

City of Colwood & City of Langford

Jointly-Developed Official Community Plans

Division 2 Projects over \$50, 000 : Comprehensive Plans and Policies

Submitted by:

The City of Colwood, The City of Langford & HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd.

Project & Outcome Summary

In the spring of 2007, the Cities of Langford and Colwood launched into BC's first inter-municipal Official Community Planning (OCP) process. Within 13 months from the kick-off meeting, both OCPs were adopted as the Cities' roadmaps to sustainability. In this process, the Cities worked together to ensure a common planning method, a seamless planning process, common terminology, and parallel OCP timelines, that encouraged innovation in community and stakeholder participation. In order to build the plan inter-jurisdictionally, the Cities shared resources and held joint public meetings and workshops. Colwood and Langford also shared one consulting team, HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd., in order to gain efficiencies in the work plan. For their efforts, the Cities were recipients of UBCM's 2008 Leadership & Innovation award for pioneering innovative and collaborative sub-regional planning. Integrated outcomes include 95% consistency in all policies between the two OCPs, integration of land use designations and terminology, an inter-jurisdictional and networked transportation system, a West Shore Greenbelt strategy, as well as enabling policies for compact and mixed-use transit-supportive City Centres and development nodes, district energy systems, and decreased auto dependence.



"Colwood and Langford's Joint OCP Process is the perfect example of what the Community Excellence Awards recognize each year in municipal and regional district governance. Their cooperation, creativity and pooling of resources enhanced their ability to serve the citizens of their communities :- an effort which stood out among other entries to this category."

~Joslyn Young, Executive Coordinator of UBCM regarding the joint application of Langford and Colwood as the recipient of the 2008 Leadership & Innovation, Mid-Size Community Award.

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Background

Colwood and Langford are locally known as the West Shore of the Capital Regional District (CRD). This sub-region is poised to take most of the region's growth as a balance to the Victoria core. Langford has a population of roughly 25,000, while Colwood has a population of 15,000 people. Both are characterized by a mixture of urban, suburban, rural and natural areas. Langford is a relatively new municipality incorporated December 8, 1992, while Colwood was incorporated June 24, 1985. The two communities have a strong track record of collaboration.

Since 2001, Langford and Colwood combined have experienced an annual growth rate of nearly 4% per annum (19.6% overall). Population is expected to reach over 32,000 in Colwood and 47,000 in Langford by 2028. This represents an additional 18,000 people in Colwood and 25,000 people in Langford, or 44% of total growth in the Capital Regional District (CRD) over this time frame. This growth is both anticipated and accommodated within the CRD's 2003 Regional

Growth Strategy which designated both communities as major growth centres in the region.

The joint pursuit of an OCP Review was proposed in 2006 by the Mayors of the two Cities as an innovative and novel approach to sub-regional planning. Both Councils backed the proposal, identifying in the idea the increased and combined opportunities for community feedback, technical analysis and sustainability-focused policy development. Both Cities also became signatories of the BC Climate Action Charter in 2007 which provided even greater justification for pursuing a collaborative process.

Following a thorough joint RFP, review and evaluation process, Holland Barrs Planning Group Inc. (now HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd.) was the successful proponent to lead teams in the tandem creation of new OCPs for both Colwood and Langford.

Approach

The review process was highly participatory with leading engagement techniques. The following goals guided process design and execution:

- **Participatory Planning & Learning:** Ensure early and ongoing participation so 'the best possible plan' can be created. The process integrated learning opportunities to support capacity building.
- **Consideration of the Regional Context:** Ensure the plan addresses Smart Growth principles, the regional growth strategies (transportation, affordable housing & economic development) and incorporates a land-use mix appropriate to the communities.
- **Rigorous Analysis:** Pursue analysis of the communities' local issues to allow decisions to be made with certainty and to ensure technical feasibility.

Can the West Shore have a Sustainable Future?

You are invited!

Official Community Plan Design Workshop

Royal Roads University (RRU), Nov 7-10, 2007

	Date	Time	Where
OCP Design Workshop Launch Where we are today in the OCP process & meet the design team.	Wednesday, Nov. 7 th	7:00 - 9:00pm	RRU, Artubus Building, Room 101.
Public Viewing Gallery See progress, learn more about options and share ideas.	Thursday, Nov 8 th to Friday, Nov 9 th	9am to 9pm daily.	RRU, Artubus Building, Side Entrance
OCP Public Ideas Workshop Discuss your thoughts about the future of your community & hear from others.	Thursday, Nov 8 th	Session 1: 1:00 - 4:00 pm Session 2: 6:30-9:30 pm (Both sessions have the same agenda)	RRU, Artubus Building, Room 101.
Design Workshop - Open House See design ideas, speak with the design team, see presentations from local youth and Avi Friedman, an expert in sustainable community planning & design.	Saturday, Nov. 10 th	1:00 - 5:00pm 1:00 to 2:00: See Ideas, meet the team. 2:00 to 3:30: Presentations & Critique 3:30 to 5:00: Citizen Discussion Groups	RRU, Grant Building, Quarterdeck

Visit www.colwood.ca or www.cityoflangford.ca for more information about this joint OCP Review.

Colwood and Langford want to address challenges of the 21st Century by planning ahead. This Official Community Plan (OCP) Review is intended to develop goals and policies by ensuring long term prosperity for all. OCP's culture and reflect community values and translate these values into goals and policies about land use, housing, cultural and social programs, economic development, heritage, parks and open spaces. For more information, please visit: www.colwood.ca or www.cityoflangford.ca.

- **Collaborative Interdisciplinary Work:** Identify and maximize opportunities for physical integration and planning collaboration between communities and departments to maximize synergies.

- **Innovative, Creative, & Realistic:** A reiterative process design—responsive to evolving ideas and events—to promote and inspire original and creative thinking to help surmount challenges with policy that can be realistically implemented.

- **Inspirational:** Provide a “touchstone”—using strong graphics, plain English and engaging facilitation—to involve people in a process which produces an outcome that is a symbol of ‘community’, a useful reference and a helpful measurement tool for future decision-making.

This approach was the most effective strategy for proactively and meaningfully involving stakeholders and community members in a learning quest. This approach allowed values and identity to be revealed alongside very real technical opportunities and constraints.

The OCP review process was defined by 5 phases where the following key activities were executed:

- Phase I:** Internal Launch & Committee Engagement
- Phase II:** Public Launch & Technical Analysis
- Phase III:** Policy & Design Workshop
- Phase IV:** Draft OCPs
- Phase V:** Open Houses, Revisions & Final OCPs.

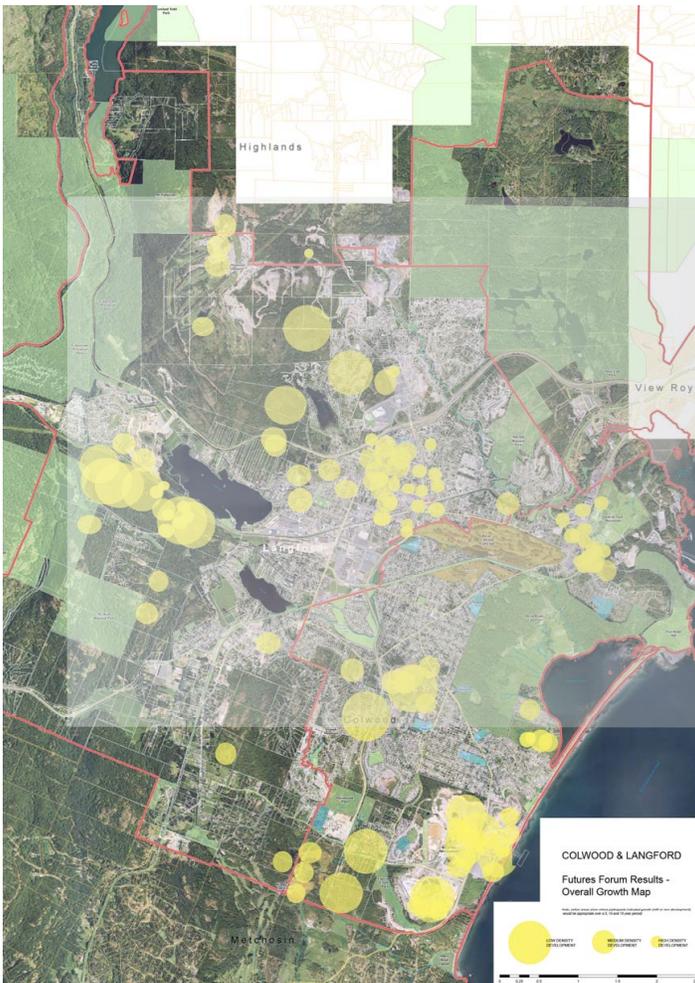
Phase I: Internal Launch & Committee Engagement

Kick-off Meeting & Preliminary Issue Scoping: As a first step, the consulting team met with staff to discuss a sustainability policy framework. This discussion allowed the team to bring a majority of staff up to speed on contemporary sustainability issues and collectively identify and scope opportunities and challenges.

OCP Steering Committees: The OCP review process benefited from the oversight of two OCP Steering Committees, which were made up of elected and appointed citizens who were passionate about their community. The Colwood and Langford OCP Steering Committees met separately and together to guide the OCP Review team at key stages in the process. An early discussion was held with the steering committee to better understand opportunities and challenges, both local and global, in scale. This early work also helped the team frame the first public event. Steering committee members provided valuable feedback throughout the process on a range of topics that included strategies for engaging residents, messaging, and proposed policies and land use designations.



Avi Freedman speaking at the Futures Forum, June 2007



Phase II: Compiled results from a 'Futures Mapping' Exercise



Phase III: (Charrette results) A hierarchy of centres connected by multmodal and green connections.

Phase II: Public Launch & Technical Analysis

Futures Forum: A Futures Forum was held over the course of two days at an old symbolic heart of the two cities, the Legion in Langford. Overall, the Forum was designed to educate, inform and get early feedback on key issues and desired directions. Since public education is critical in any planning exercise, particularly with respect to sustainability planning, four featured speakers were chosen to inspire and inform:

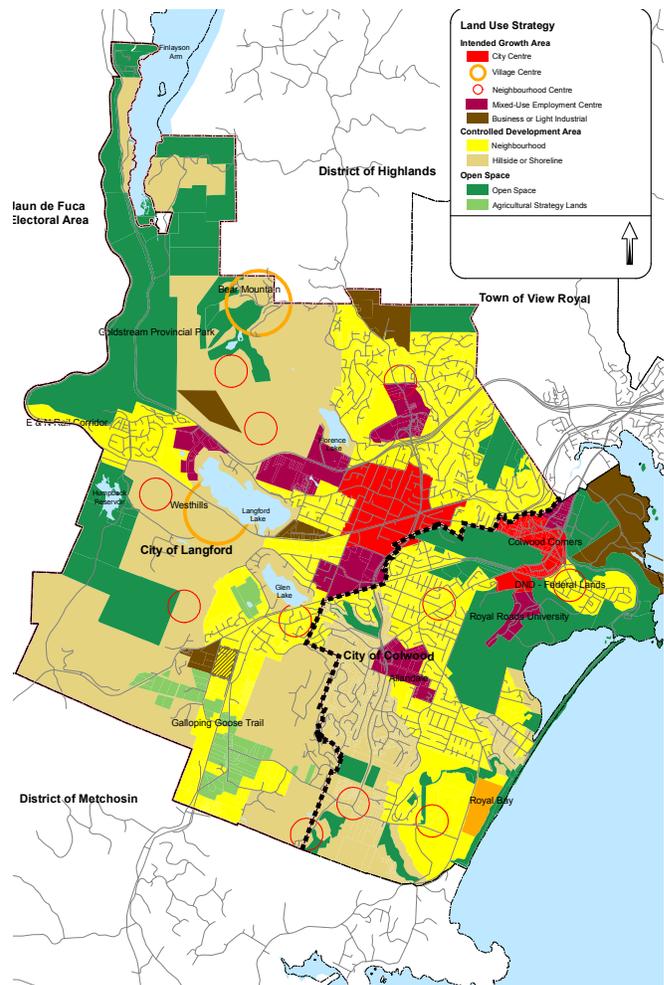
- Mark Holland, Holland Barrs Planning Group Consultants (8-Pillars of a Sustainable Community Planning, Day 1)
- Avi Friedman, McGill University (Sustainable Communities, Day 1 & Healthy Communities, Day 2)

- Tom Lancaster, Smart Growth Advisory Services (Principles of Smart Growth, Day 1)
- Franc D'Ambrosio, D'Ambrosio Architecture + Urbanism (Good Urban Design, Day 2)

Following the speaker sessions, participants broke out into groups to discuss six topics: parks and open space, complete neighbourhoods, transportation, housing, culture and recreation, and economic development. A 'Futures Mapping' exercise was also held to gain direction on where residents envisioned growth occurring. Groups were tasked to place 5, 10, 15 and 20 year growth scenarios on a map by placing dots on map, that represented 450 homes each, in one of three

The process itself was highly inclusive. We were encouraged to participate, and there were many levels of community engagement. The process had integrity. We very much felt heard.”

~Cindy Moyer, OCP Steering Committee member.



Phase III - V Final OCP Plan Area Maps

densities (low, medium, high). The results were twofold: This teaching tool gave participants an intimacy with the difficult land use decisions that Councils face and, secondarily, the mapping product indicated that infill in strategic locations was highly supported and urban expansion was envisioned in key areas.

Community & Regional Stakeholder Workshops:

Over 100 local and regional service providers, non-profit groups, active residents, school board representatives, major landowners, land developers, representatives from different levels of government and BC Transit were invited to share and contribute to policy development. . Workshops focused on housing, social development, parks and the natural environment, transportation, urban design and development, arts, culture and heritage, infrastructure, and economic development. Each session lasted three hours and

used a modified ‘open space technology’ format. Participants were asked one question: Based on your area of expertise and knowledge of Colwood and Langford, what is the most important thing to address in the OCPs? After sharing their priorities, participants then clustered responses and worked collaboratively to develop policy recommendations.

Policy Options Report & Detailed Analysis: A draft policy options report was developed to provide a concise overview of issues, current conditions, trends, and public and stakeholder feedback, and to discuss responsive policy options. This work was supported by rigorous analysis by the consulting team. The report set the stage for a meaningful policy discussion with citizens during public consultations and design exercises.



Charrette Public Workshop Citizen Presentation



Charrette Open house plenary session



Charrette team hard at work



Citizens discussing where growth should occur

Phase III: Policy Design Workshop

Charrette & Public Workshops: As the centerpiece of the process, the charrette event was designed to create a powerful sub-regional vision for growth and connectivity. With this outcome, all policy directions could be tested against the emergent vision. Planning both communities this way maximized opportunities for community integration and planning collaboration. Participants were brought together on the beautiful Royal Roads University campus (Hatley Park National Historic Site) in Colwood. The charrette team included key planning and engineering staff members who were supported by an experienced multi-disciplinary team. Public feedback was gained ‘real time’ in a Public Viewing Gallery, during two public workshops and at an open house held at the end of the event.

Phase IV: Draft OCPs

Draft OCP: Given the intent to develop two distinctive but generally consistent policy documents, one draft OCP was initially developed for both Cities to test the viability of developing plans with similar goals and policy content. The 1st draft focused mainly on applying a number of policy options (as revealed in the Policy Options Report) and a sub-regional scale land use map. From here, the consulting team evolved the one draft into two OCPs. New and innovative mapping was also developed that included an integrated multi-modal transportation map and West Shore integrated open space network. Drafts were reviewed by the steering committees and staff teams. This process of developing and reviewing draft documents revealed that policy and land use designation consistency was in fact possible and desirable.

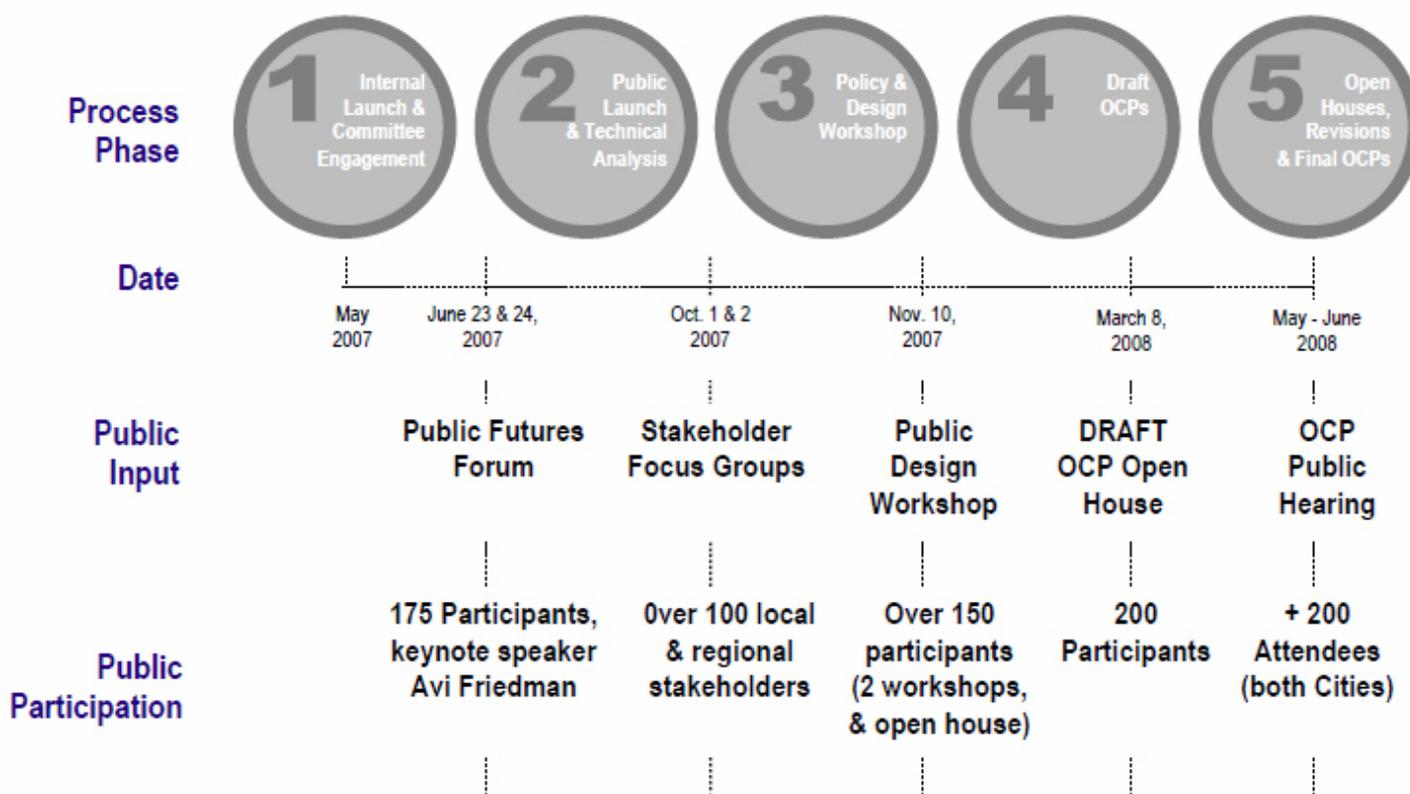
Phase V: Open House, Revisions & Final OCPs

Draft OCP Open House: The 2nd draft OCPs were shared with the public and, with more public feedback, the stage was set for more refinement. The public was in support of the emerging plans; public feedback was reviewed by the steering committees in a joint session.

Overall, the steering committees, Councils and staff members were pleased with the outcomes of the process as it related to the depth and quality of the thinking and discussions that transpired over the course of the year long process. Overall, 650 members of the public and stakeholders were involved in the process.

Final OCPs: The final OCPs were fine-tuned and customized to reflect emerging issues as identified by staff and each community's Planning & Zoning Committee. Overall, 95% policy consistency was maintained. Only minor differences emerged in overall policy direction for each community, including differing infill targets and hillside development policies.

OCP Review Process Overview



Community Impact & Implementation

The results of this process created two OCPs that offer a tangible vision for community development while still offering all stakeholders the flexibility needed in fast-growth communities in major growth areas in the CRD. A number of innovative and exciting outcomes were achieved. General outcomes include:

Successful implementation of BC 1st joint OCP review - This collaborative OCP review created both a model process and a series of innovative outcomes that can serve as a platform for further inter-municipal planning in BC. It offers a viable template and benchmark for planners to emulate while still allowing room for local adaptation. Given new OCP requirements to formulize GHG emission reduction targets (Bill 27), the plans anticipate the necessity for greater inter-municipal and regional cooperation due to global and local sustainability issues.

Regionally Significant and Comprehensive in Scope - The methodology employed in this process produced, in essence, integrated sustainability community plans (ICSPs) in communities where the near majority of new regional development will occur. These OCPs will ensure that 44% of new development in the region will be more sustainable.

High Consistency with Different Implementation Choices - Colwood has chosen to use a comprehensive OCP which includes development permit guidelines. Langford engaged in more projects simultaneously (e.g. Parks Master Plan review) and has adopted the OCP and will implement new development permit guidelines through the zoning bylaw.

The plans incorporated a long list of innovations that include:

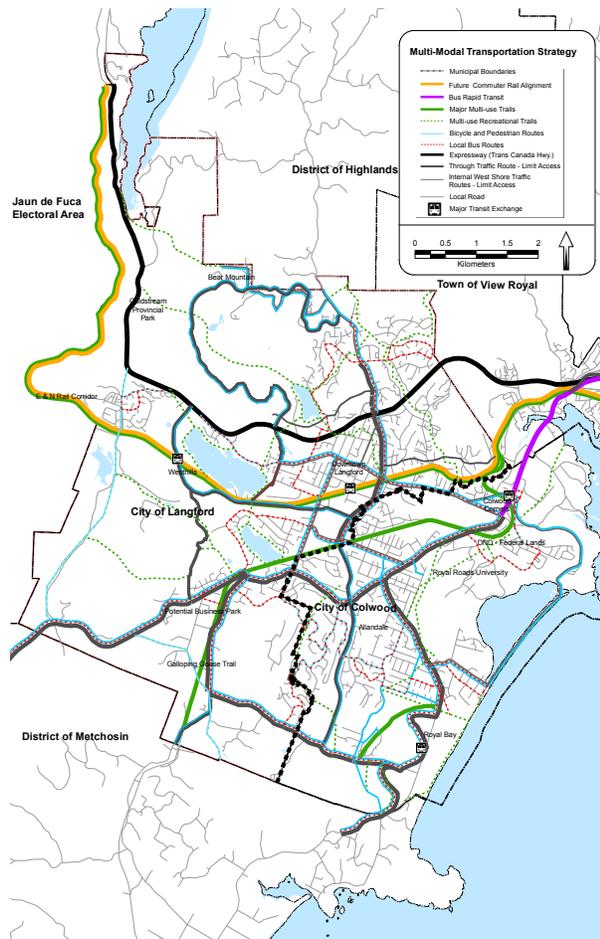
Innovations in Planning for Land Use & Urban Design

- **Centres-Based and Integrated Land Use Plans:** A centres-based approach to planning defines the growth management and land use plans. Consistency in land uses designations and terminology was achieved between the two municipalities. To support this approach, policies and land use designations define and support higher densities in a mixed use City set in open spaces. Centres will be connected by multi-modal connections.
- **Form-Based Planning:** The need to achieve sustainability through liveability, walkability and good urban design were consistently emphasized throughout the OCP review. Form-based planning is a means of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Key elements of the form-based approach adapted to the BC context include:
 - o **Growth Management and Land Use Plans:** The regulated area designated land uses by function, rather than use, to define areas where context appropriate policies and regulations would be applied. Powerful visual depiction of the designations provided clarity on the long term intent.
 - o **Building Form Standards:** Development Permit Areas (DPAs) were defined to direct form and character for all residential, commercial and industrial uses. DPAs were also defined by area to ensure context specific regulation of development. For instance a multi-family project in the city centre will be subject to General Multi-Family, Commercial and Industrial DP guidelines and Centre DP guidelines.
- **Adaptive Reuse & Infill Polices and Guidelines:** Policies, land use designations and DPs to maximize adaptive re-use opportunities in greyfield (big box) and brownfield sites.

- **Sensitive Infill:** Policies to ensure sensitive infill in areas not designated as a Centre (i.e. existing lower density neighbourhoods) with strong direction on density guidelines for development (Langford = 16 upa; Colwood = 12 upa).

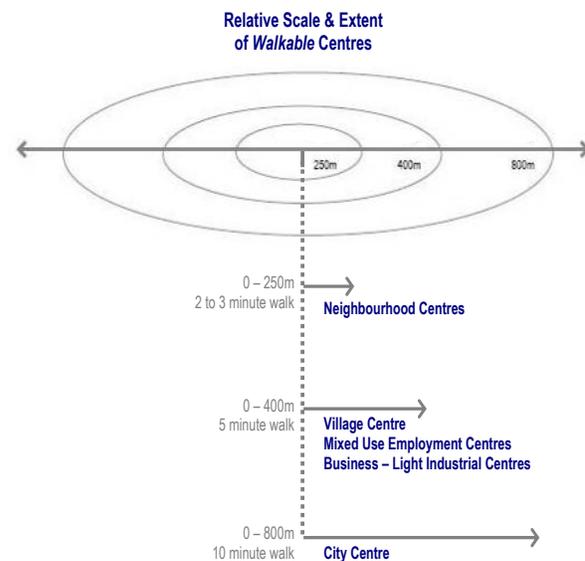
Innovations in Transportation Planning

- **Integrated & Networked Multi-Modal Transportation System:** There was a recognition that it was insufficient to define conventional road typologies (e.g. arterial road) since most roads in the community would actually need to accommodate different modes



along different sections. To address this, a Multi-Modal Transportation Plan was developed to direct road planning.

- **Walkability:** Walking is envisioned to be a primary means for mobility in centres. Land use designations were developed based on walksheds to ensure denser and mixed use development would support highly walkable environments. To further support this direction, a finer grained road network was defined for the City Centres.
- **Planning for Integration of Rapid Transit Infrastructure:** BC Transit is currently investigating rapid bus and commuter rail services for the West Shore. The OCPs included policies and guidelines to direct how and where transit will be integrated.



Innovations in Infrastructure Planning

- **Green & Integrated Infrastructure:** A policy framework to guide decisions about green and integrated infrastructure development replaced policies

for development of conventional systems. Innovative policies were developed to support demand-side management, full cost accounting, integrated resource management and GHG reduction.

Innovations in Protecting of BC's Environment

- **West Shore Greenbelt:** A new West Shore Greenbelt concept and implementation strategy was developed to ensure long term definition of a sub-regional recreational, habitat and open space green network. This feature of the plan was the most exciting for the public.
- **Significant Open Space Retention in Greenfield Areas:** A 40% open space retention policy was implemented in both OCPs to support environmental protection on greenfield sites in Hillside / Shoreline designated areas, especially where there are ecologically sensitive areas.
- **Updated Mapping and Terrestrial Environmental Protection DPAs:** Both OCPs updated their environmental mapping and development permit area guidelines in partnership with the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team (GOERT). Colwood introduced Terrestrial Environmental Protection DPAs in their OCP (Langford already had them in place).

Attention to the Living Document

- **Plain Language:** Steering committee members emphasized the need for Plain English. This proved a challenge in technical discussions, so language was reviewed and a comprehensive glossary was added.
- **Engaging Content:** As many illustrations and diagrams as possible were added to aid understanding. This will be part of ongoing work to make the documents more user friendly and visually attractive.

Implementation

The projects below demonstrate the effectiveness of the OCPs, in terms of development policy implementation, and Council and public support for policy adherence.



In Colwood, the 4.6 ha, 1.0 FSR Essencia project, is located in the “Hillside-Shoreline” OCP designation adjacent university open space Esquimalt Lagoon Migratory Bird Sanctuary, a 1970s neighbourhood and new development. The proposal may proceed to Public Hearing in Spring 2009. The site plan and program includes over 40% retained and restored open space; 150 hotel-resort units, 75 residential units (strata & ‘fractional’ ownership & affordable rental); artist space, a community garden with greenhouse, a restored 1924 Pendray Estate ‘villa’ with other minor commercial and educational uses; a ‘green enterprise node’ as a public access walkable destination for local neighbours which include the 13.5 ha phased 550-unit Aquattro multi-family site, and students and staff of Royal Roads University ; a strong ‘pedestrian only’ orientation; alternative transportation strategies (e.g. electric car share, cycling programs, community shuttle, and public event transportation management protocols); 15

allocated affordable housing units (approximately 10%); and pilot status for the Green Shores rating system for shoreline ecosystems.

In Langford, a proposed 2,800-unit development proposed for south Skirt Mountain is also located in the “Hillside-Shoreline” OCP designation. The rezoning application was supplemented by a comprehensive document that included a detailed description of the consistencies between the development proposal and the OCP (the proposal is not fully completed yet, but has been introduced to the Planning and Zoning Committee). Of particular note in this regard are: dedication of 40% of the subject property as open space; creation of a pedestrian-oriented mixed use neighbourhood centre; incorporation of a wide range of housing types, the large majority of which are proposed to be constructed in high density clusters to minimize the footprint of development; contributions to affordable housing include 450 assisted living apartments and 70 dedicated rental apartments; preservation and restoration of significant environmentally sensitive areas; certification of all buildings pursuant to LEED or Built Green standards; and commitment to sustainable development practices that will promote energy and water conservation, retention and reuse of rainwater and grey water, and waste reduction.

Transferability & Professional Impact

This project not only demonstrated how two neighbouring communities can plan for an integrated and sustainable future, but also put forth a compelling model for inter-jurisdictional long range planning. The focus on sustainability and deep integration of sustainability objectives into all aspects of policy and development guidelines also puts forth an exciting framework for addressing community objectives for a prosperous and green future.

The OCPs show significant compliance with the Climate Action Charter and offer a template for OCPs that implement the commitments for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. More importantly, the joint process and

outcomes will facilitate achieving the Charter’s goals in that future local and sub-regional initiatives will have a greater impact than insular and independent initiatives. Despite the fact the OCPs were developed prior to the passing of Bill 27, the OCPs nonetheless offer innovative enabling policies that will influence building performance (see Section 9.0 - Our Sustainable Buildings) and include the provision of energy efficiency-oriented form and character DP guidelines. The OCP will be easily adapted to be in full compliance with 2008 amendments to the Local Government Act statutory requirements under Bill 27, and regulatory opportunities under Bill 10.

“High environmental standards are what we want to see in Langford,” Lillian Szpak, chair of planning and zoning, said in an interview (about the South Skirt Mountain proposal). “We want to see good use of land and good sustainable development. This will fit in well with the north side of development that is there now.”

**~Goldstream Gazette
(Jan 2009)**