
Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Review



Summary of Community Input at February 3, 2016 Community Meeting

February 22, 2016

Introduction

A Community Meeting for the Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan (OCP) Review was held on the evening of February 3, 2016 at the Lighthouse Community Hall. Approximately 160 people attended. After introductions and a presentation on the project, participants divided into five separate groups for facilitated discussions on the following topics:

- Growth and development
- A community of all ages
- Streets and movement
- Natural environment
- Anything else

An RDN planner facilitated the discussion at each of these groups and recorded comments on flip charts. There was also paper and pens at each group for participants to record their individual comments. After 20 minutes participants were asked to move to another discussion group, and again after another 20 minutes, so that each person could participate at three tables. People were also encouraged to move between tables at their own pace if they wished.

This report is a summary of what was said and recorded at this meeting. The raw transcription of the flip charts and individual comments is included as an appendix.

Next Steps

Now that the comments from the Community Meeting are summarized and categorized, the next step is to confirm what was said, and to further explore the issues that were identified in order to develop options for addressing them in the OCP. Some of the issues noted in this summary report cannot be addressed in the OCP, or only in part. More information will be provided on the tools available to address the identified issues as the project moves forward.

This is what you said about Growth and Development

Infrastructure

1. There is a desire for sewer, potentially along the coast instead of just Bowser Village in order to deal with small lots and potential impact of failing systems on the marine environment.
2. A coordinated approach to stormwater management is needed. For example there are drainage issues in Bowser and the lower reach of Nash Creek. It is difficult and less effective for property owners to deal with stormwater management individually.
3. In Deep Bay, infrastructure such as sewer and a second access from the Island Highway should be a requirement of any major development.

Industrial Lands

4. There is a need for industrial and light industrial land both to grow the economy and to provide jobs for younger adults who currently have to commute out of the area for work.

Attracting development

5. There is a need to attract development investment to the area. Areas could pre-zoned for desired uses rather than only designated in the OCP. Reduce costs of development wherever possible.

Parcel Sizes

6. Smaller parcel sizes should be allowed in general to attract younger people to the area by increasing supply of affordable property.

Deep Bay

7. Deep Bay needs a plan prior to a major development application. Infrastructure such as sewer and a second access from the Island Highway should be a requirement of any major development.
8. Deep Bay has an opportunity for more services that support/compliment the marina, and needs a solution for parking, including for boat trailers.

Local economy & tourism

9. Community needs to encourage local consumption and support local businesses
10. More tourist accommodation is needed, and areas should pre-zoned for hotels and motels. Relax residential zoning to allow more eco-tourism.
11. Local cooperation is needed to support tourism and reconcile benefits and drawbacks.

Horne Lake

12. Some **Horne Lake** cabin owners would like **permanent residency** to be allowed and would like to connect to **hydro** and **sewer**, and improve the condition of **roads**.
13. There is a need for **commercial** services in the Horne Lake / Spider Lake area.

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

14. Review the **ALR** boundary, as some land not suitable for agriculture may be in the ALR, and unnecessarily restricting development.
15. Allow **smaller parcel sizes and/or clustered housing in the ALR** in order to reduce to cost of purchasing land to attract younger people.

Village Centres

16. Village Centre **plans** should be developed for Qualicum Bay and Dunsmuir.
17. **Development** should be concentrated in existing and proposed village centres for better access to public transit and amenities and reducing the carbon footprint by keeping some cars off the road.

This is what you said about a Community of all Ages

Seniors

18. There are too many costly and time consuming requirements for **renovations** to allow seniors to stay in their homes longer.
19. **Smaller houses** in **higher density**, central areas close to services are needed to allow seniors to age in the community.
20. More **services** and **activities** for seniors are needed like a medical centre, community/seniors centre, swimming pool, and outdoor pickleball courts

Jobs

21. **More jobs** within Area H are needed to attract and keep **younger people**.
22. **Marketing** of Area H to tourists, new residents and **younger families** is needed.

Families with young children

23. More **childminding** opportunities are needed (such as Ravensong, library, and gym) to allow parents to be more involved in the community.

Children and Youth

24. A **safer route** between the school and Magnolia Court is needed, as the highway is currently the only route.
25. Youth need better **transportation** options.
26. More and improved amenities for children and youth are needed like a **skateboard/BMX park**, a **park in Bowser Village**, improved parks and **basketball courts**.

This is what you said about Streets & Movement

Trails & Beach Access

27. The trail network should continue to be **improved** and **extended**, and the **rail corridor** should be used for a trail.
28. Trails should be promoted as a **tourist attraction**, **signage** and **maps** improved, and doggie bag dispensers installed.
29. **Motor bikes** on walking trails are a concern due to safety and damage to trails.
30. **Public beach accesses** should be improved, and there is a problem with property owners next to beach accesses blocking access and removing public signs.
31. Better access along the **beach** is needed; erosion-protection structures on the foreshore can impede walking.
32. More marinas, **boat launches** and trailer parking is needed.

Safety

33. **Street lighting** is needed at major intersections, but there is also a concern about light pollution.
34. There needs to be **safer access** to commercial properties like Georgia Park Store and Magnolia Court.
35. **Speeding** on Highway 19A is a concern. There is not enough signage for speed limits, not enough enforcement, and there may be alternative ways to slow traffic. Speed limits may need a review.
36. There is a lack of crosswalks, and a need for better **pedestrian safety** in Bowser Village and Gainsburg/Crome Point Road in particular.

37. The lack of shoulder in some sections of Highway 19A is a concern for pedestrians and cyclists, and where shoulder does exist could be marked more clearly and cleaned of debris more often.
38. The Deep Bay area needs a second highway access, especially with the increase in traffic to and from the VIU Marine Station.

Parking

39. Parking improvements are needed for Deep Bay, Spider Lake, and other popular recreation spots.

Transit

40. A bus to Courtenay is needed, in addition to the service to Nanaimo, and the current bus services needs a better schedule based on resident need and greater frequency.

Highway signage

41. An entrance/welcome signage on the highway is desired.
42. Improved highway signage approaching Horne Lake exit is needed.

What you said about the natural environment

Marine and Shoreline Environment

43. Shoreline erosion and proliferation of sea walls, as well as sea level rise and extreme storm events are concerns.
44. Dumping on the beach is a concern.
45. Derelict vessels in Deep Bay are a problem.
46. Failing septic systems along the foreshore are a problem, and there is an interest in sewer along the coast to mitigate this.
47. There is support for the work of Nile Creek Salmon Enhancement Society.
48. Overharvesting of beach cast seaweed is a concern.

Watersheds and Aquifers

49. Drought, aquifer capacity, watershed protection and deforestation causing erosion are concerns, and there is an interest in better understanding aquifer capacity.

Emergency Planning and Response:

50. There is concern about fire hazard, flooding, coastal erosion of both steep slopes and low bank, and extreme storm and tsunami events.

Invasive species

51. Invasive species, are a concern, Scotch broom in particular.

What you said about other topics

52. Concern about unsightly properties and abandoned buildings
53. Desire for community policing
54. Concern about noise pollution and a desire for a Noise Bylaw
55. Concern about aggressive dogs and dogs off leash, desire for better animal control from the RDN

See the Appendix for full transcription of comments