

Electoral Area F

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

(OCP) Update



Round 1 Engagement Summary

May 2020

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The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is updating the Electoral Area F Official Community Plan (OCP). Electoral Area F includes the communities of Coombs, Hilliers, Errington, Meadowood, Whiskey Creek and the surrounding rural areas.

An OCP is an overarching plan that guides future land use by describing a community’s vision for the future and includes objectives and policies to help achieve that vision. An OCP is used by the public when planning future use of their land or advocating for the community vision, and by the RDN when planning related community or infrastructure projects or approving development.

The first Electoral Area F OCP was adopted in 1999 and much of the OCP remains relevant. This review is structured around the following topic areas:

- Growth Management
- Employment and Economy
- Climate Change Preparedness
- Environment
- Housing
- Mobility, Health and Well-Being

The Area F OCP update process includes completing best practices research, reviewing technical information, reviewing existing RDN policies and strategies, and gathering information and feedback from community members.

The first round of engagement was held in February and March 2020, where the project and general process was introduced to residents and they had opportunities to share their thoughts and concerns about what is currently working or not working with the existing OCP.

The first round of engagement was designed to raise awareness about the project, gather input from residents and stakeholders, check in with the community about the OCP Community Values created 20 years ago, and ask what has been working or not working with the current OCP. Engagement was structured around the topic areas.

Residents were asked to review the current OCP Community Values and provide feedback on whether the values are still relevant or how they could be improved. Residents were also asked to provide feedback on Challenges they are experiencing or Opportunities they see for the future.

Project information and engagement opportunities were shared through several methods.



For the first round of engagement, multiple opportunities were provided for residents and stakeholders to share their feedback. Approximately 335 residents provided feedback and/or attended an event. More than 1000 residents and stakeholders visited the project website, reviewed materials and viewed the project video.

Community Pop-Up Events

- February 16, 2020 at the Bradley Centre from 9:00 to 11:30 am
- February 16, 2020 at the Meadowood Store from 1:00 to 4:00 pm
- February 17, 2020 at the Coombs Fairgrounds Family Day Celebration from 1:00 to 4:00 pm
- February 18, 2020 at Trees Diner from 2:00 to 4:30 pm



160
participants (approximately)
stopped by the four
community pop-up events

Stakeholder Workshop

- February 18, 2020 at the Bradley Centre from 9:00 to 11:30 am



16
stakeholders
attended the workshop

Community Information Meeting and Town Hall

- February 26, 2020 at the Bradley Centre from 6:00 to 8:30 pm



100
residents (approximately)
attended the Community Information
Meeting and Town Hall

Survey

- February 15 to March 9, 2020 on the project website and paper copies



50
participants
completed the survey
(online and hard copy)

Project Website and Email Submissions

- Residents asked questions or provided comments through the Project Website, Project Email or through communication with the Area F Director



11
project website and email
submissions to date

Project Website Views

- The Project Website was launched in January 2020 and has had over 1,000 views to date



368
informed visitors viewed at least
one link or downloaded a document
to date. 75 visitors registered to stay
up-to-date on the project

Project Video Views

- The Project Video was posted on the project website and shared on Facebook and Twitter



1482
combined views on
Facebook and YouTube

A high-level summary of what was heard during Round 1 Engagement is provided below as a snapshot of themes that emerged from the feedback. The detailed summary later in this report and the verbatim feedback in **Appendix A** can be referred to for a complete understanding of the comments on each topic. The next round of engagement will ask for feedback on draft OCP policy directions.

- A low level of regulation and freedom to undertake a variety of uses on a rural property is highly valued. However, there is support for additional regulation to protect the environment, clean up unsightly properties, and address unhealthy or unsafe living conditions.
- Housing affordability is a significant concern with suggested opportunities including allowing all dwellings and suites to be stratified and allowing RVs to be used as dwellings.
- Allowing large residential parcels to be further subdivided to provide affordable housing is supported in several comments, yet sprawl is often cited as not wanted.
- Environmental protection should be strengthened to protect watershed health for wildlife values and for drinking water.
- There is some support for increased services and businesses in Area F to reduce travel time and increase community self-sufficiency, as long as residential areas are not negatively impacted by incompatible land uses. Others see Area F as primarily a residential area and do not see a need for this kind of growth.
- Homebased and small local businesses and farms are important to the livelihood and lifestyle of Area F residents and need to be further supported, while minimizing negative impacts such as traffic, noise and pollution.
- Improvements to road shoulders to make walking safer is supported, but they should be appropriate to the rural area and not to the scale and expense of more urban roads.
- Public transportation in Area F is supported for a number of reasons including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing transportation options for youth, seniors, and people with low incomes.
- The development process is too long, difficult, and costly.
- Climate change must be addressed and there are increasing concerns about wildfires, flooding and impacts to the local water supply due to drier summers and harsher winters in Area F.
- Residents of the Little Qualicum River Village strata raised a number of specific concerns related to protection of the Little Qualicum River and the zoning within the strata.
- Establishing a secondary road access and planning for emergency evacuation are important to many Corcan-Meadowood residents.

Introduction

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is updating the Electoral Area F Official Community Plan (OCP). Area F includes the communities of Coombs, Hilliers, Errington, Meadowood, Whiskey Creek and the surrounding rural areas. As part of this process, a comprehensive communications and engagement approach is being implemented to ensure the updated OCP reflects the values and needs of Area F residents. This document provides an overview of the communications and engagement program implemented in February and March 2020 as part of the first round of engagement, including details on tools and techniques used and number of participants involved. Also included in this document is a high-level summary of recurring themes that emerged across feedback that was shared through the multiple engagement opportunities and detailed summaries of feedback provided on current OCP Community Values and Challenges and Opportunities across multiple topics areas. All verbatim comments that were received are located in **Appendix A**.

Project Overview

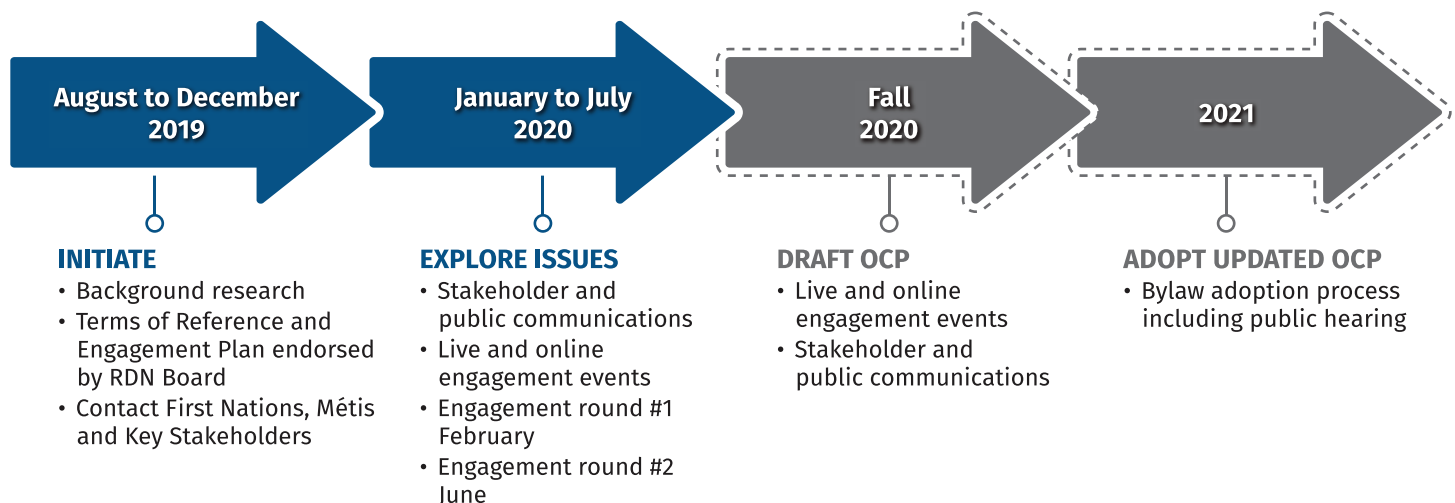
An OCP is an overarching plan that guides future land use by describing a community's vision for the future and includes objectives and policies to help achieve that vision. An OCP is used by the public when planning future use of their land or advocating for the community vision, and by the RDN when planning related community or infrastructure projects or approving development.

The first Area F OCP was adopted in 1999 and much of the OCP remains relevant. This review is structured around the following topics where updates will be focused:

- Growth Management
- Employment and Economy
- Climate Change Preparedness
- Environment
- Housing
- Mobility, Health and Well-Being

The Area F OCP update process includes completing best practices research, reviewing technical information, reviewing existing RDN policies and strategies, and gathering information and feedback from community members. As part of the update process, a comprehensive and robust engagement process was developed to provide opportunities for residents to learn about the project and share their ideas and concerns at key milestones throughout the project.

Project Process



During the **Initiate Phase** of the project, the Terms of Reference and Engagement Plan were adopted by the RDN Board. Communications were initiated with First Nations and Metis communities and key stakeholders.

In the **Explore Issues Phase**, two rounds of engagement will be implemented. The first round of engagement was held in February and March 2020, where the project and general process were introduced to residents and they had opportunities to share their thoughts and concerns about what is currently working or not working with the existing OCP. A second round of engagement will provide opportunities for residents to review and share feedback on draft OCP policy directions. The Terms of Reference and Engagement Plan endorsed in December 2019 schedule this second round of engagement for June 2020.

The **Draft OCP Phase** involves drafting a revised OCP based on feedback received from residents. Additional engagement opportunities for residents to provide input on the draft updated OCP will be provided during the Draft OCP Phase.

The last phase is **Adopt Updated OCP**. Once residents have had opportunities to review and provide comments on the updated draft OCP and the draft has been revised to reflect resident feedback, the updated OCP will be presented to the RDN Board for three readings and adoption. Prior to the Board considering adoption, a final opportunity for residents to provide input will occur through a formal public hearing.

Engagement Overview

The first round of engagement was designed to raise awareness about the project, gather input from residents and stakeholders, check in with the community about the OCP Community Values created 20 years ago, and ask what has been working or not working with the current OCP. Engagement was structured around the previously mentioned five topics. A two-page OCP Snapshot document was created for each topic that included background data and information, a summary of what the current OCP says, and Challenges and Opportunities. Several maps were created as companions to these OCP Snapshots and a video outlining the topics was posted to the project website and social media.

Residents were asked to review the current OCP Community Values and provide feedback on whether the values are still relevant or how they could be improved. Residents were also asked to provide feedback on challenges they are experiencing or opportunities they see for the future. A variety of communications tools and engagement opportunities were provided to promote the project and gather feedback from residents.

Communications Tools

Project information and engagement opportunities were shared through several methods:

- Project website: www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/areafofp
 - Project video hosted on the project website and circulated via social media
 - OCP Snapshots about the different topics hosted on the project website with hard copies available at all live events.
- Posters placed in key locations throughout Area F
- Postcards delivered to all residents in Area F
- Social media posts via Facebook and Twitter
- Advertising in the Parksville Qualicum Beach News

Engagement Opportunities

For the first round of engagement, multiple opportunities were provided for residents and stakeholders to share their feedback.



- Community Pop-Up Events:
 - During the Community Pop-Up Events, feedback was collected through written comments on post-it notes that were placed under each topic on a tabletop rollplot, and on feedback forms; team members also wrote verbal comments on behalf of residents. OCP Snapshots and companion maps were also available for residents to review.
 - Community Pop-Up Events were held on:
 - February 16, 2020, at the Bradley Centre from 9:00 to 11:30 am
 - February 16, 2020, at the Meadowood Store from 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 - February 17, 2020, at the Coombs Fairgrounds Family Day Celebration from 1:00 to 4:00 pm
 - February 18, 2020, at Trees Diner from 2:00 to 4:30 pm
 - Stakeholder Workshop at the Bradley Centre on February 18, 2020, from 9:00 to 11:30 am

- Stakeholders including representatives from business, agricultural, resource, stewardship, recreation, and social services organizations were invited to participate in a workshop to provide input into the OCP update. During the workshop, feedback was collected through written comments on post-it notes that were placed under each topic for the Community Values exercise, through small group discussions on the topics for the Challenges and Opportunities exercise, and on feedback forms.
- Community Information Meeting and Town Hall at the Bradley Centre on February 26, 2020, from 6:00 to 8:30 pm
 - Immediately prior to the Town Hall Meeting, residents were able to view community maps, review the OCP Snapshots and provide feedback on the Community Values and Challenges and Opportunities by writing feedback down on post-it notes and placing them on display boards. They were also provided with a feedback form to write any additional comments.
- Online survey on the project website from February 15 to March 9, 2020
- Paper copies of the online survey were available at the in-person sessions and upon request
- Youth colouring contest

On-going Engagement

In addition to the specific events and online engagement held during the first round of engagement, there are several ways for residents to provide feedback or any ask questions throughout the process:

- Project office hours in Area F on Thursdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (or by appointment)
- Question and Answer section on the project website
- Project email: areafofp@rdn.bc.ca

Next Steps

The feedback gathered during the first round of the engagement process will help inform draft updates to the existing OCP Community Values and the development of draft policy directions. In Round 2 Engagement, options for updating the OCP Community Values and options for new or amended policies throughout the OCP will be shared and residents will be asked to provide input.

A high-level summary of key themes that emerged during Round 1 Engagement is provided below. The high-level summary reflects common themes that emerged from the feedback shared based on residents' experiences and perspectives and is not intended to be exhaustive. Some themes may be contrary to others, but the intent is to present an overview of what was shared. Additional context and specific topic area themes can be found in the detailed summary of themes. The detailed summary of themes represents the frequency and diversity of perspectives that emerged throughout the engagement process. The detailed summary of themes is included in the next section of this report, and all verbatim feedback is included in **Appendix A**.

- A low level of regulation and freedom to undertake a variety of uses on a rural property is highly valued. However, there is support for additional regulation to protect the environment, clean up unsightly properties, and address unhealthy or unsafe living conditions.
- Housing affordability is a significant concern with suggested opportunities including allowing all dwellings and suites to be stratified and allowing RVs to be used as dwellings.
- Allowing large residential parcels to be further subdivided to provide affordable housing is supported in several comments, yet sprawl is often cited as not wanted.
- Environmental protection should be strengthened to protect watershed health for wildlife values and for drinking water.
- There is some support for increased services and businesses in Area F to reduce travel time and increase community self-sufficiency, as long as residential areas are not negatively impacted by incompatible land uses. Others see Area F as primarily a residential area and do not see a need for this kind of growth.
- Homebased and small local businesses and farms are important to the livelihood and lifestyle of Area F residents and need to be further supported, while minimizing negative impacts such as traffic, noise and pollution.
- Improvements to road shoulders to make walking safer is supported, but they should be appropriate to the rural area and not to the scale and expense of more urban roads.
- Public transportation in Area F is supported for a number of reasons including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing transportation options for youth, seniors, and people with low incomes.
- There are too many barriers to development including long and difficult development approval processes.
- Climate change must be addressed and there are increasing concerns about wildfires, flooding and impacts to the local water supply due to drier summers and harsher winters in Area F.
- Residents of the Little Qualicum River Village strata raised a number of specific concerns related to protection of the Little Qualicum River and the zoning within the strata.
- Establishing a secondary road access and planning for emergency evacuation are important to many Corcan-Meadowood residents.

Introduction

At the live engagement events and in the community survey, activities and questions were structured around the five topics and divided into two parts: the current OCP Community Values, and Challenges and Opportunities in Area F. This section begins with a summary of input on the current OCP Community Values, and is followed by a summary of input on Challenges and Opportunities in Area F.

Community Values

The current OCP includes a list of 20 Community Values representing underlying principles consistently voiced by residents, landowners and stakeholders throughout the public process to create the OCP in the late 1990s. In Round 1 Engagement for the OCP update, residents were asked to review the current OCP Community Values and provide feedback on whether the values are still relevant or not or how they could be improved. When providing their comments, residents were encouraged to consider how Area F has changed over the past 20 years and how it might change in the future.

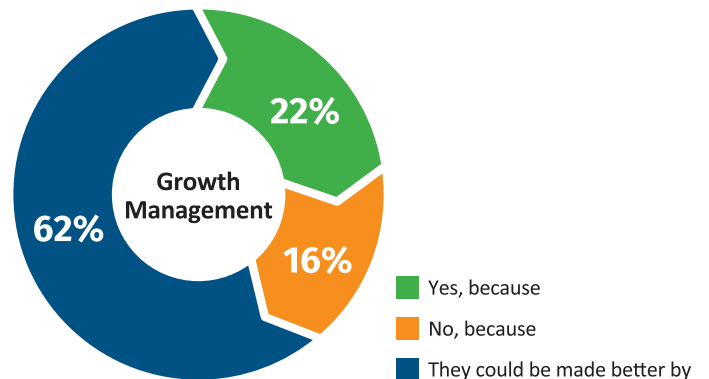
The following section describes high-level themes that emerged, and comments provided by residents, landowners and stakeholders through the community pop-ups, town hall meeting, stakeholder workshop, and survey. The summary is organized based on whether residents agreed if the values are still relevant or not and why they agreed or disagreed, and suggestions on how the values could be improved. For the purpose of community engagement and organizing feedback, the existing OCP Community Values were categorized into five topics (Growth Management, Employment and Economy, Environment, Housing, and Mobility, Health and Well-Being).

Growth Management – Current OCP Community Values

The current OCP Community Values are:

- Support for only a low level of regulation and the involvement of residents in the development of regulations.
- Support for a more self-sufficient use of land, where more than one land use activity is conducted on any parcel.
- Support for no further sprawl in rural areas.
- Support for safe and effective methods of solid and liquid waste management.
- Support for road design and construction standards that meet the safety and transportation needs of the community.

Do you feel the Community Values for Growth Management are still relevant?



Yes, because...

- Large acreage-size parcels need to be maintained to preserve a rural quality of life
- High-density development should be limited, development should be restricted to current developed areas, and some uses of land are undesired by some (such as additional lots with mini-storage units and the use of agricultural lands for cannabis production)
- Mixed use on individual parcels adds community character
- Low level of regulation is important for Area F residents
- There needs to be a balance in regulation to maintain private flexibility and freedom, but consider noise and nuisance bylaws and the importance of building codes for safety
- Current road conditions in the Corcan-Meadowood area are poor with inconsistent maintenance schedules between the two neighbourhoods
- More than a single road access to Corcan-Meadowood is needed
- Safe waste management practices are important
- Low level of regulation is important for Area F residents
- A balance of regulation to maintain freedom and privacy but also considers a need for noise bylaws and safe building codes is important

No, because...

- A proactive plan for emergency situations is needed, through better forest management to prepare for wildfires, mitigation strategies for the impacts of climate change, and resident evacuation plans
 - Meadowood needs emergency access to the highway
- Protection of the health and safety of environmental systems should be considered:
 - Soil, creeks and groundwater need to be protected from toxic materials such as waste and toxic chemicals
 - Forest management to protect from wildfires
- Current road conditions in Meadowood are poor and need to be better maintained
- Emergency services access to and from the highway is needed
- Low density and large parcel sizes need to be maintained
- Planning for future growth is needed
- Development approval process is too slow
- RDN should align with the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) regulations
- Improved health and safety regulations are needed for rental housing, e.g. mold, air quality
- More regulation is required so there is clear guidance when conflicts arise

They could be made better by...

- Developing a proactive plan to mitigate the impacts of climate change and supporting alternative energy generation
- Protecting the health and safety of environmental systems and wildlife habitats:
 - Soil, creeks and groundwater
 - Riparian zones (Little Qualicum River Village)
 - Wildlife corridors (when subdividing)
- Protecting from light pollution
- Supporting a higher standard of road maintenance, and reducing speed limit through Coombs
- Improving active mode infrastructure, such as cycling and pedestrian connections safety
- Planning for future growth and increasing transportation network capacity
- Prioritizing secondary access for the Corcan-Meadowood area to reduce trip distance, connect communities, and for emergency evacuation

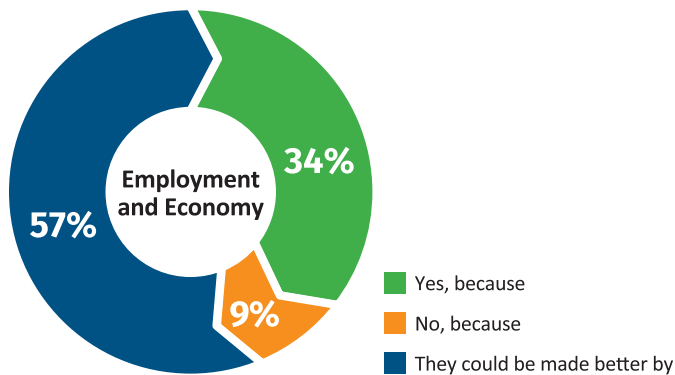
- Ensuring standards are met and maintained with water and wastewater infrastructure (septic, well, rainwater) to protect water systems, adapt for an increased population, and adapt for changes in land use
- Improving waste management, such as through a local recycling program
- Clarifying the language of the first two bullets; it is unclear what they mean, or they may be no longer relevant
- Clarifying what is meant by “sprawl” in the third bullet
- Supporting more commercial development in the area so there are more amenities closer to home for residents
- Ensuring that new industrial development such as grow-ops will only be permitted in existing commercial areas and not where it will negatively impact existing residential areas
- Limiting high-density development
- Reducing time and complexity of the development approval process
- Developing an evacuation plan for the Corcan-Meadowood area that all residents are aware of and understand
- Supporting more regulation and oversight to support environmental protection and clean up of unsightly properties
- Supporting a flexible balance of low regulation with a need for more regulation so there is clear guidance when conflicts arise
- Increasing community involvement in decision making

Employment and Economy – Current OCP Community Values

The current OCP Community Values are:

- Recognition of home-based businesses as critical to the lifestyle of Area F residents.
- Recognition of the economic and environmental benefits of forested areas.
- Protection of lands with potential aggregate or mineral resources development that would limit extraction activities.
- Support for existing businesses that located in the Plan Area under pre-OCP circumstances and regulations.

Do you feel the Community Values for Employment and Economy are still relevant?



Yes, because...

- Large number of home-based and local small businesses is important to income, lifestyle, and keeping jobs local
- A rural lifestyle and self-sufficiency are important for Area F residents
- Large commercial and industrial growth and the types of business allowed should be restricted to limit interference with enjoyment of nearby properties
- Support for local farms is important
- Logging should be reduced to protect water supplies
- Business practices should not harm the environment

No, because...

- There is too much reliance on resource extraction jobs
- Enforcement of laws and zoning needs improvement

They could be made better by...

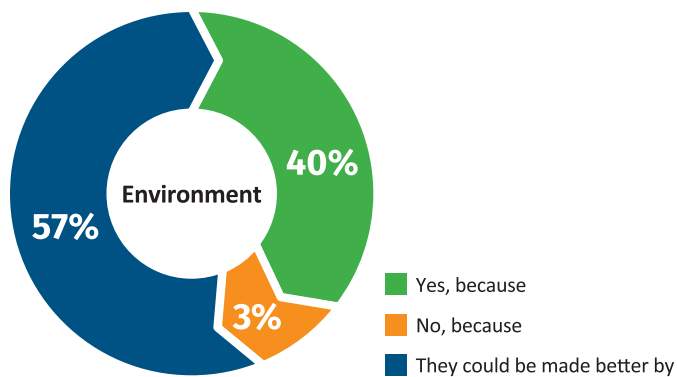
- Increasing local commercial spaces for businesses to operate and increasing local job opportunities
- Supporting additional local services and business to reduce travel distances from home
- Supporting highway access to Meadowood to reduce distance travelled to employment and services
- Supporting home-based businesses as long as they do not negatively impact nearby residential properties and the environment
- Supporting a more local economy and food security while protecting the environment
- Ensuring community involvement in decision making related to development
- Supporting resource extraction in a responsible manner and limiting it around residential areas
- Balancing the need for regulation with flexibility for residents
- Addressing some pre-existing businesses in residential areas that are disruptive to surrounding uses

Environment – Current OCP Community Values

The current OCP Community Values are:

- Encouragement of sustainable and environmentally sound farming practices.
- Recognition of the need to safeguard environmentally sensitive areas- protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats.
- Protection of the supply of potable water to ensure water self-sufficiency and assure the provision of a clean, safe water supply.
- Encouragement of the preservation of natural and heritage features and encourage public access to these features, wherever possible.
- Recognition that the impact of extraction activities on the environment, residents and other resource uses must be minimized.
- Support for the protection of watersheds and aquifers from degradation, inappropriate development, and pollution in recognition of the importance of a water supply.

Do you feel the Community Values for the Environment are still relevant?



Yes, because...

- Wetlands, riparian areas, aquifers, forests and air need protection
- Ecosystems and wildlife habitat need to be preserved, including:
 - Riparian areas
 - Wetlands like Hamilton Marsh
 - Wildlife corridors and salmon spawning areas
- Droughts caused by climate change may impact our water supply
- Quantity and quality of drinking water need to be protected
- Watershed and aquifer protection is critical
- Better management of tree cutting on private property is needed
- Sustainable forestry is important

No, because...

- Ecosystems and watersheds need to be better protected from forestry and agricultural impacts
- Drinking water needs to be better protected

They could be made better by...

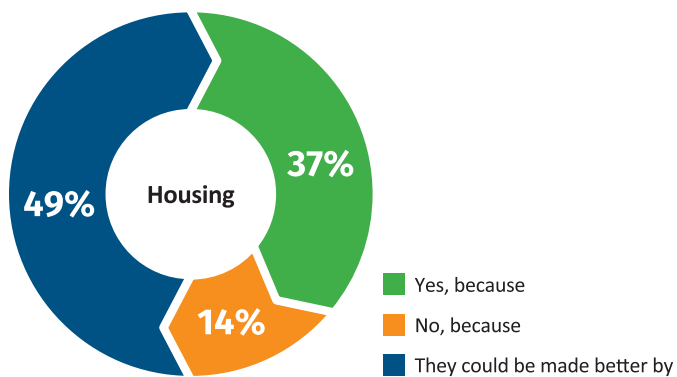
- Strengthening protection of riparian and wetland ecosystems and watersheds
- Addressing improper development on the Little Qualicum River in the Corcan – Meadowood area.
- Adding a climate change lens
- Creating a proactive plan to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as forest fires and drier winters
- Supporting restoration and rehabilitation of watersheds and aquifers, not just protection
- Defining “inappropriate development”
- Strengthening the language to use more active words that “encourage” and “recognize”
- Limiting development in areas without adequate flood mitigation
- Limiting logging to better protect watershed health
- Educating residents on how they can reduce negative impacts on the environment
- Encouraging local farming in the area
- Limiting the amount of regulations on private property

Housing – Current OCP Community Values

The current OCP Community Value is:

- Recognition of value of a mix of housing types and landscaping, affordable housing, owner-built dwelling units, and the ability to relocate moved-on buildings to parcels in the area.

Do you feel the Community Value for Housing is still relevant?



Yes, because...

- There is a lack of affordable housing options for all income levels
- The many mobile home parks provide needed housing for people with lower incomes
- A mix of housing types is needed
- The housing situation is fine as is
- There is a need to limit sprawl and high density, but still provide a mix of affordable housing options through zoning or multiple homes on one property
- Current single road access to the Corcan-Meadowood area does not support the development of more housing options

No, because...

- There are many illegal dwellings:
- more dwelling units than allowed on a single property
- unsafe dwelling conditions not meeting building codes
- RVs and mobile homes being used as dwellings contrary to zoning appear not be connected to a septic system and could be contaminating groundwater

They could be made better by...

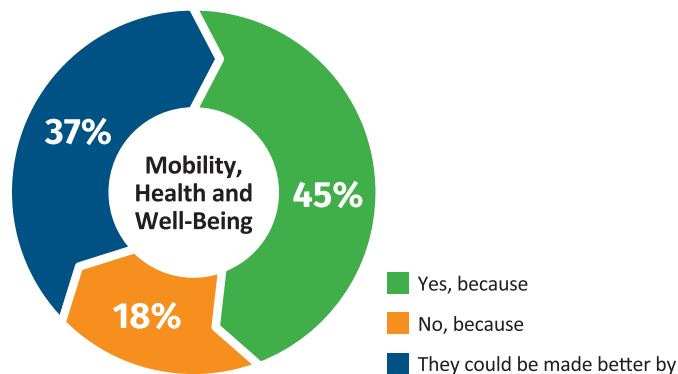
- Addressing current RV housing conditions including lack of appropriate sewage and water hookups and heating
- Supporting the provision of affordable housing options through changes to zoning or incentives
- Considering density transfer or bonusing
- Allowing multiple houses on a single parcel
- Allowing all permitted dwelling units, including suites, to be stratified
- Allowing RVs to be used as dwellings
- Restricting Airbnbs
- Maintaining large acreage size parcels
- Creating a second road access to Meadowood before allowing more housing in that area
- Ensuring housing developments include protecting the environment and providing parks

Mobility, Health and Well-Being – Current OCP Community Values

The current OCP Community Values are:

- Protection of the ‘quality of life’, rural nature and privacy found in Area F.
- Support for the public’s use of forested lands for recreational enjoyment.
- Support for the creation of an integrated park and trail system in the Plan Area.
- Support for road systems that include the development of pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle paths as part of the transportation system.

Do you feel the Community Values for Mobility, Health and Well-Being are still relevant?



Yes, because...

- A safe place to walk and cycle on roads is needed
- Paths, trails and sidewalks for cyclists, pedestrians, ATV riders and equestrians are important and benefit physical and mental health
- Errington Road and Grafton Road need safe spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, a bridge off Corcan Road needs repair for ATV use, and a path in Coombs linking to Whiskey Creek and Qualicum Falls is wanted
- Speeding and speed enforcement are a concern
- Forests and parkland areas should be protected
- Current community access to some private and forested lands is limited
- Community centre is needed in Corcan-Meadowood and outdoor recreation spaces throughout Area F are important and needed
- Rural qualities of life such as privacy are important to maintain

No, because...

- Main roads, such as Grafton Road, do not have safe spaces for people to walk and bike
- Infrastructure for cyclists is not necessary
- Additional highway access into Corcan-Meadowood needs to be explored for emergency access and to reduce travel times
- Current gravel roads need to be better maintained
- Clarity is needed on the defining features of a rural quality of life
- Rural qualities such as privacy are important to maintain and should be considered when planning any trail development

They could be made better by...

- Recognizing the need for a second highway access into Corcan-Meadowood
- Providing public transportation to support low income families, youth and residents with limited mobility and to conserve gas
- Providing safe spaces and pathways for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, while considering need, cost, location and maintenance
- Working with Ministry of Transportation Infrastructure to develop trails in road rights-of-way
- Limiting environmental impacts from development of trails, trail users and ATVs

Additional Community Values

Are there other Community Values you feel are important to include in the updated OCP?

- Maintaining and protecting the rural way of life and characteristics for which Area F is known, with minimal regulations
- Reflecting climate change and planning for its effects
- Prioritizing protecting things that bring the community together such as community gathering places, the farmers market and hall
- Planning for food security
- Improving road safety in Coombs during the tourist season
- Considering adding Meadowood to Area H
- Reflecting the friendliness and neighbourliness of Area F residents
- Recognizing that incorporation is too costly
- Keeping them the same as no changes are needed

Introduction

Residents were also asked to share challenges they are experiencing and opportunities they see related to the topic areas:

- Growth Management
- Employment and Economy
- Climate Change Preparedness
- Environment
- Housing
- Mobility, Health and Well-Being

The OCP Snapshots listed known challenges and opportunities for each topic. OCP Snapshots were available on the project website and at in-person events.

Growth Management

Challenges

- Very spread out with no real active centre or centres
- Additional growth and development need to be sustainable and consider potential impacts on the water supply
- Mixed messages being provided by the RDN who does not always appear to be supportive of development
- Approval process for permits relating to subdivision, rezoning or building permits takes a long time and is costly
- Potential for forest companies to sell their land as real estate
- Lack of second access to Corcan-Meadowood
- Sewer and water systems improvements and road maintenance are needed to support additional growth
- Errington Village Centre has poor soil capacity to sustain large wastewater system
- Community water and sewer systems are costly to install, and it is unlikely that cost will be supported by residents of Area F
- Interest from Parksville in extending into Area F boundary and taking the Errington Industrial Area and tax base
 - Expansion of industrial uses near residential areas
- Lack of noise bylaw
- Water supply quality needs to be protected
- Riparian areas, aquifers, and natural areas need to be protected from negative development impacts

Opportunities

- Support affordable housing development and innovative dwelling types such as tiny houses and intergenerational homes
- Allow multiple dwelling units on one parcel, including ALR lands
- License mobile home parks as it is a good use of land
- Change Forest Land Reserves to other uses when appropriate
- Reduce light pollution and greenhouse gas emissions through dark skies bylaws
- Develop community centre for the Corcan-Meadowood community
- Encourage additional local amenities such as farmers markets, grocery store, and a regional sportsplex
- Concentrate retail, recreation and entertainment amenities and growth in one community
 - Errington could be suitable since the community hall is already there
- Encourage small businesses, commercial development and highway businesses to support the economy and protect the character of Area F
- Provide additional access to Highway 4 and/or Highway 19 to better serve the Corcan-Meadowood community and share local resources and facilities
- Extend water and sewer infrastructure into Errington
- Widen roads to incorporate pathways for walking and biking
- Relax zoning and regulations to better support entrepreneurship and tourism
- Rezone mill site or revert to ALR
- Explore incorporation to become a rural municipality
- Support local food production
- Protect groundwater, creeks and important farming soils by maintaining tree coverage and encouraging ground cover crops
- Protect bird and bee habitats through appropriate landscaping

Employment and Economy

Challenges

- Requiring business licenses creates unwanted barriers for businesses
- Working with the RDN to get appropriate permits, licenses and approvals in a timely manner
- Jobs in area tend to be seasonal
- Lack of well-paying jobs in area and residents have to commute to other areas for work
- Home-based businesses do not provide enough opportunities to support multiple employees
 - Homebased business regulations are not clearly defined
- Too much reliance on the resource industry for jobs
- ALR regulations limit what landowners can do in terms of home-based businesses and subdivisions in the 5 to 10 acre size
 - ALR regulations keep changing
- Businesses that are not appropriate in scale and associated nuisances such as odour, noise, traffic that negatively impact Area F residents' rural quality of life
 - Incompatibility of uses with commercial uses in residential areas
- Lack of commercial zoning and it is too costly to go through re-zoning process
- Unable to attract seasonal/agriculture works because there is not enough appropriate housing
- Industrial development puts a heavy burden on water and sewer services in rural areas and road usage
- Industrial development has a negative stigma associated with it (e.g., steel mill)
- Lack of infrastructure such as water and sewer servicing and waste management to industrial lands and it is costly to provide
- Lack of adequate access into Corcan-Meadowood
- Lack of public transit is a barrier to employees getting to work

Opportunities

- Support additional tourist amenities such as bed and breakfasts, eco-tourism and agri-tourism
- Encourage local food production
- Create jobs through green and local initiatives such as sustainable farming and reforestation
- Develop village centres to support job creation and generate tax dollars
- Encourage more business such as a gas station or coffee shops (e.g., Tim Hortons) along Highway 19
- Prepare a regional job plan with Parksville and Qualicum Beach
- Provide better wayfinding and signage for businesses
- Increase affordable housing
- Re-develop around Coombs Market
- Support light and heavy industry in Hilliers and homebased businesses and small businesses in Errington
- Encourage light manufacturing in pre-zoned industrial lands
- Remove barriers to support more homebased businesses and shorten permit/business license timelines
- Explore grey water systems and/or rain collection systems
- Mitigate climate change through sustainable development
- Provide access to Highway 19 or Highway 4 for Corcan-Meadowood residents
- Promote high visibility and strategic Mid-Island location of Area F

Climate Change Preparedness

Challenges

- Impacts of clear cutting and deforestation on private forest lands resulting in:
 - Water run-off and poor water quality
 - Loss of local wetland and riparian ecosystems
 - Increased wildfire risk
- Lack of protection of Hamilton Marsh as a major water source
- General wildfire risk in Area F, lack of fire-smarting on private properties and open burning practices
- Need for an evacuation planning and emergency preparedness in the event of an emergency such as fire or flooding
- RV lots in Little Qualicum River are alongside river and have a high flood risk
- Impacts to infrastructure such as roads and electricity during major storms
- Proximity of essential services
- Hotter summers and harsher winters
- Lack of adequate emergency access in and out of the Corcan-Meadowood area to Highway 4 or Highway 19
- Providing education and incentives for electric or hybrid vehicles
- Incentives for electric vehicles may not be viable as many Area F residents commute outside of area

Opportunities

- Provide additional access to Highway 4 and/or Highway 19 for Corcan-Meadowood residents for emergency use and to support reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Support initiatives such as solar energy/renewable energy rebate programs, rainwater collection, grey water systems, and electric vehicle charging stations
- Update the Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Encourage sustainable forestry practices, fire-smarting and fire safety requirements or zoning regulations to reduce wildfire risk
- Implement regular emergency preparedness meetings and information sessions for residents
- Educate residents on self-sufficiency, including water conservation, private water and sewage systems, open burning, responsible farming and fire smarting, and emergency preparedness
- Increase businesses and housing in village centres, with local amenities such as a farmers market, grocery store and restaurant in Errington
- Support housing options like tiny homes which require less land to develop
- Improve and upgrade infrastructure, including moving services underground and infrastructure for water storage
- Provide public transportation to reduce personal vehicle usage
- Protect the environment through wetland conservation and watershed management

Environment

Challenges

- Watershed and wetlands negatively impacted by development, road run-off and contamination from sewer and septic systems and farming practices
- Lack of enforcement to protect sensitive areas and groundwater
- Little Qualicum River, including the fish spawning areas and sensitive riparian areas are being impacted by inappropriate development and septic tank contamination
 - Increased flood risk as more trees get removed on the banks
- Wildlife corridors are not being respected
- People are dumping garbage and polluting natural areas, parks, trails and ditches (e.g. Forbidden Plateau)
 - Lack of appropriate waste and recycling facilities
- Drinking water availability from aquifers is being impacted by the number of private wells and other communities are accessing local water supply (Englishman River)
- Logging is being done too close to the Englishman River and clear-cutting on private lands
- Waterways in recreational areas are being impacted by people driving through rivers because there are no access points to safely cross
- Wildfire risk in Area F
- People experiencing homelessness living in environmentally sensitive areas without facilities

Opportunities

- Improve environmental regulations and enforcement for the protection of waterways and wetlands
- Educate for residents on sustainable practices, impacts of downstream effects, and management of private wells and septic fields
- Improve access to parks, recreational areas, trails and outdoor activities (e.g. mountain biking, backcountry camping, 4x4, horse trails) for resident and tourist use and enjoyment
- Increase tourism by marketing the natural attractions (e.g. Little Qualicum River Falls) and allow for zoning for tourist lodging
- Provide additional access to the highway from Corcan-Meadowood
- Limit and restrict lighting at night
- Concentrate resource extraction in areas where it is already occurring
- Consider sustainable practices, such as:
 - Sustainable forestry by limiting the footprint and finding ways to use 'waste wood'
 - Recycling programs and community clean-up drives
 - Grey water systems and rainwater harvesting programs
 - Alternative industries, such as the hemp industry for paper production

Housing

Challenges

- High cost of housing and a lack of suitable affordable housing units
- Low availability of different housing types such as multi-family and rental units
- Lack of small starter homes, homes for young families and retirements homes
- Current regulations for different housing types and building restrictions creates difficulties in developing a variety of affordable housing options
 - Less attractive to build in Area F
- Too many restrictions on mobiles and RV housing development
- Riparian areas in Little Qualicum River Village are being destroyed by RV lots
- ALR restrictions do not allow a second dwelling on property, which makes it hard to keep land in the family
- Lack of regulation and enforcement has resulted in poor and unsafe living conditions and disrepair for some dwellings and rental properties
- Inappropriate housing development such as RVs and mobile homes and related septic systems are contaminating wells and water sources
- Rural areas are not suitable for higher density development due to limited amenities, services and access
 - Infrastructure is not available to support multi-unit housing and apartments

Opportunities

- Develop affordable housing for seniors and low-income families and supportive housing development at top of Church Road
- Re-develop old Errington school site for mixed use development
- Provide additional access into Corcan-Meadowood to support increased affordable housing development
- Stratify residential lots (both existing and new) to support affordable homeownership
- Allow more than one dwelling on a property to support multi-generational families and supply additional rental properties
- Increase flexibility with regulations and bylaws to allow for a variety of non-traditional and innovative housing options (e.g. tiny homes)
 - Fewer restrictions on RVs and mobiles to support their use as lower cost housing options
- Dedicate land for development of RVs or tiny homes housing for full-time residency

Mobility, Health and Well-Being

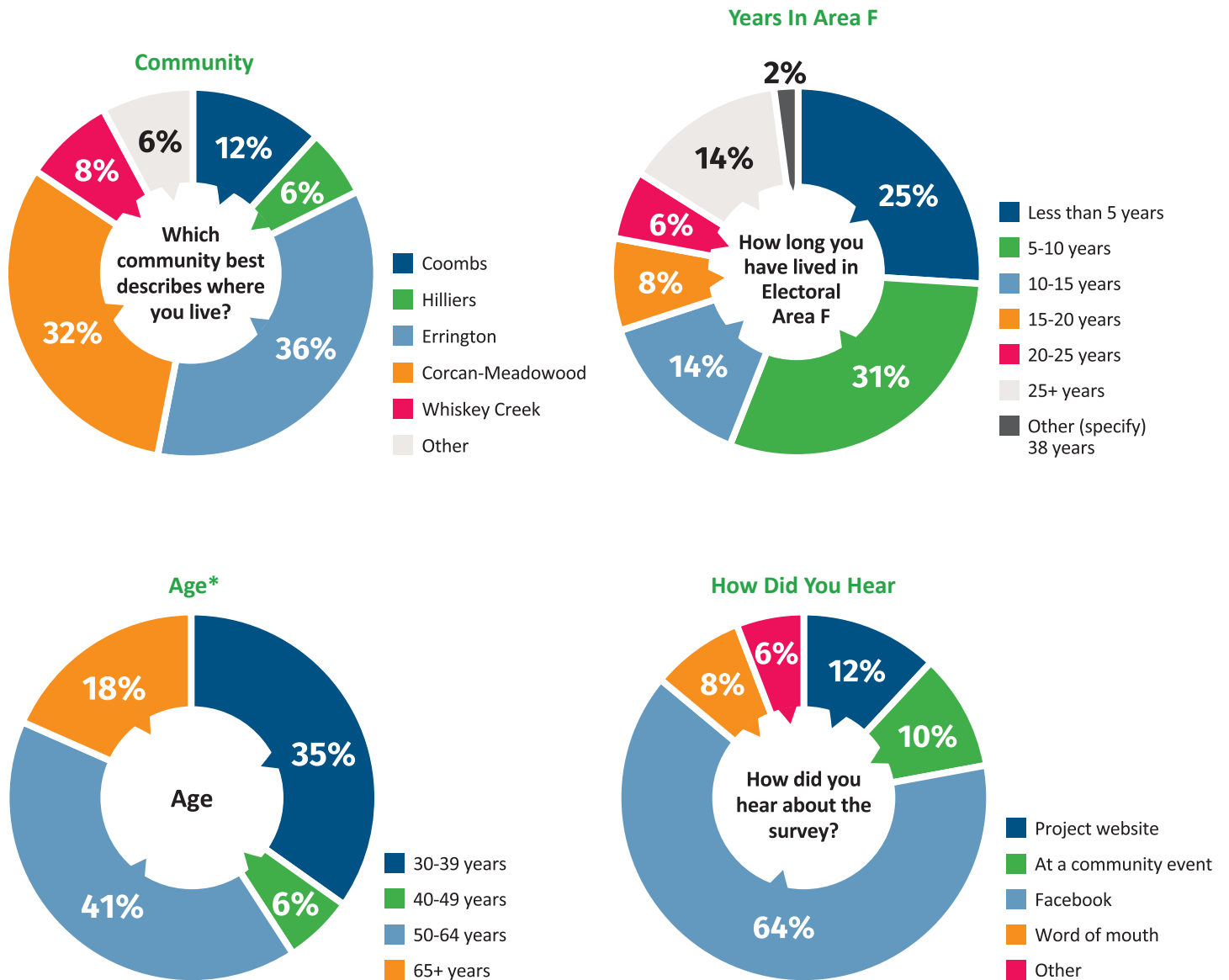
Challenges

- Lack of local community amenities and services such as recreational opportunities, community parks, off-leash dog parks, health services and family doctors
- Lack of additional emergency access route (Highway 4 and/or Highway 19) from Corcan-Meadowood and Little Qualicum River Village
- Speed limit is too high in residential communities along Highway 4
- Not safe for people walking and biking on roads due to lack of shoulders
 - No safe connection between Highway 4A and Englishman Falls via Errington Rd. for pedestrians and cyclists
- Safety concerns for residents using trails and in forested areas due to drug use and crime in these areas
- Lack of public transportation in the communities for low income families and residents with limited mobility
- Lack of adequate and safe parking spaces at popular tourist destinations such as Goats on the Roof
- Roads in Corcan-Meadowood and Hilliers are not well-maintained

Opportunities

- Provide additional access from Highway 4 and/or Highway 19 into Corcan-Meadowood
 - Upgrade emergency access bridge across Little Qualicum River
- Improve road safety for residents and tourists near popular destinations and businesses
- Widen road from Baylis to Meadowood to provide shoulders for residents to safely walk and bike
- Formalize unofficial trails, extend and protect existing trails and increase connections to improve connectivity for residents
- Provide public transportation service through new bus shuttle services, extending existing bus services into Errington, transit subsidies and advocating to the provincial government
- Support additional community services and amenities such as parks, medical services, community centre in Corcan-Meadowood, and a regional sportsple

Additional demographic questions were asked of survey respondents. A summary of responses received is presented below.



**Note: the 40-49 age category may not fully reflect the number of survey participants in that age category as the response option was not available during the first week the survey was live*

