of directional or "wayfinding" signage is to guide people from town arrival points to a general area or specific destination, i.e. "Waterfront



6.0 Implementation Strategies:

Funding Sources

6.1 Cost Sharing Partnerships

- Business owners and District "partner" on purchase and installation costs for these streetscape amenities.

6.2 Public/Private Donor Programs

- Many municipalities, small and large, are having redevelopment schemes partially funded by private donors, from large corporate donors to small businesses, in exchange for their names mentioned in the form of plaques, pavers, and public announcements.

6.3 New Bus Stops

- B.C. Transit will fund new bus stops within Sooke.

6.4 Other Funding Opportunities

- Development Cost Charges
- Community Service Organizations
- Private Donors
- Civic Annual Budgeted Funds
- Provincial grant monies matching Municipal Funds

7.0 Conclusion : *"Getting There from Here"*



It is the goal of this document to communicate design guidelines for the future redevelopment and urban design of Downtown Sooke, which reflects the character and uniqueness through built form, mobility and streetscape improvements. The design guidelines are intended to unite the area over time, making the statement that you have arrived in downtown Sooke, as well as allow future development to be diverse, appealing, and unique.

Key focus areas for the guidelines are:

- Traffic calming and traffic/parking reconfiguration improvements.
- Pedestrian wayfinding, safety, and walkway linkages within the downtown core and to the waterfront – Sooke Harbour.
- Streetscape improvements that identifies the downtown core.
- Siting, size, and scale of new buildings to reflect local character.
- Promoting public shoreline access for nodes of commercial and recreational open space opportunities.
- Plan for future infill development to improve upon the expanses of parking lots.
- Provide for cyclists and future transit stops.

8.0

Acknowledgements



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9.0

Appendix A

Public Process Communications

10.0

Appendix B

Project Drawings



District of Sooke public survey results



For Review

prepared for:
on:

District of Sooke
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by:

Sooke Downtown Revitalization Committee