

**Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan Review
Community Forum
Summary of the responses from the small group exercises
May 10, 2008**

Approximately 40 people were in attendance. Attendees were divided in to five tables. Each table was asked to consider the same three questions. The following is a summary of the responses to each question.

Question 1:

- a. *After reviewing the summary of the current Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan, please discuss what you would like to see included in the Official Community Plan review.*
- b. *To what extent do you think the Official Community Plan should be reviewed? i.e. do you think that it needs a complete overhaul or just a tune up?*

Table 1-Summary of responses to question 1

- The Official Community Plan needs to include support for alternate sewage systems.
- We need to include watershed level planning and we need to look at agriculture and the impacts on adjacent lands, as well as riparian areas.
- We need to review the relationship between rural and urban areas.
- The Official Community Plan needs a complete overhaul.
- We need to conduct a literature review to see what other local governments and communities are doing to address sustainability.

Table 2-Summary of responses to question 1

- A complete overhaul of the Official Community Plan is necessary.
- We need to develop this Official Community Plan through consensus.
- The process must be transparent and conclusive.
- People must feel heard.
- We need to focus the Official Community Plan on sustainability.
- We need to ensure that the language in the Official Community Plan is understandable and simple.
- The Official Community Plan process needs to make residents feel like they have been listened to.
- Childcare should be provided at Official Community Plan meetings to allow people with children to more easily attend.
- The process should be fun, it should include food, and there should be action.
- The Regional District of Nanaimo should provide timely feedback to keep peoples interest in the process.

Table 3-Summary of responses to question 1

- We need to control population growth.
- The Official Community Plan needs to be rewritten including the urban containment boundaries.
- We should keep the things we like in the existing Official Community Plan and get rid of the stuff we don't like.

Table 4-Summary of responses to question 1

- The Official Community Plan needs to be rewritten with some precautions.
- We need to look at other well written Official Community Plans such as the Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan.
- There's no need to reinvent the wheel and we should look elsewhere for examples.
- The Official Community Plan language needs to provide clarity and clear language without being overly complicated.
- The public needs to be included in the draft not the bureaucrats.
- We need to create zoning bylaws to reflect the Official Community Plan.

Table 5-Summary of responses to question 1

- The Official Community Plan should consider waste disposal policies with respect to the landfill site, sewage treatment, etc.
- We should look at our environmental practices, the way we construct and develop. We need to look at the structures themselves.
- We need to develop standards that reflect environmental best practices.
- We should use the green bylaws toolkit as a guide.
- The Official Community Plan should address outdoor burning.
- We need to shift paradigms by thinking about the environment, then the economy and the community within the environment.
- We need to look at affordable housing options such as in-law suites.
- We need to have walking paths considered in Development Permit Areas.
- There needs to be a refocus on transit within the community by considering other modes of transportation other than the automobile and buses.
- The Official Community Plan should support an electoral area wide program for acquisition of community parks.
- The Official Community Plan should be specific about sustainability language and what sustainability is.
- Airport flight paths should be designated and enforced.
- The Official Community Plan should provide incentives for sustainability, green development, best agricultural practices, etc.
- The Official Community Plan should reward people for going green.
- Roughly half of the table thought that the Plan required a complete overhaul while the other half thought that a full overhaul was not necessary.

Question 2:

It is important to ensure that the Official Community Plan process meets the needs of the community.

- a. How should the Regional District of Nanaimo obtain input from the community?*
- b. How should the Official Community Plan review process be structured to encourage participation from a broad spectrum of Plan Area residents?*

Table 1 – Summary of responses to question 2

- ❖ Door-to-door surveys, workshops, facilitated meetings should be used.
- ❖ Community associations should be used as sources of information.
- ❖ 3rd party folk from other jurisdiction should be brought in.
- ❖ Community parties and social functions should be used.
- ❖ Open houses should be targeted and focused.
- ❖ The process should target youth.
- ❖ A youth advisory group should be developed.
- ❖ The process should learn from others.

Table 2 – Summary of responses to question 2

- ❖ The process should include community meetings and functions throughout the Plan Area including Cedar, South Wellington, Cassidy, and Yellowpoint.
- ❖ The Regional District of Nanaimo should provide tax incentives to those citizens who participate in the Official Community Plan process.
- ❖ There should be an opportunity through the media for political discussion so that people can sit down to discuss and promote their thoughts and agendas on the air.
- ❖ The process should include public meetings.

Table 3 – Summary of responses to question 2

- ❖ The use of a Steering Committee is desirable.
- ❖ Surveys should be used, but questions need to be well thought out. Electronic surveys are not desirable.
- ❖ Workshops are useful.
- ❖ The process must include young people.
- ❖ The Regional District of Nanaimo should do presentations to the secondary school students.
- ❖ Invitations should be sent to specific people to lend input who represent different interests, cultural groups, First Nations, a variety of ages, and a diversity of social and economic groups.

Table 4 – Summary of responses to question 2

- ❖ Instead of going to the people, use a steering committee to represent the community.
- ❖ The Committee should be funded by the Regional District of Nanaimo and should be tasked with taking information back to the Regional District of Nanaimo staff.
- ❖ The Official Community Plan meetings should be run by the steering committee groups.
- ❖ We should be cautious of using questionnaires because they often corner you into having a certain point of view.

Table 5 – Summary of responses to question 2

- ❖ We are concerned that questionnaires are not as useful as telephone polling because telephone polling can provide a representative sample.
- ❖ We would like the Official Community Plan process to include a steering committee.
- ❖ Workshops in conjunction with focus groups are a good idea.
- ❖ Make online materials available for review and input.
- ❖ Start a blog so people can write and debate specific issues.
- ❖ Apply for funding for coffee table meeting from UBCM.
- ❖ The process should include a design charrette for the Cedar Village Centre.
- ❖ We need to use simple language.

Question 3:

The efficient flow of information between the Regional District of Nanaimo and community is vital to the success of the Official Community Plan review. One of our goals is to ensure that every Plan Area resident is well informed about the Official Community Plan review.

What are the most appropriate methods of sharing information about the Official Community Plan review and how can we (the RDN and the community) best ensure that all Plan Area residents are informed of Official Community Plan related activities?

Table 1 – Summary of responses to question 3

- ❑ Shaw Cable 4 should be used.
- ❑ There is a youth radio station at 101.7fm that should be used
- ❑ Use the internet.
- ❑ Interface data with Google.
- ❑ Work with community groups to inform their members.
- ❑ Identify representatives from each area within the Plan Area.
- ❑ Use volunteers to form a telephone committee to conduct telephone surveys.

Table 2 – Summary of responses to question 3

- ❑ Use Take 5 magazine.
- ❑ We need to use Community Bulletin Boards and we need have more of them erected.
- ❑ Post notices at mailbox boards.
- ❑ Set up information tables at community centres, swap meets, grocery stores, large gatherings, farmers markets, etc.

Table 3 – Summary of responses to question 3

- ❑ Use all methods identified in the community forum program.
- ❑ The Regional District of Nanaimo website is good but could there be a notification system used to inform the community of changes.
- ❑ Should use an email list.

Table 4 – Summary of responses to question 3

- ❑ Each community group could submit people to sit on the steering committee.
- ❑ The workshops should be put on by the steering committee not the Regional District of Nanaimo.
- ❑ Business people must be involved with non-business people.
- ❑ It is necessary to identify local business owners rather than absentee business owners.
- ❑ Use the Regional District of Nanaimo website.
- ❑ Use direct mail.
- ❑ Allow the steering committee to run the process.

Table 5 – Summary of responses to question 3

- ❑ Use online services.
- ❑ Use direct mail.
- ❑ We like the Take 5 Magazine.
- ❑ Advertise at corner stores.
- ❑ Use information tables and provide handouts.
- ❑ A newsletter is a good idea.
- ❑ Use general educational activities to promote more informed citizenry.
- ❑ Use telephone announcements.