



COWICHAN OUR FUTURE

REGIONAL OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN FOR THE ELECTORAL AREAS
PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS SNAPSHOT

APRIL 16 2020

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



**NUMBER
OF PEOPLE
ENGAGED**

411

**OPEN HOUSE
PARTICIPANTS**



191*

ONLINE PARTICIPANTS

602

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

* includes 128 electoral area residents and 63 non-electoral area residents. Response patterns were similar between both groups.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is developing a Regional Harmonized Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas (RHOCp). This work involves the harmonization and then modernization of seven electoral area official community plans (OCPs) and eight zoning bylaws to create one unified OCP (including complementary local area plans) and one zoning bylaw for the following nine electoral areas:

Area A - **Mill Bay / Malahat**

Area B - **Shawnigan Lake**

Area C - **Cobble Hill**

Area D - **Cowichan Bay**

Area E - **Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora**

Area F - **Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls**

Area G - **Saltair**

Area H - **North Oyster / Diamond**

Area I - **Youbou / Meade Creek**

In February 2019, the CVRD initiated a consultation process on the RHOCp commencing with the electoral area Advisory Planning Commissions (APCs). The APCs reviewed the RHOCp draft objectives and policies for general consistency with existing electoral OCPs.

In February 2020, the CVRD invited electoral area residents to participate in an initial community engagement process to inform them of the RHOCp process, prioritize the RHOCps goals and values, and gather input on how they would like to be involved in the Regional Modernized Official Community Plan (RMOCP) process moving forward.

Electoral area residents were invited to attend one of four open houses and to provide their input through an online questionnaire. Events were held on the following dates and locations:

- **February 1 (1-4 p.m.)** The HUB at Cowichan Station
- **February 2 (1-4 p.m.)** Cowichan Lake Arena
- **February 8 (1-4 p.m.)** North Oyster Community Center
- **February 9 (1-4 p.m.)** Kerry Park Recreation
- **Online questionnaire** February 1-22

HOW WE PROMOTED ENGAGEMENT



Regional Harmonized Official Community Plan website

(www.cvrld.bc.ca/regionalocp) including a backgrounder and videos on the harmonization and modernization process



Social media campaign (Facebook and Twitter)

Direct mail of 30,000 postcards and flyers



Formal letters to health and education stakeholders

Advertisements in the CVRD News, *Chemainus Courier* and *Cowichan Valley Citizen*

KEY THEMES

Participants were asked to weigh in on a series of questions focused on the draft RHOCp goals and values and the three emerging issues of growth, climate change and economy.

The top themes across all engagement questions are described on the following page. Please see the full summary report for more results details listed by emerging issue at www.cvrld.bc.ca/regionalocp.

Draft Goals from the RHOCp

- **Managing growth:** Guiding where and how our residential and commercial areas will grow to accommodate new people while protecting our region's agricultural lands and environmental assets.
- **Improving and expanding housing options:** Encouraging different types of housing, such as apartment and semi-detached dwellings through changes in policy and bylaws in order to provide more affordable shelter for all Cowichan residents.
- **Protecting the natural environment:** Protecting our region's natural ecosystems, biodiversity and watersheds from development, industry and other human activities.
- **Mitigating and adapting to climate change:** Reducing our region's greenhouse gas emissions and adapting our infrastructure and essential services to minimize the impact of sea level rise, more extreme weather events and prolonged dry periods.
- **Managing infrastructure:** Ensuring our water, waste and sewage systems are maintained and upgraded to appropriately service our region's future needs.
- **Building the economy:** Facilitating new local jobs and economic opportunities through land use changes, programs and partnerships.
- **Strengthening food security:** Protecting and enhancing our agricultural lands, fisheries and other sources of food to ensure our region has safe, secure access to food in the future.
- **Preserving heritage and strengthening arts and culture:** Retaining our historic buildings, sites and valued agricultural landscapes, as well as creating supportive environments in which arts and cultural activities can thrive.
- **Strengthen relationships with First Nations communities:** Building strong relationships with First Nations in the Cowichan region to advance reconciliation and collaborate on planning initiatives.



Nature-Based Environmental Protection

Participants have a deep connection to the natural environment, with many citing beaches, trails, forests and mountains as the nucleus of their communities. There was a strong desire to protect wildlife and greenspace, especially old growth forest. Participants felt that forested areas were key to climate change mitigation and could also provide valuable ecosystem services, such as carbon capture. Watershed protection was a significant area of concern, with many participants expressing the importance of maintaining and enhancing these valuable resources for human and environmental health.



Sustainable, Low-Impact Agriculture

Sustainable, small-scale agriculture and food production was a significant economic sector of interest, as well as a community characteristic for many participants who cited these activities as being integral to their rural lifestyle. There was a strong sentiment that low-impact agriculture, including agroforestry and permaculture, could encourage local food security and safeguard the surrounding land and watersheds. Participants saw sustainable agriculture as a way to enhance connections to the land, as well as to each other through community events and markets.



Retention of Rural Character

Participants identified strongly with the rural character of the region, and many described their friendly neighbourhoods and agricultural landscapes as hallmarks of their communities. Many preferred communities with adequate amenities and proximity to nature, particularly for outdoor recreation. There was a strong preference for population growth and development to remain within the bounds of existing communities to avoid disrupting greenspace while maintaining the agrarian nature of the region. Participants appreciated the large, treed lots that define their communities, but also sought a variety of housing options to meet the needs of aging residents, low-income residents and growing families.

ENGAGEMENT PREFERENCES


Participants were asked how they would like to be involved in the next phase of the RMOCP engagement.

Overall, participants expressed a strong desire to participate in a more intimate, personalized way. Specifically, participants expressed interest in online questionnaires and opportunities to dialogue in small groups.

There was a strong preference for geographically distributed events with attention to ensuring events in each electoral area. There was also an interest in targeted events to ensure representation for different demographics, specifically youth. Participants displayed a strong sense of community across engagement events and overall expressed an interest in self-organized and self-directed opportunities in this next phase of engagement.



**Desire to
participate in
more, intimate,
personalized
ways**



**Interest in online
questionnaires
and small group
dialogues**

**Geographically-
distributed events,
youth participation,
self-directed
activities**

Feedback on engagement preferences will help shape a consultation and engagement plan for the RMOCP. The next set of engagement events, likely this fall, will allow residents to build on this initial understanding of values and priorities and further shape a RMOCP vision and set of growth principles. Moving forward CVRD residents can expect to see the following types of engagement activities:

- **Opportunities to participate online** (including alternatives to PlaceSpeak)
- **Electoral area specific events** (town halls) with opportunities to engage in dialogue

- **Community circles** will be multiple small group events to be held across the CVRD hosted by community members and guided by a discussion toolkit
- **Youth-focused engagement events**
- **A speaker series** focused on policy themes

Thank you to all who have been involved to date and we look forward to your continued involvement.

Visit www.cvrld.bc.ca/regionalocp for more project information and to sign up for our project email list.

NEXT STEPS

The next set of engagement events will build on our initial understanding of residents' values and priorities.



www.cvrld.bc.ca/regionalocp