



Official Community Plan Review **What We Heard Report**

June 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OCP REVIEW PROJECT

The District of Central Saanich is reviewing and updating its Official Community Plan (OCP), which was adopted in 2008. The OCP presents the long-term vision for the community. It sets out objectives and policies that guide planning and land use management decisions. It helps us determine how and where we live, work, play and move.

As a result of the review and update process, we will ensure the OCP reflects current values and priorities, addresses current and trending issues, and prepares the community for challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Since fall 2020, residents, business owners, property owners, renters, community organizations, institutional stakeholders, local First Nations, Ministries from other levels of government, and all others who live, work and play in Central Saanich have had, and will continue to have, an opportunity to shape the new OCP.

1.2. OCP REVIEW PROCESS

The OCP review process has been broken into four phases. In phase one, we focused on the pre-planning work essential to the project's success. This included developing a workplan, engagement strategy, and conducting background research. We formed an OCP Advisory Committee and began to engage with key stakeholders and local First Nations.

In phase two, we explored the current OCP strengths and weaknesses with respect to the community's hopes for the future. This included meetings with stakeholder groups, W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip) Chief and Council, and W̱SÁNEĆ (WSANEC) Leadership Council, an online Emerging Themes Town Hall, a survey about priorities and community character, Community Conversation Workbooks, and a Big Ideas Contest. We also engaged with the OCP Advisory Committee through monthly committee meetings, and with committee members and Central Saanich's Mayor and Council through a Land Use Workshop.

As we move into phase three, we will begin to test and draft policy direction and policy options, in consideration of what we have heard from the community, along with best practice research and technical analysis. Near the end of phase three, there will be opportunity for the community to weigh in on the draft OCP and to dive deeper into key topics if needed.

Finally in phase four, the draft OCP will be revised based on all of the feedback we have received. The OCP will then be taken through a bylaw adoption process in accordance with the Local Government Act.

1.3. WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

This document provides a summary of what we heard during phase one and two of the project, and represents a variety of interests and perspectives from across Central Saanich. At the end of each phase of the project, we will continue to update this document with a summary of what we have heard to date.

2. PHASE 1: PROJECT SCOPING AND BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The following is a summary of the first phase of engagement, including our engagement process and results from early stakeholder meetings. It is not intended to be a complete accounting, but rather a way of recording and reporting out on the common themes that emerged during those conversations.

2.1. WHAT WE DID

In December 2020, the project team, which is made up of District staff and members of the project consultant team, met with representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups.

The purpose of these meetings was to:

- Introduce ourselves and the OCP review process
- Learn more about each of the representatives and their organizations
- Gather early insight on a range of topics related to the OCP itself and the OCP review, as well as Central Saanich and the Saanich Peninsula more generally
- Consider together what ongoing engagement could look like

The project team selected stakeholder groups identified during development of the Engagement and Communications Strategy.

Together, the groups represent a broad diversity of interests related to the following topics:

- Agriculture
- Business and economic development
- Community services
- Natural environment
- Residents and community development
- Tourism

During each meeting the project team posed a series of questions which helped to focus the discussion:

1. Broadly speaking, what are the biggest **challenges** faced by Central Saanich community members now and in the future?
2. Broadly speaking, what are the biggest **opportunities** for Central Saanich community members now and in the future?
3. Are there any **other key issues** you think are important to Central Saanich community members that we should keep in mind?

4. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for **reaching out to and engaging** with community members in Central Saanich?

2.2. WHAT WE HEARD

2.2.1. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In many cases, stakeholders spoke to the following topics as both a challenge and an opportunity; these themes have been combined below.

Rural character

Central Saanich has a unique community character, which is often referred to as “rural character”. This term is not explicitly well defined, especially as it can be attributed in different ways to different communities. However, many of those we met with referred to community features such as the relationship between compact villages, rolling hills, and agricultural lands. The feeling of the community, the atmosphere, a sense of authenticity, connection and belonging, close-knit, neighbourliness were often terms used to describe Central Saanich.

There is a great opportunity to better define rural character for Central Saanich through the OCP review process, to help understand what it means and identify ways to protect and enhance the qualities that make Central Saanich unique.

Managing growth



In Central Saanich there is a perceived tension between managing and directing growth, while maintaining a lifestyle familiar to and valued by Central Saanich residents.

Historically, Central Saanich has taken a slow-growth approach to managing growth and development. That inclination remains today and is likely to continue.

Additionally, Central Saanich has very little undeveloped land available for development, due to the urban containment boundary and that around 70% of land in the district is within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Some of the challenges that we heard related to growth included more traffic, less available parking, and less privacy.

The thoughtful management of growth, however, does present an opportunity to make better use of underutilized land. It will help to address many of the other challenges we heard from stakeholders, including improving housing affordability and providing a greater mix of housing choice; enabling young adults, young families, and the employees of many local businesses to stay in the community; having a high enough population density to support local business; diversifying the local tax base to provide more and better community services; and increasing ridership to justify more investment in transportation infrastructure, such as improving public transit service.

Housing affordability

The cost of housing in Central Saanich is very high. Many of those we spoke with mentioned the big impact housing costs are having on young adults and young families, local business employees and seniors who want to continue living in or move to the community.

One of the biggest opportunities for Central Saanich to address housing affordability is to integrate what the District learned through the Residential Infill and Densification Study and provide a greater variety of housing choice (e.g., secondary suites, carriage homes, duplexes, small lot subdivisions, townhouses, apartments, and small-scale multi-unit buildings).



Aging population

Central Saanich has an aging population, which puts additional pressure on certain community services, especially health care. In communities like Central Saanich, where a greater portion of the housing stock is made up of single-detached houses, there is an increased risk of seniors experiencing social isolation. Housing affordability is increasingly important for seniors, especially those on a fixed income. A connected network of sidewalks also becomes increasingly important as you age and your mobility decreases.

Many of these challenges have begun to be addressed by recent projects, like the Active Transportation Plan and Residential Infill and Densification Study, and there is an opportunity to further address them through the OCP review process.

Parks and trails

Central Saanich needs a broader strategy for creating, maintaining, and promoting the use of parks. Parks play a crucial role in community development and contribute greatly to the health and vibrancy of the community.

We heard it was important to complete connections across Central Saanich through the local trail network for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Community services

The need for community services in Central Saanich outweighs the capacity of community organizations to provide those services. Community services – like supportive housing, child care, learning and development services, health care and mental health support, community gardens, and many others – are critical for creating healthy, strong, and resilient communities. It is important to note many of these services are managed by volunteers or rely significantly on volunteer support.



We also heard Central Saanich should continue to focus on being an attractive place to live, work and play to attract doctors and others vital to performing these much-needed community services.

Local business and economic development

Central Saanich has a decent variety of local businesses for a community of its size. Supporting, frequenting, and promoting local businesses was mentioned by most of those we spoke to. This was especially true given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local businesses.

A strong local economy is an important part of building a vibrant and liveable community. The OCP can help contribute to a strong local economy by exploring ways to expand housing choice to provide more workforce housing and to help staff get travel to work through a variety of transportation modes (e.g., walking, cycling, transit, personal vehicles).

There is a desire for the District to play a more active role in supporting local economic development, potentially through helping to develop an economic development strategy for Central Saanich or for the Saanich Peninsula more broadly.

Tourism

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, regional, provincial, national and global tourism is here to stay. The Saanich Peninsula has a lot to offer in terms of tourism; scenic views, long shorelines, rolling hills that are easy to traverse by bicycle, an abundance of agricultural land with several wineries, and major tourist destinations like The Butchart Gardens and the Victoria Butterfly Gardens.

There is an opportunity to help the tourism industry thrive in Central Saanich by clustering tourism-focused land uses, encouraging the development of hotel and other forms of accommodation outside of downtown Victoria, intercepting those travelling through the district from the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal to elsewhere on the Island, and exploring the potential regional connections presented by the Brentwood Bay Ferry Terminal.

Keating Business District

The Keating Business District is a unique asset for Central Saanich, the Saanich Peninsula, and the South Island. The light industrial businesses in Keating help to diversify the job base, playing an important function for the health and vibrancy of the region. Many of those we spoke to said the area had a lot of unrealized potential and it could use more attention to better activate this part of the district.



Agriculture

As agricultural land makes up so much of Central Saanich's land base, there is a need to ensure it is healthy and thriving. There is ever-increasing demand for agricultural products both locally and regionally, and local food security is top of mind for many. Agricultural land provides essential environmental benefits, and land stewardship can result in many co-benefits between agricultural activity and ecological needs.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the agricultural community is managing water runoff from other adjacent land uses that results in flooding and poorer water quality. Another is the prevalence of underutilized agricultural land, which we heard was in part due to the high cost of industrial land in the region. The incremental impact of non-farm uses taking up agricultural land is seen as a significant challenge.



Environment

Environmental stewardship is important to Central Saanich community members. There is a lot of potential to establish a common vision across the Saanich Peninsula, to commit to working together and finding greater efficiencies to addressing environmental challenges through collaboration.

We heard several challenges ranging from concerns about wildlife and tree protection, to the District not having a centralized garbage collection service.

Another challenge is that single-detached houses, which make up a majority of the housing stock in Central Saanich, have a greater impact on the environment than many other forms of housing.

Climate change

Central Saanich will have to continue to adapt to a changing climate. This reality was recognized by many of those we spoke with. Sea level rise and an increasing risk of wildfires are particular challenges for the district. Some suggested there is an opportunity to identify priority projects like developing a coastal adaptation strategy to help combat the effects of climate change.

Residential enclaves

One of the most unique qualities of Central Saanich are its three distinct residential enclaves; Brentwood Bay, Saanichton and Keating/Tanner Ridge.

Transportation between these areas is seen as a challenge, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. This is an issue the Active Transportation Plan will address, and there is an opportunity to complement that work through the OCP review.

The distribution of businesses and services across the three enclaves is another challenge. Rather than having one centre with a concentration of community services, shops, and restaurants, as seen in other communities, those businesses and services are distributed across Central Saanich.

Transportation



Central Saanich is mostly auto-oriented. As transportation habits change – with people relying more on other modes of travel like walking, cycling and public transit – and as technology evolves –there is an opportunity to anticipate and begin to plan for those trends.

Recently, the District has begun to develop an Active Transportation Plan to guide the implementation and promotion of safe, attractive, and convenient active transportation options.

As mentioned through the various themes above, Central Saanich has many challenges and opportunities with regard to transportation, especially as it relates to managing growth, connecting employees to local jobs, and addressing gaps in the network of sidewalks and trails. Traffic safety, especially at busy intersections, continues to be a particular concern for the community.

Collaboration

There is a great opportunity for Central Saanich to collaborate with others to address common issues and achieve common goals. Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney are all updating their OCPs at the same time, for example. This will allow the Saanich Peninsula to tackle topics with sub-regional implications more effectively, such as access to services, housing, transportation, environment, climate change and economic development.

First Nations

Stakeholders often mentioned the importance of collaborating with Tsartlip First Nation, Tsawout First Nation, and WSANEC Leadership Council as well. Central Saanich has an opportunity to focus on reconciliation through ongoing relationship building with local First Nations, learn about and educate community members about local First Nation history, and find ways to integrate traditional knowledge and ways of knowing into its plans and processes.

2.2.2. OTHER KEY ISSUES

There were many other issues that stakeholders brought up during our conversations. Themes that cut across those conversations are described below.

COVID-19

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and being able to adapt to the current circumstance was at top of mind for many of those we spoke with. The pandemic has shed light on many issues, from the need to support local businesses to the inequities that many community members face in being able to access vital community services (e.g., a food bank), training, resources, and technology.

Education and information sharing

We heard that the way we share information is going to be important throughout the OCP review process. Some effort will need to be made to educate Central Saanich community members about what the OCP is, why it is important, how it is used to shape their everyday lives, and the difference their contribution will make. Being accessible and inclusive was important for us to keep in mind.

Usability of the OCP

Some stakeholders mentioned the OCP was needlessly long, and this is a great opportunity to make it more user-friendly, navigable, and concise.

2.2.3. ENGAGING

The common themes that emerged regarding challenges and opportunities for reaching out to and engaging with Central Saanich community members are described below.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic impact on engagement means the District has had to focus on reducing barriers as much as possible. We will continue to be creative and adaptable when planning alternatives to in-person activities. We have been and will continue to reach out through existing networks and organizations even more than we would have had to in the past.

We heard it would be good to use a greater variety of tactics, delivered through the mediums suited to these audience groups, which has been the case to date. Hosting stakeholder meetings via Zoom has been received for the most part, though access to technology and support may still pose a challenge for some. For example, using print media as much as digital media, and providing both online and paper-based engagement activities. We also heard direct outreach and word of mouth is required to be successful. To make up for having less options for in-person engagement available to us in the early phases of the review, we should explore hosting more, small-group meetings for deeper exploration and insight.

Managing complexity

OCPs are complex because they include objectives and policies that cover a broad range of topics. By necessity, they must also consider how each of those topics interrelate and impact each other. Some stakeholders noted that it will be important to keep that complexity in mind and ensure it doesn't intimidate or discourage community members from providing their input.

Youth engagement

Many of those we spoke with emphasized the need to find fun ways to involve youth in the OCP review. Young people possess unique perspectives and have a right to contribute to planning for their community's future. Visionary questions like the ones we will ask as part of the OCP review project lend themselves well to creativity and problem solving.

3. PHASE 2: COMMUNITY VISIONING AND EMERGING THEMES

3.1. WHAT WE DID

The results from engagement in phase one helped to shape how we engaged on specific topics in the second phase of the project.

In phase two, we conducted meetings with stakeholder groups and local First Nations. We hosted public engagement opportunities including, an Emerging Themes Town Hall, a Priorities and Community Character Survey, Community Conversation Workbooks, and a Big Ideas Contest. In addition, we continued to engage with the OCP Advisory Committee through monthly committee meetings, and with committee members and Central Saanich's Mayor and Council through a Land Use Workshop.



3.1.1. STAKEHOLDER AND FIRST NATIONS MEETINGS

Throughout spring 2021, we met with stakeholder groups including the Central Saanich Community Association and Saanich Inlet Protection Society, as well as with W̱JOḺELP (Tsartlip) Chief and Council and the W̱SÁNEĆ (WSANEC) Leadership Council. The purpose of these meetings was to:

- Explore the strengths and weaknesses of the current OCP with respect to stakeholder and First Nations' ideas for the future.
- Provide the opportunity for stakeholder groups and First Nations to ask questions and share input on the OCP Review more generally.

3.1.2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

On March 25, 2021, we hosted an Emerging Themes Town Hall open to all Central Saanich community members.

The purpose of the Town Hall was to:

- Update community members on the OCP Review process
- Share some of what we have heard from community members to date
- Present thought-provoking ideas from experts in various fields to foster creativity and get community members excited about the future
- Provide the opportunity for community members to ask questions of the expert panel and the rest of the project team

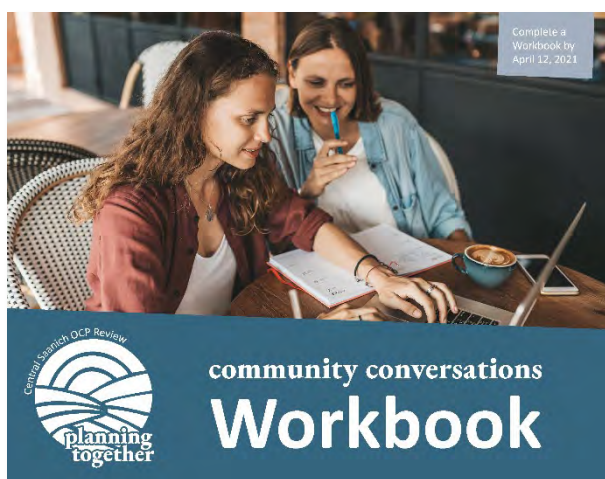
A recording of the Town Hall is available at letstalkcentralsaanich.ca/ocp.

The Priorities and Community Character Survey was available online and printed copies were made available from February 22 to April 13. Through the survey, we asked community members about Central Saanich's most urgent priorities, today and in the future. We also asked about the hopes and concerns community members may have for current and future generations.

To craft a common definition of Central Saanich's unique community character, we asked community members to identify the specific attributes and features that make up rural and small-town character in Central Saanich. Crafting a common definition will help in subsequent phases, as we shape the vision, policies and guidelines in the OCP and help preserve Central Saanich's unique community character.

In addition, we encouraged community members to host a Community Conversation with family, friends, and colleagues. We provided workbooks to help focus the conversation on the topics that matter most to them. The workbooks included a community mapping exercise, a community visioning exercise, as well as a series of exercises that focused on six key topics related to the OCP, including:

1. Agricultural and food security
2. Growth management, housing and affordability
3. Jobs and economic development
4. Parks, recreation and open space
5. Environmental protection and climate action
6. Transportation and mobility



Participants could choose to do any or all of the exercises, depending on their interests and the time available to them.

3.1.3. OCP ADVISORY COMMITTEE, MAYOR & COUNCIL

To continue to engage the OCP Advisory Committee and Central Saanich's Mayor and Council, we hosted a Land Use Workshop on May 26, 2021. Through the workshop, the OCP Advisory Committee and Central Saanich's Mayor and Council explored emerging key topics related to land use. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Reflect on what we have heard to date through public and stakeholder engagement and previous OCP Advisory Committee meetings.
- Explore key topics that have emerged from past engagement, through the lens of land use.
- Advance our collective understanding of each topic through an interactive workshop format that is tailored specifically for generating discussion.
- Give Mayor and Council and the OCP Advisory Committee the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas and listen to each other.
- Inform and provide guidance for our planning work as we move into Phase 3 of the OCP Review.

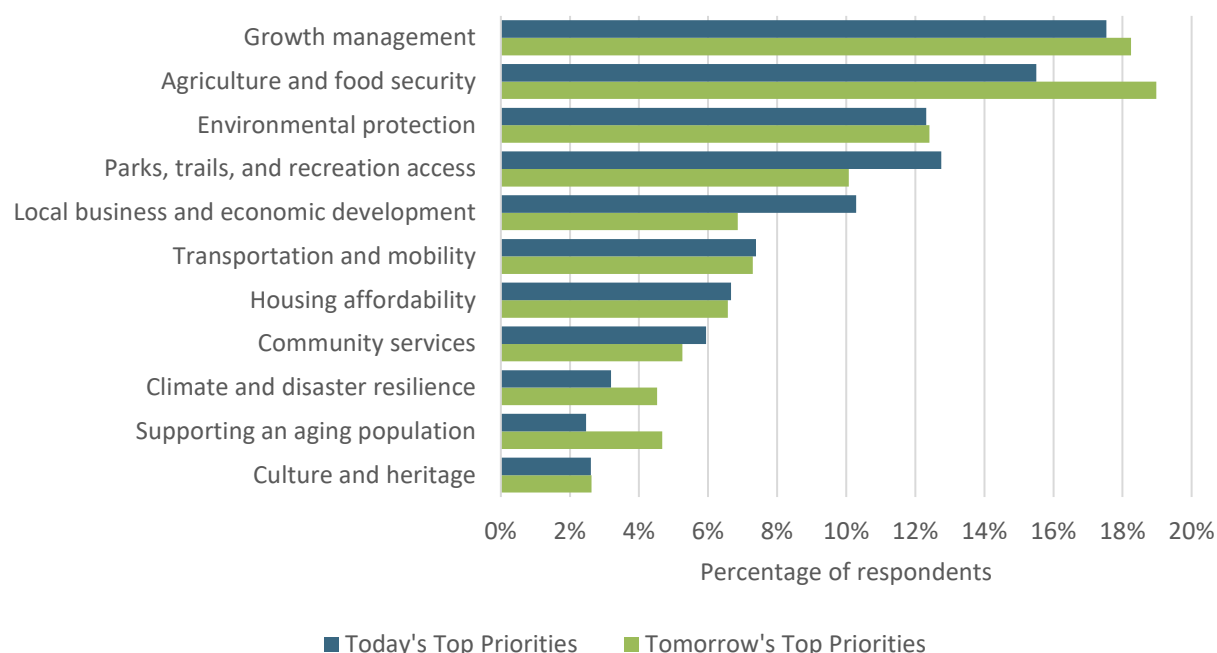
3.2. WHAT WE HEARD

The summary below provides a highlight of key themes from our meetings with First Nations and stakeholders, the Emerging Themes Town Hall, the Priorities and Community Character Survey, the Community Conversation Workbooks, the Big Ideas Contest, and the Land Use Workshop.

3.2.1. VISION & PRIORITIES

We heard about community members' top priorities for Central Saanich today and in the future. As shown in *Figure 1*, growth management, agriculture and food security, environmental protection, and parks, trails and recreation access are high priority topics. When community members think about priorities for today, they lean more towards local business and economic development, and accessing nature and recreation. When they think about priorities for the future, they lean more towards agriculture and food security, supporting an aging population, and climate and disaster resilience.

Figure 1. Top Priorities for Central Saanich



Community members hoped for Central Saanich to maintain its rural and small-town character, and especially to retain the quiet and safe nature of the community. They hoped to maintain a balance between agricultural surroundings, compact village life, and the community's distinction from nearby urban areas. Many hoped Central Saanich would stay lower density, experience a reasonable or lower level of population growth, and maintain its semi-rural infrastructure.

Similarly, community members are concerned about balancing new development with Central Saanich's rural, agricultural community roots. Many are concerned increasing densification will change the sense of community, architectural design, and overall rural and small-town community character.

On the other hand, there is concern the high cultural value placed on agriculture and farming has dominated the culture of the peninsula, with a lack of focus and respect for Indigenous heritage and

culture. There were suggestions to increase the awareness of Indigenous history and presence in the community, especially through design elements, cultural artifacts like totem poles, educational signage, and naming.

Specifically through the Community Conversation Workbooks, we asked community members to describe Central Saanich in the future in three words. Respondents most often cited 'safe', 'community', and 'green'. Below are the top 10 most frequent responses.

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. Safe | 5. Fun | 9. Quiet |
| 2. Community | 6. Clean | 10. Active |
| 3. Green | 7. Rural | |
| 4. Affordable | 8. Beautiful | |

3.2.2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

To craft a common definition of Central Saanich's unique community character, we asked community members to identify the specific attributes and features that make up rural and small-town character in Central Saanich. The most commonly referenced examples and features are summarized together below.

Streets

Community members often cited West Saanich Road, Mt Newton Cross Road, Wallace Drive, East Saanich Road and Oldfield Road as examples of streets that represent rural and small-town character.

They often referred to streets adjacent to farmland, including a combination of open farm fields, farm animals, farm stands and farm houses. They also referred to the streets' vistas and views, including rural vistas, open space, mountain views, residents' landscaping and tree-lined roads. Additional features related to accessibility by car, bike, and foot, with less congestion or slow-moving traffic. For roads like Wallace Drive and East Saanich Road, many noted the proximity to amenities, and especially local businesses.



Buildings

Community members commonly referenced 1931 Mt Newton Drive and developments in the Brentwood Bay and Saanichton Villages (particularly the post offices) as examples of mixed-use and commercial buildings that represent rural and small-town character. Agricultural buildings, the former Woodwynn and Michell's Farms, as well as farm stands and the Saanich Fairgrounds were also commonly cited. They referenced the Prairie Inn and heritage buildings like the old schoolhouse in Pioneer Park, as well as single detached homes and community spaces like the Brentwood Village Scout Hall.

Community members made note of features related to building scale, including a preference for low-rise and smaller buildings, as well as open space between neighbours and large acreages. Building architecture and design, including heritage or historical connection, the uniqueness of the buildings, and preference for materials of stone and wood, were also commonly referenced. Many noted the building use, including community spaces and agricultural infrastructure, contributed to a building's rural and small-town character.

Gathering places, parks and plazas

Community members often cited parks like Centennial Park and Pioneer Park as examples of rural and small-town character. The Saanich Fairgrounds, Brentwood Bay Library, Brentwood Crossing, Saanichton Village Shopping Centre, and Island View Beach were also referenced as gathering places and plazas.

Community members referenced features related to the amenities, including sports facilities, playgrounds, seating and tables, and particularly Pioneer Park in Brentwood Bay. The presence of community, including multi-generational spaces where residents are active, and gather to celebrate and recreate, was also noted as a key feature to rural and small-town community character. In addition, landscaping features, including spaces with trees, gardens, greenspace and grass, gravel parking, low fencing, and open space were often referenced.



Trails and pathways

Community members commonly cited examples of trails and pathways including through Centennial Park, Mt Newton Cross, Tod Inlet, Island View, Willow Way, and Brentwood Waterfront.

They noted features related to access to nature, accessibility and efficiency of routes, views of farmland and animals, quiet and peacefulness, and undeveloped features like dirt and gravel paths and those removed from development, all related to rural and small-town character.

Natural features

Community members commonly referenced examples of beaches such as Island View, parks such as Oak Haven and Gore Park, trails to Tod Inlet, as well as views and vistas over farmland and the ocean, and the waterfront around Brentwood Bay. They noted features related to nature, including natural and untouched beauty, old growth trees, open fields, ocean and beaches, streams, wildlife and habitat, wetlands, local species and vegetation. Other features included views and vistas of rural lands, ocean and water, open space, and beautiful surroundings, as well as quiet and peacefulness. Some community members referenced low density features such as little traffic, few big box stores and malls, low density homes and buildings, and uncrowded spaces.



Detracts from character

Community members commented that Keating, both the road and industrial zone, detract from Central Saanich's rural and small-town character. They also noted that high traffic, including commercial vehicles, speeding cars and lack of parking, as well as high-density developments, including high-rise condos and apartments, subdivisions and townhouses, detract from Central Saanich's rural and small-town character.

Contributes to character

Community members would like to enhance and promote agriculture, including the protection of farmland and farm stands, and to promote food production, processing, and retaining small and historic farms. They hope to enhance active transportation networks to improve neighbourhood connections and walkability; enhance parks, pathways, trails, sidewalks and crosswalks, and bike lanes and facilities; preserve undeveloped land and large acreages, and to limit the number and scale of buildings.



3.2.3. TOPICS OF INTEREST

Managing growth

Community members hope to maintain Central Saanich's rural and small-town character, while balancing population growth and environmental protection. Some hope to increase density within the Urban Containment Boundary to prevent urban sprawl and to increase housing options. Some hope to maintain lower density, single-family zoning, and to limit the development of condos and high-rises. Overall, community members hope to be consulted on proposed development that may impact them, and for the District to be responsive to community needs.

Community members are concerned unmanaged growth, overdevelopment, and increasing infill will lead to a lack of environmental protection, loss of greenspace and agricultural land, and loss of community character. Some are concerned that growth will lead to crowding and increased traffic. Some are concerned that growth will be poorly planned, developer-led, and lacking public input.

Community members commented on the strengths of the current OCP in terms of containing urban development, infrastructure improvements, and efforts to enhance community character and quality of life. Community members also commented on the benefits of the current OCP objectives being broad and leaving room for innovation.

For the OCP review, community members noted that infrastructure improvements, including transit, water and sewage, hospital and healthcare, will be needed to support increasing development. Similarly, community members support increasing residential development to support an increasing population.

Finally, there is a strong desire to consider Indigenous cultural and environmental values that relate to managing growth and developing land in Central Saanich.

Transportation



Community members hope for efficient and safe transportation, with reduced car traffic and increased active transportation. Many of their comments expressed a desire for improved transportation networks and infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling and improve safety, like traffic management, street lighting and accessible sidewalks. Some hope for improved transportation options and increased connection to downtown Victoria, the ferry, airport, and surrounding communities. They suggested that transportation planning should be coordinated across the region, and that transportation and land use be complimentary and considered together.

Community members are concerned with a lack of safe and efficient transportation networks. Particularly, a lack of continuous walking and cycling infrastructure, and limited transportation options and connections that will continue to encourage car dependency and increase traffic. Some are concerned with safe walking and cycling along Wallace Drive in particular, as well as public transportation to schools. Many are concerned with an increase in traffic and parking, and general lack of transportation infrastructure to support an increasing density.

Community members noted the current objectives and policies in the OCP related to transportation are overall strong; particularly in encouraging and providing options for active transportation. However, community members commented on current issues regarding traffic congestion, especially as it relates to safety and greenhouse gas emissions.

Agriculture and food security

Community members hope Central Saanich continues to play a vital role in supporting food security on the Island, and that current and future residents will continue to access fresh, healthy, local foods. They hope Central Saanich continues to encourage small-scale, sustainable agricultural production, and that farmers are supported and farmland is protected.

They are concerned about loss of agricultural land to development, a lack of support for farmers, particularly young farmers, and access to locally grown food.

Community members commented on the current strengths of the OCP in protecting farm land from development, particularly through the Agricultural Land Reserve. Community members commented on the benefits of supporting farm labourers and the current OCP objectives being strong on paper. However, community members also noted weaknesses with implementation and the ability to achieve OCP objectives. There were also concerns related to urban sprawl and developing farmland, and needing adequate housing for agricultural workers.

Specific suggestions from community members included ensuring arable land continues to be farmed and is protected from development, municipal land be leased for growing food, agricultural education is promoted, and farm stands are supported.



Environmental protection

Community members hope to maintain healthy ecosystems, and their connection to and stewardship of land and nature. Some mention reducing pollution from stormwater runoff, air pollution from traffic, and open burning. Community members envision a future with pockets of biodiversity and greenspace, and stronger marine protection planning. Similarly, community members are concerned with increased pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions, waste and garbage, and a lack of environmental protection for natural spaces and wildlife habitat.

We heard concern around environmental protection particularly related to water quality and marine health. Community members are concerned with the implementation of OCP objectives related to the marine environment, marine shorelines, and watershed management. They suggest adopting performance measures, regular public reporting, and enforcement to help achieve OCP objectives. Other suggestions include improved coordination with various jurisdictional bodies around the marine environment, especially in Brentwood Bay, additional shoreline development policies, and placing an increased focus on stormwater management.

Community members were concerned about land and water pollution from sources like agricultural production, septic fields, BC Ferries, and derelict boats. Particularly, there is concern for the health of Maber Flats and the Brentwood Bay marine environment. They suggest ecological health and environmental protection be treated with the same level of significance as agriculture in Central Saanich.



Housing affordability

Community members hope for a range of affordable housing that can meet the needs of a diverse population, particularly for young families and people living with disabilities. They suggested increasing housing development and density to include affordable, public, multifamily and infill housing, particularly in village centres.

Similarly, community members are concerned with the lack of affordable housing options, particularly for middle- to low-income households, young families and renters. Some are concerned with the current cost of housing and property taxes. They commented on the weaknesses of the current OCP, including the need to better define affordability in order to achieve it.

Community inclusion and safety

Community members hope Central Saanich continues to be a safe community with a strong and vibrant community spirit. They hope to maintain its family-oriented character and to promote inclusion and diversity across populations of all ages.

Some community members are concerned with an increase in crime, conflict, and general public safety.

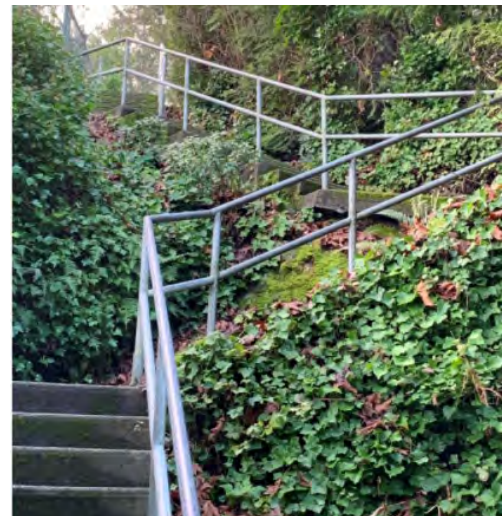


Liveability

Community members hope to maintain and improve quality of life through a well-planned community that fosters community connections. They hope for a community where residents can live, work, and recreate, all in close proximity. They hope the community can support an aging and multigenerational population, especially through affordable housing, access to services, and accessible transportation.

Community members are concerned with maintaining their current quality of life and sense of community, high levels of safety and low levels of noise. They are concerned with current and future residents being able to live, work, and age in the community. Some are concerned that increasing living costs may drive an aging population out of the community.

Community members envision a future where people of all ages can live and work in Central Saanich, that there is a diverse range of housing to meet all levels of income, as well as infrastructure and services to support people's needs, and the balance between growth, lifestyle, and natural environment is maintained.



Economic development and local businesses

Community members hope for a sustainable local economy where local businesses thrive, and residents can live and spend money within the community. They hope for diverse local employment opportunities, and a variety of local stores, restaurants, and entertainment. Most would like to support independent businesses, while some hope for more commercial development of chain restaurants and stores.



Community members are concerned with being able to maintain and promote local businesses. Some are concerned with maintaining job security and employment opportunities. Others are concerned with having to depend on neighbouring communities for essential goods and conveniences.

Community members noted the current OCP objectives related to economic development are diverse and ambitious. Overall, they noted that Central Saanich could benefit from more diverse employment opportunities and amenities, while some suggest focusing on one industry.

Parks, trails and recreation

Community members hope to maintain and increase recreational opportunities, including access to greenspace, trails and parks, and recreational facilities. Some hope for improved off-road trail connections, expansion of trails and parks with connection to residential and commercial areas, and increased trail maintenance and signage. Some hope for investment in recreational and educational opportunities, particularly for youth, including skate parks, waterparks, mini-golf, recreational centres, and programming. Many are concerned with a loss of greenspace in neighbourhoods, accessing parks and trails, and impacts on the trail system with increasing use. Some are concerned with a lack of recreational facilities.



Community members commented on the strength of the current OCP objectives related to parks, trails and recreation, in balancing ecological and human needs. They also noted weaknesses in supporting equestrian use trails, and providing adequate amenities including water fountains, boat launches, playgrounds and picnic areas.

Looking ahead, community members envision more accessible recreational spaces with adequate parking, improved beach access, and spaces that are welcoming and safe for all users. Community members also hope for improved active transportation networks and connectivity between residential developments, schools, libraries, greenspaces, and recreational activities. They also commented on a need for improved amenities and programming including, rentable indoor community facilities, playgrounds, boat launches, seating and benches, maritime activities and events, as well as after school programs in public spaces.

Community services

Community members desire community services that meet the needs of all residents, from children to seniors. They hope for continued and increased support for arts and culture, including community events. Some hope for improved community services like garbage pickup, yard waste, and development of recreational facilities to support increased density. Some commented on affordability, hoping that current and future residents of all ages can continue to afford living in the community, including access to services and free recreational activities.



Community members are concerned with the lack of services and infrastructure needed to support increasing density. Some reference a lack of transportation infrastructure including parking and active transportation networks. Others reference access to childcare, health services, and recreational programs for young families. Some reference garbage and yard waste collection, as well as adequate sewage system. Others are concerned the cost of living in Central Saanich will become unaffordable, particularly for families and workers.

Climate change

Community members hope for urgent climate action including reducing traffic and greenhouse gas emissions, restoring natural systems and meeting conservation targets. Similarly, we heard concern for climate change impacts including forest fires, flooding, food security, and the community's climate mitigation and adaptation plans.



Looking ahead, community members envision strong climate action, including carbon offsets, increased use of renewable energy and electric vehicles, more active and public transportation, as well as emergency preparedness. Community members commented on the need to transition to renewable energy sources, improve waste management and maintenance of infrastructure. They suggested learning from best practices in other municipalities.

Community members commented on the current strengths of Central Saanich's waste and water management, as well as protection of greenspace. They noted weaknesses in the implementation of objectives, including lacking measures to monitor success, and communicating out to the public.



Reconciliation

Community members hope for healthy and strong relationships between neighbouring First Nations, the District, and Central Saanich residents.

They are concerned that racism towards Indigenous community members continues to persist in the community and its institutions. Public education around the Indigenous history of the lands, and the Douglas Treaty, are needed to move towards reconciliation. An example includes increasing First Nations' visual presence on the land through renaming and mapping of historic sites.

Community members encourage the District to endorse the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to acknowledge First Nations' role in stewarding the land since time immemorial, to move towards new and improved relationships and community governance.



Keating Business District

There was strong support from community members for improving the overall built environment in the Keating Business District, to create more attractive, pedestrian-oriented space that attracts new companies and employees. Similarly, there was strong interest in attracting higher value, employee-intensive businesses to better utilize the space, and improving active transportation connections within Keating and to the village centres.

Keating currently lacks the rural and small-town feel of the rest of Central Saanich. Community members support workforce housing adjacent to (and for some, within) the Keating Business District within existing residential and rural lands. Some are enthusiastic about medium to high-density, mixed-use development (including residential) in the commercially zoned portions of Keating. Others are concerned with introducing residential development, due to the potential for conflict between uses. A suggestion to divide Keating into different precincts with different zoning that could address different needs and uses was brought forward. However, some are concerned with losing the "heavy industrial" or "dirty" lands that existing industry depends on. Some are concerned with end-of-life plans for the gravel pit.

There was interest in the idea of creating an "innovation district" as a key central precinct of Keating that could grow over time.

Overall, community members expressed an interest in addressing climate and environmental sustainability goals by utilizing rooftops for solar energy and attracting environmentally focused businesses.

Rural lands

Community members reflected on three distinct rural designated lands (Keating, Mt Newton, and Island View), that could merit different approaches to land use planning.

Keating is in close proximity to Brentwood Bay, Keating Industrial Lands, and a gateway to Butchart Gardens. The Keating area may be the most suitable rural lands to consider more diverse housing options, given its proximity to employment centres and urban containment boundary.

The Mt Newton area, including its large, forested lots and excellent recreational trails, has important environmental value, though there is a threat of wildfire interface. In addition, this area has a current focus on agriculture, farming and pastoral lands.



There is no consensus on whether rural lands should be further developed or not. Some see value in smaller lots and more housing on these lands, and others worry this will limit farming and environmental value, and detract from Central Saanich's rural and small-town character. There is some consensus on wanting to use the rural lands in a more community-oriented way, through active transportation paths, gathering spaces, farming and food security programs, as well as park space.

Future commercial nodes

In general, community members expressed support for recognizing two areas that could be identified as future (or small village) nodes in the updated OCP (Turgoose and Island View). Though each is distinct from the other, they do have features that may lend themselves well to such a designation.

Turgoose is already seeing growth and new development. It is adjacent to the Patricia Bay Highway and Lochside Trail, with the potential for a future rapid transit corridor. It is also close to local parks and the waterfront. It is also adjacent to Tsawout First Nation lands and there have been many comments about the need to coordinate or partner with the Nation regarding development in the area.

Island View is close to the Keating Business District, a school, and transit, which means that it could be a good location for workforce housing. Corridor development was supported during the recent Infill and Densification project. It is also adjacent to the Patricia Bay Highway and there is frequent transit use in the community already. The unique, hilly topography is both an opportunity and a challenge for any development in Island View. Neither are seen as being very walkable, and there is a lack of current active transportation connections in each. The feasibility of commercial development needs to be considered in each area as well, as they may not be ready for development or redevelopment that would support a commercial node at this time.

The advantage of recognizing these areas as future commercial nodes is to provide some direction and help guide Council's decisions about their future. However, community members cautioned against the District about being too prescriptive with how we designate these two nodes. They hope that future Council's are given the flexibility to be creative with how each area evolves in the future.

3.3. DEMOGRAPHICS WE'VE HEARD FROM

To understand who we have engaged with to date through our public engagement activities, we collected demographic information in the spring 2021 *Priorities and Community Character Survey*, of which we received 242 responses. The following is a summary of that demographic information. This does not fully represent everyone engaged with. Instead, it shows trends for who we are hearing from and gives insight into whether we should adjust our approach to promotion and outreach.

The figures below show that the vast majority (95%) of survey respondents live in Central Saanich, and about a third (34%) work in the community.

Figure 2. Do you live in Central Saanich?

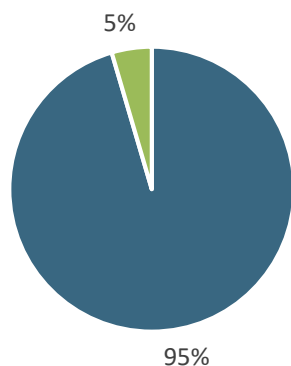


Figure 3. Do you work in Central Saanich?

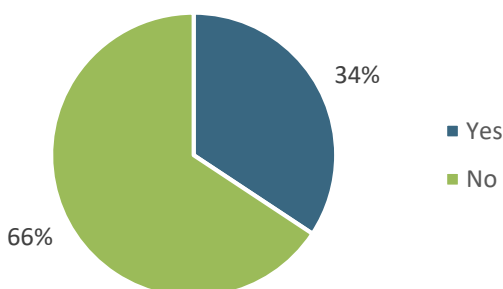
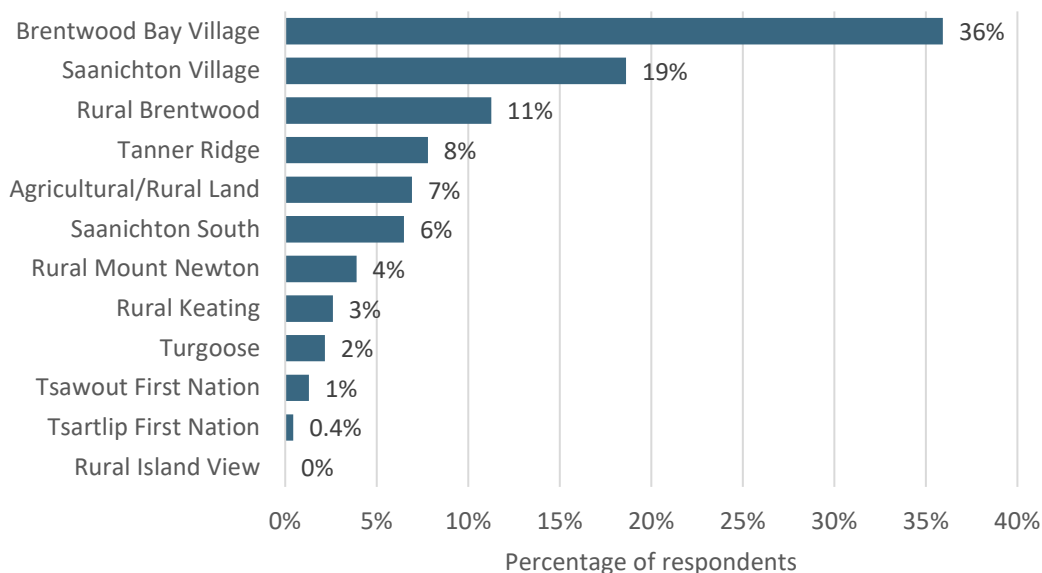


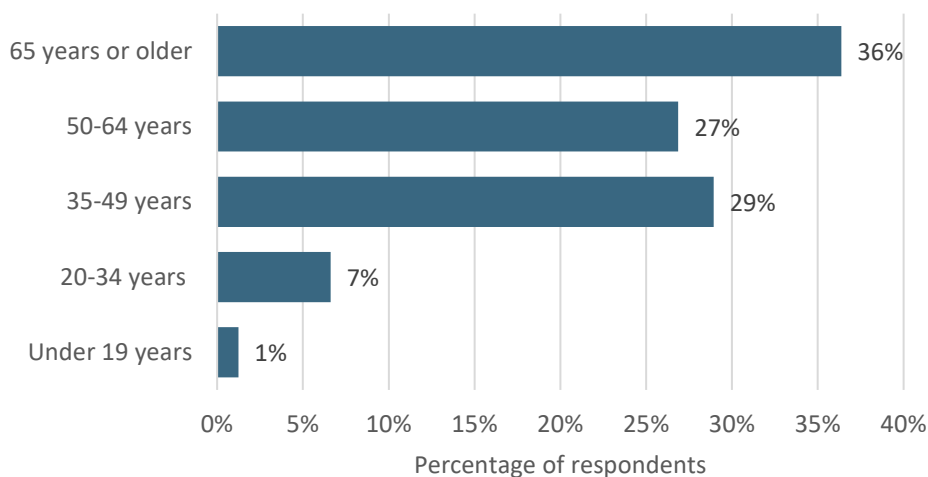
Figure 4 shows that most survey respondents live in Brentwood Bay Village (36%) or Saanichton Village (19%). As might be expected, we heard from fewer people living in rural lands as compared to village centres or other residential areas. We did not hear from many people living in Tsawout or Tsartlip.

Figure 4. What part of Central Saanich do you live in?



As shown in Figure 5, 92% of survey respondents are above the age of 35, 36% of which are 65 years or older. We only heard from a couple of youth under the age of 19 (1%), and very few community members between the ages of 19 and 34 (7%). A class from Stelly's Secondary School did complete Community Conversation Toolkits, which is not represented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?



Moving into phase three, we will continue our work to reach out to members of the public that have been unrepresented in our public engagement process to date, including community members under the age of 35 and First Nations community members.

Through various streams of engagement, we have and will continue to engage local stakeholders, including local community organizations and businesses, as well as Tsartlip Chief and Council, Tsawout Chief and Council, WSANEC Leadership Council, the OCP Advisory Committee, and Mayor and Council.

4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The project team offers our sincerest appreciation to the individuals and groups that took the time to participate in phase one and two of the OCP Review. This overview is only a glimpse of the richness of input that we were able to gather. The input will continue to shape our work to review and update the OCP and how we engage with the Central Saanich community.

Ongoing engagement will continue through summer 2021. Towards the fall, there will be additional opportunities for the community at large to weigh in on the OCP review, get more specific in regards to policy direction and policy options, and to dive deeper into key topics.