

District of North Vancouver's Community Planning Working Group



Guidance on the Official Community Plan Review Process Discussion Paper

Submitted to District Council, April 20th, 2009

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Executive Summary

The Community Planning Working Group (CPWG) came together in May 2008 to assist planning staff and Council of the District of North Vancouver (DNV) in the early stages of developing a new Official Community Plan (OCP). A reflection of a desire on the part of the District to work more closely in partnership with the community, the Working Group attracted a diverse collection of District citizens from various walks of life and from different parts of North Vancouver, though by no means reflecting the full spectrum of perspectives in the community. Over their 10-months term, members of the Working Group worked together, as a full group and later in three sub-groups, towards fulfilling a challenging mandate of providing advice from diverse interests, expertise and geographic areas of the District on the draft content, framework and public engagement process associated with the OCP. This Discussion Paper is a result of their work.

It is important to note that the content of this discussion paper reflects the opinions of the CPWG members. The Working Group acknowledges that these views may not accurately reflect those of the entire spectrum of the community. For this reason, the Working Groups puts forward its analysis and recommendations simply as a starting point for wider conversations that need to happen throughout the community through the OCP review process. The consultation process on these and other ideas is regarded as the most important part of the OCP review process, as emphasized in the final section of the Discussion Paper.

An identification of current conditions and trends within the District reveals several significant planning challenges that the District faces over the coming years. These issues and challenges form the basis of the recommendations put forward by the CPWG and are described in Section 2. They include:

- Stewardship of the Natural North Shore
- An Aging Population
- Lack of Housing Diversity and Availability
- Health, Equity and Accessibility
- Homelessness
- Transportation and the Relationship to Land Use
- Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Management
- Financial Sustainability

Accordingly, the CPWG proposes eight principles describing the desired future of the District. The principles reflect a general orientation towards sustainability, and are further described in Section 3 along with illustrative examples of strategies for their advancement. They are offered for consideration towards achieving a more sustainable future for the District. The proposed principles are:

1. A healthy and safe District
2. An inclusive District where all people are valued
3. A learning & creative District
4. An economically prosperous District
5. A District that's good to live in
6. A District of nature's custodians
7. A well-managed District
8. A collaborative and sharing District

In Section 4, the CPWG provides a brief description of the typical framework for an OCP as well as an analysis of how well the District's current OCP (adopted in 1991) and its associated plans and policies correspond to such a framework. The Working Group highlights the need for creating an OCP that is guided by a strong vision and principles, out of which flow a number of corresponding objectives, targets, policies and guidelines. Furthermore, the Working Group identifies the need for re-thinking the relationship between sub-area plans and the OCP so that they are consistent with each other and move the community towards a common vision. A potential approach involves concentrating on the development of a limited number of sub-area plans for those areas subject to change and growth, for example, town centres and key transportation corridors.

Finally, the CPWG articulates a strong recommendation for full and inclusive public engagement and consultation as part of the OCP review process. A number of strategies, tactics, tools, and stakeholders are identified for consideration in Section 5. After considering various alternatives, the Working Group recommends an overall approach to the consultation task that carefully balances the exercise of leadership in setting out a bold sustainability vision on the one hand, and ensuring that there is ample opportunities and time for all voices to be heard on the other hand. This approach puts a great deal of emphasis on informed engagement and provides for ownership of the new OCP by the community. The public engagement process is envisioned to adhere to the following proposed seven principles:

1. The process is relevant, authentic, engaging and understandable;
2. The process is transparent and responsive, allowing participants to clearly understand how their input influences decisions;
3. The process is inclusive and reaches out to the public in its full diversity;
4. The process is based on informed engagement, using evidence-based information about current conditions;
5. The process allows for conversation among community members and decision makers;
6. The process allows for balanced participation by all interests, for example those of new Canadians and youth; and
7. The process invites public involvement early on and throughout the process until and after the plan is adopted.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

CPWG – Community Planning Working Group

DNV - District of North Vancouver

GHG - Green House Gases

OCP – Official Community Plan

Charrette - An intensive, time-limited multi-interest design sessions

Food security – A condition when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO)

Social networks – A social structure made of nodes (generally individuals or organizations) that are tied by one or more interdependencies. Social networks include webs of friends, colleagues, acquaintances, neighbours, families, as well as virtual communities such as Facebook and MySpace.

World Café and Dialogic workshops - Methods for informal small group interaction

Section 1 – Introduction

The Community Planning Working Group (CPWG) is made up of a group of District of North Vancouver (DNV) citizens who came together in May of 2008 to assist District Council and staff as they move toward developing a new Official Community Plan (OCP). Our Working Group membership, which was open to applicants from across North Vancouver, includes a wide range of interests, experiences and expertise, and a number of diverse points of view. Over the period of about ten months, our Working Group learned about Official Community Plans and their role and function, about the current District OCP and why it needs to be replaced, about the issues that challenge our community now and in the future, and the opportunity that a new OCP will provide for addressing these challenges. Acting with the support from staff and direction from Council, we were charged with offering advice on the following, as indicated in the Working Group's Terms of Reference (Appendix 1):

- A draft vision and/or principles for a sustainable community reflective of the current planning issues in the District – for further development and consultation with the community.
- A strategic framework for the OCP including the type of plan, scope and issue areas, structure of the plan and relationship to Local Area Plans.
- Principles and a process for effective public engagement for the OCP Review.

As we moved through the process, meeting on a monthly basis through a mix of presentations and discussions, we came to understand the challenges, not only in the development of a new OCP but in defining the role of our own Group. Most if not all of our 25 to 30 members agreed that a new OCP should support the goal of a sustainable community that has already been identified by both DNV Council and the Metro Vancouver Regional District. But some of us found ourselves reluctant to be prescriptive about the goal of sustainability, so early in the OCP review process and without consultation with the wider DNV community.

We worked together, as a full group and later in three sub-groups. In mid January 2009 we met for a daylong workshop, with the goal of building the basis of a White Paper that Council and Staff could use in their next steps of engaging the community to develop the new OCP. There was a strong sense of agreement around the major challenges facing our community and even what a great OCP will look like, but even with our task clearly defined and a great workshop effort, we still stumbled over trying to develop consensus around some differences amongst our members.

We began to think of the contention within our group as a conversation among two “voices”:

The ‘content voice’ expressed the need for the OCP review consultation process to advance a draft sustainability vision, principles and a proposal and/or proposals for change to achieve the vision. The ‘process voice’ expressed concern that such an approach poses the danger of the public perceiving a “decide-announce-defend” bias in the OCP review process, undermining their trust in the process, resulting in disengagement, controversy and counterproductive political upheaval.

The ‘process voice’ expressed the need to build trust in the OCP review consultation process by presenting baseline information that informs the public on the need for

sustainability and invites vision articulation and brainstorming around how to achieve it, using draft sustainability principles as a catalyst for discussion. However the 'content voice' expressed concern that such an approach would not go far enough to advance sustainability and that the status quo perspective would prevail.

We believe that both these voices speak the truth, even when they do not agree. Therefore, we attempted to find middle ground that would satisfy the interests of both of the legitimate voices that emerged in the course of the CPWG's work. So we have decided to offer here a Discussion Paper, with the hope that its contents will spark conversation – at the Council and staff level and also with and between citizens from across the District. By finding such middle ground, we hope to provide suggestions that will help the District continue showing sustainability leadership in ways that also build public understanding and support for the changes that are needed. An updated OCP that advances sustainability and is 'owned' and supported by the public in its full diversity is our ultimate goal.

For the purposes of this paper, we thought of 'sustainability' in its famous Brundtland Commission definition: meeting the needs of the current generation without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, we also thought about sustainability in terms of the Natural Step system conditions, which are already adopted by Council. A discussion about the meaning of sustainability within the context of the District of North Vancouver is likely an essential part of the community-wide conversations, and we leave the task of determining an acceptable definition of the term to that process.

In the spirit of social sustainability, we attempted to consider and understand the diversity of interests within our community, and to carefully consider just exactly who the OCP will affect and be affected by. We use the term 'residents' through the paper, with a broad definition that includes everyone that comes to the District to live, work or play.

We see this product of our work as the door that opens to a great, involved OCP development process in the community, where there is plenty of space for the ideas and input of people beyond the Working Group. We are looking forward to watching and participating in the discussion as it evolves, and to the development of a new Community Plan for the District of North Vancouver that will build on the outstanding natural assets and community spirit that already exists and will guide our livable community into a sustainable future.

Section 2 - Planning Issues Facing the District

This section of the discussion paper provides an overview of community planning issues that emerged during conversations among Community Planning Working Group members. While we do not consider this to be a definitive or exhaustive list of issues, it does touch on a broad range that should be considered during the process of developing the new Official Community Plan.

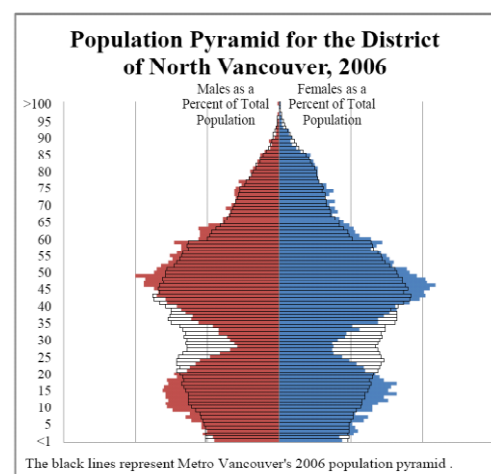
By identifying some of the critical challenges the community faces and the implications of these issues, it is our hope that this summary may serve to help raise awareness and express an urgency regarding the need to develop a forward-thinking, effective community plan with policies and actions towards creating a healthy and sustainable community. We do not wish to suggest that the municipal government has the capacity or even the responsibility for addressing every single one of these issues. But we want to stress that the municipality has a role to play with respect to every one of these issues, directly or indirectly, and should work with other levels of government as appropriate toward meeting the challenges. Identification of current conditions and planning issues should be considered a key element of the public engagement process which helps initiate a dialogue with Council and the community on planning for the future in the District.

Stewardship of the Natural North Shore

When asked about what they value most about living in the District, most residents cite the natural beauty of this area as a key factor. The municipality plays an important role in protecting the unique natural assets of the North Shore. These assets are important to the ecological health of the region, providing environmental functions such as maintaining air and water quality. They are also important to the quality of life of the people of the region, many of whom view it as an aesthetic jewel and a unique recreational opportunity. Furthermore, as custodians of the natural North Shore, we acknowledge the potential for economic activities and job creation (e.g. eco-tourism). It is the role of the municipality to act as a steward for these natural assets

An Aging Population

Growth in the District in the last five years has been minimal (an increase of 250 people) and is among the lowest in the region. The proportion of seniors has increased dramatically in recent decades and is expected to rise steadily in the coming decades as the baby boomers age. The District has a comparatively small number of young adults and the number of children is steadily declining. The implications of these trends towards an aging population include an increased demand for more diverse and appropriate housing types, a greater need for services for seniors, increased pressure on the health care system, closure of schools, young adults leaving the community, and serious labour shortages for local service jobs.



Lack of Housing Diversity and Affordability

The District has one of the highest housing prices in the region with the March 2009 'benchmark price' (typical for that type housing) of a single family home estimated around \$744,500 and benchmark townhouse price at about \$516,500. Approximately 70% of the District's housing units

are within single family neighbourhoods and there is comparatively little rental housing (only about 18% of the housing stock). A recent housing study presented to Council indicated that there are a significant number of households in the District that are “in need” and spending more than 50% of their income on housing (the accepted upper limit is typically 30%). This sector of the population is in an unfortunate circumstance and often one paycheck away from homelessness. The median household income in the District is comparatively high (\$77,032 in 2005), however, it is increasingly challenging for first time homebuyers to afford a home even in dual income families with good jobs. Many adult children who grew up in the District have departed due to the high price of housing and cannot afford to live in the communities they grew up in. Similarly, empty-nesters and seniors are not finding smaller, more affordable units suited to their need. While there are more diverse housing options within the three North Shore municipalities collectively, the housing supply with the District does not appear to sufficiently meet the current demands of residents or those who wish to move to the District. These issues will only be exacerbated as the community continues to age unless greater housing choices become available. A key question during the OCP development process is to determine what kind of housing the District will need over the next 25 years to meet the needs of a healthy, safe and sustainable community.

Health, Equity and Accessibility

While the majority of District residents enjoy greater than average incomes compared to the region, a significant proportion of residents are in poverty (12.8% in the “low income” category according to 2006 Census). Furthermore, approximately 14% of children under the age of 18 live in low-income homes and are essentially in poverty. Specific populations such as single parent females have notably lower incomes than other sectors of the District’s population and many are in need. The implications of these disparities include a need for affordable housing and access to services, jobs and transportation. Ignoring these matters will increase the potential for greater stress, mental illness and civil unrest. The cycle of poverty has many facets that must all be considered to address and effectively eliminate inequities.

Equity and accessibility are also important determinants of health. A community plays a significant role in creating, maintaining and improving the health status of its members. While the formal medical and health care system is necessary when confronted by disease or illness, it is the everyday conditions of life such as education, employment, income, housing, early childhood development opportunities, food security, and social supports that truly create the conditions for good health. A municipal council, through sound public policies, shapes and enhances those health promoting underlying conditions. Municipal policies influence the range and affordability of housing options, the availability of recreational facilities, the public safety and security of the community, child care opportunities and smoke free bylaws to name but a few. Municipal council with an engaged civil society and its organizations and agencies are able to ensure health through programs, policies and bylaws.

Homelessness

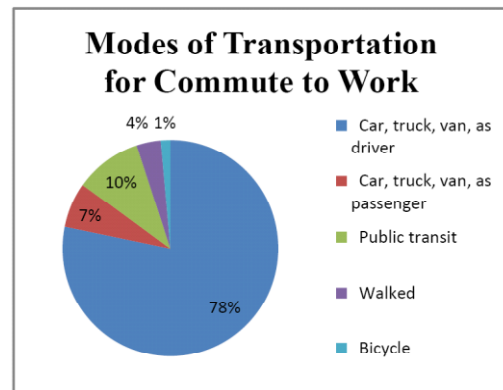
Homelessness is often associated with more densely populated urban areas such as Vancouver’s Downtown East Side, however it exists and is significant in the less populated and affluent North Shore. The 2008 Regional Homelessness count estimated a total of 127 homeless people on the North Shore, an approximate tripling since the first count was undertaken in 2002. The implications of homelessness may include a loss of dignity and hope by homeless individuals, increased costs for shelter, health and social services. Homelessness is a complex issue and requires consideration of many factors such as affordable and appropriate housing, mental health services and social services such as job training. The cost of homelessness on society, both socially

and economically, is immense. Eliminating homelessness is a regional goal and challenge which the North Shore and the District must consider in striving to become a sustainable community and to “meet human needs fairly and equitably” in keeping with Council’s sustainability policies based on The Natural Step system conditions.

Transportation and the Relationship to Land Use

Both personal and work trips are heavily reliant on the car in the District. Of those DNV residents who regularly commuted to work in 2006, about 85% of them used a car, van or truck (either as a driver or a passenger) while only about 10% used public transit, and less than 5% walked or cycled to work. For comparison, in the City of North Vancouver, approximately 68% of residents commute by automobile, 20% take transit and 9% walk or cycle. Information from tip diary surveys suggests that almost 80% of the daily trips in the District take place within the North Shore. However, our public transit system is not really oriented to serve the majority of our

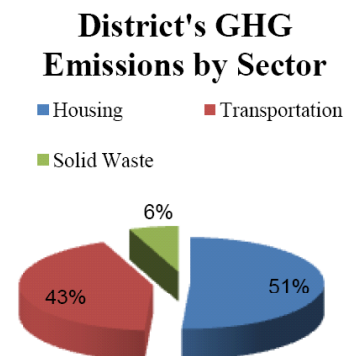
trips happening within the North Shore as most of the buses and sea-buses are aimed at taking passengers across the water and into Vancouver. Land use is a key factor in the provision of transit with areas of greater density providing adequate capacity to support more frequent transit service. The District’s suburban character makes it difficult to serve by efficient transit. The result is a greater reliance on the automobile, increased traffic and greenhouse gas emissions than in pedestrian oriented, mixed-use areas. The need for a change in transportation choices is underlined by the fact that as many seniors age in the community, they will be unable to use their cars and will need more accessible community services.



Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Management

More than 90% of the District’s GHG emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels, either in vehicles or for home heating and cooling. In comparison to more compact cities, there is a very high ‘carbon footprint’ from the land use and transportation pattern in the District. The impacts of climate change are difficult to specify. However, severe weather events have been hitting the North Shore and the Lower Mainland more frequently in recent years and may be associated with climate change. In the District, where 80% of our land is forested, clean-ups after severe storms have been a major cost. Landslides are becoming more of a serious concern and the melting of the snow pack in the mountains can lead to flooding. Snow removal from streets

in the District is another challenge that is growing with additional snow loads. The threats of climate change on the health of human and ecological systems are critical and the challenge of reducing emissions to mitigate climate change has become a moral imperative and a regulatory requirement. The Province now requires that municipalities include targets and measures in OCPs to reduce greenhouse gases with Provincial targets to reduce emissions by 33% (2007 baseline) by 2030 and 80% by 2050.



Financial Sustainability

The District's aging infrastructure such as its recreation centres coupled with a limited tax base due to changing demographics and the current trend of a declining number of jobs in the District is an issue in considering the long-term financial sustainability of the municipalities. The infrastructure system and the fairly extensive system of roads and utilities in the District have been created to serve a largely suburban land use pattern which demands significant resources to build and maintain. Factors such as changing energy and resource prices, carbon taxes, the costs of managing municipal infrastructure and services in an environment of more frequent and severe weather events, changing regional and world economies, will likely affect municipal costs. Means of maximizing efficiencies of existing infrastructure include focusing urban development in areas where transit infrastructure and access to services exist. Partnerships between different jurisdictions and levels of government may also be leveraged to deliver shared services and facilities.

Section 3 - Proposed Sustainable Community Principles for DNV

In light of the issues discussed in Section 2 as well as the District's current commitments and legal obligations, we identified the need for a clear sustainability orientation in the new Official Community Plan. In attempting to draw up this list of proposed sustainable community principles, we have reviewed sustainable community principles from many sources including those from other community plans throughout British Columbia as well as from other parts of Canada and around the world. We were not surprised to find considerable consistency in the documents. Considering the growing understanding of climate change and scarce natural resources and the interest in walkable neighbourhoods, increasing cost of fuels, greater demand for transit alternatives and the general desire for equity within our community, we are recommending the following 8 draft principles be considered as a starting point to catalyze discussion as part of the community engagement and consultation process in developing a revised OCP. A few points illustrating examples of appropriate strategies follow each principle.

1. A healthy and safe District

A place where diverse and renewed communities are actively engaged, enabled and empowered to improve their health and to have confidence in the health system.

- Improving health status and reducing health inequities
- Ensuring efficient police and emergency access
- Creating vibrant, mixed-use neighbourhoods with facilities that help foster a safe environment

2. An inclusive District where all people are valued

A place where all our citizens have the resources and support they need to participate fully in the life of their community and in society generally. Services and opportunities are available and designed to meet the specific needs of all sectors of the population.

- Tackling poverty and social inequities
- Increasing the involvement of local people and communities in shaping the future of the district
- Investing and focusing resources and efforts into services, activities and opportunities for all citizens with special attention to critical issues facing the District (e.g. early childhood development)

3. A learning & creative District

A place that supports and stimulates lifelong learning and cultural activities to enable all citizens, and particularly children and young people, to maximize their potential and pursue personal development and fulfillment.

- Supporting, developing and promoting culture and leisure for example through the museum, recreation centre, art galleries etc.

4. An economically prosperous District

A municipality that is a full partner in the Lower Mainland region by playing its part in the economic future of the region, offering a rich mix of employment, business and investment opportunities, where all people have the chance to participate in and benefit from economic opportunities.

- Enabling local people to fulfill their potential and supporting the local economy by encouraging business development and economic investment in the district
- Supporting knowledge economy, for example through Capilano University

5. A District that's good to live in

A place that provides good quality homes in a clean, safe and well maintained community and maximizes accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking to employment, recreational and community facilities. It promotes and fosters unity and cohesiveness while valuing excellence and diversity.

- Providing access to resilient, affordable homes that meet the needs of local people in all age and income groups
- Strengthening a sense of community

6. A District of nature's custodians

A community that protects and enhances environmentally significant and sensitive areas and natural assets, while providing opportunities for people to live in harmony with nature;

- Identifying and enhancing the ecological health of the District's significant natural features and systems,
- Protecting critical environmental areas such as watercourses
- Requiring environmentally responsible development practices and the integration of development design into the natural features
- Enhancing environmental literacy and awareness

7. A well-managed District

A municipality that provides long term funding sources and development policy for sustainable infrastructure development and maintenance. It develops and implements land use and transportation policies based upon a comprehensive understanding of their impact on each other.

- Providing public infrastructure that is efficient and adequately maintained.
- Promoting innovative strategies to conserve energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide sustainable and renewable energy to the community
- Integrating land use with transportation systems

8. A collaborative and sharing District

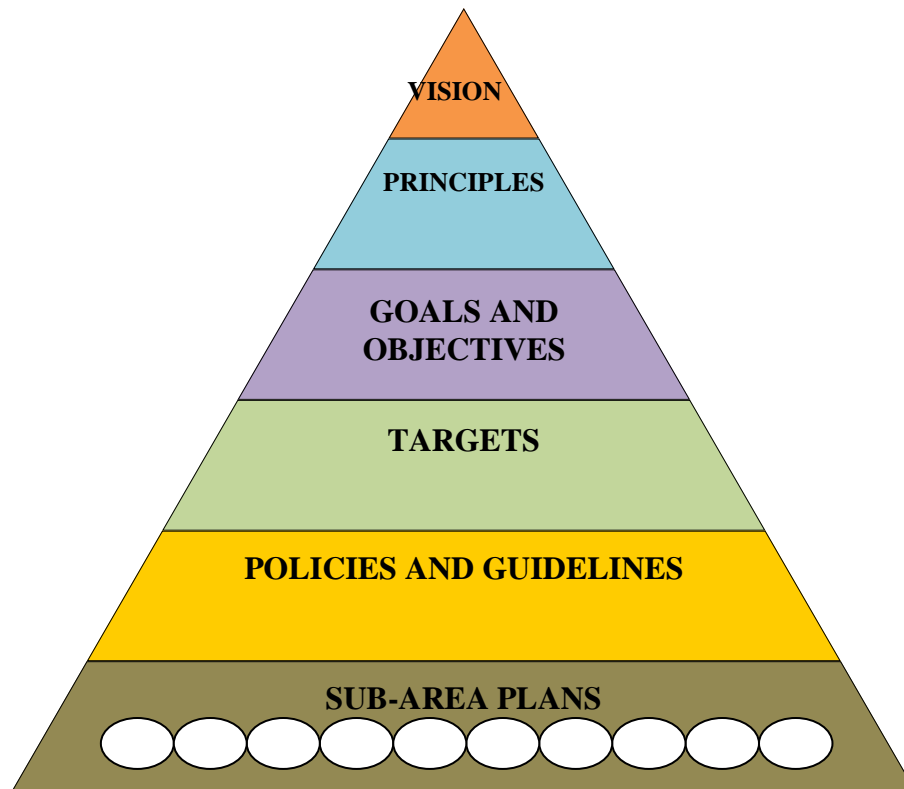
A place for communities that benefit through shared opportunities, projects and programmes and efficient use of resources.

- Providing leadership in the collaboration with our surrounding jurisdictions
- Recognizing the interaction/interdependence between the DNV and the North Shore and Metro Vancouver (while determining its own future)

Section 4 – A Strategic Framework for the OCP

4.1 A typical OCP structure

For the most part, Official Community Plans in BC have very similar structures, represented by the diagram below:



VISION- The Vision is a clear, broad statement of community values and aspirations. It describes how positive change will occur in the future, and how the community will benefit accordingly.

PRINCIPLES - The Principles are an extension of the community Vision, broken out into key elements, such as housing, health and safety, natural environment, economy, transportation and mobility, governance, etc.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - Flowing from the principles, specific goals and objectives are established in order to meet the values and expectations of the Vision. Goals describe specific positive actions and expected outcomes, with measurable results.

TARGETS - Targets are based on the outcomes of the Goals and Objectives, expressed in quantifiable, numerical terms. The effectiveness of the OCP can thus be measured, rates of change can be established, and amendments can be formulated to address shortfalls in meeting desired targets.

POLICIES & GUIDELINES - Policies and Guidelines may apply at various scales: specific areas, District, North-Shore and Metro. Policies and Guidelines are adopted by Council, and are not contained within the OCP proper. Rather they are consistent with the OCP and are intended to assist in the implementation of the OCP.

SUB-AREA PLANS

Sub-area plans are typically identified in the OCP. The plans themselves are adopted by Council independently of the OCP. Sub-area plans are consistent with the OCP, yet ascribe area specific land use designations, density and growth targets, transportation policies, etc. to a geographically-described area. Sub-area plans are sometimes accompanied by specific design and environmental guidelines.

4.2 The current OCP's framework

The current District of North Vancouver OCP was adopted by Council in 1990. The OCP contains the following sections:

- Community goals (environment, social and economic)
- Natural and built environment
- Population and housing
- Community facilities and services
- Parks and recreation centres
- Employment and Port lands
- Transportation and utilities
- Development Permit Areas
- Maps, Schedules,
- Amendments
- Local Area Plans (LAPs)

What works?

While the existing OCP is outdated, it does provide **direction** on certain key issues that are **still valid**. For example, the OCP:

- identifies economic, social, environmental goals;
- delineates and protects urban containment boundaries based on water servicing limits;
- recognizes the importance of housing types and affordability;
- recognizes the importance of community facilities and social services;
- recognizes the need for a strong local economy and employment base;
- provides a population estimate (approx. 93,000 residents by 2011); and
- recognizes need for improved East -West transportation connections, expanded transit service and pedestrian and cycling routes.

What doesn't work?

The existing OCP has provided many years of service to the community; however, it is now faced with a **number of limitations and challenges**. As examples, the OCP:

- does not provide a clear Vision;
- is not responsive to changing demographics, and community needs;
- does not consider current economic conditions and social well-being;
- does not consider climate change impacts and greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- does not encourage diversity of housing types;
- limits the definition of “mixed use”;
- does not provide more up-to-date information on natural hazards and streamside protection;
- contains 68 amendments, and it is not an accessible, online document;
- includes nine Local Area Plans (LAPs) that are not consistent with each other or with the OCP itself.

As a result, the OCP tends to be underutilized, and the LAPs are used more frequently where direction is lacking in the OCP.

4.3 Recommendations for an effective OCP framework

We believe that that an effective OCP:

- is **vertically consistent**, so that the Vision is reflected in all the elements of the framework;
- is **founded on objective and factual data**;
- provides **direction** on the form, extent, nature and rate of **growth and change** in the District;
- explores the **relationships between different local neighbourhoods/centres** within the context of the realities of the North Shore, including all three municipalities, First Nations, and the Port Authority;
- relates to the **Metro Region**, other **DNV plans and initiatives**; and **identify and address key issues**;
- integrally involves the **community** in developing a Vision;
- contains a **Vision** which is **strategic and flexible**, providing guidance without being too prescriptive;
- is based on **up-to-date research**;
- contains **up-to-date land use, transportation, greenspace and other network diagrams/maps**;
- relates to and **support regional objectives**;
- is **holistic** – recognize and understand the relationship between various components of the community;
- is **principle-based** to guide effective decision-making;
- has a **balance** between flexibility and certainty;

- evolves from **thorough community engagement and public consultation**;
- is **short, simple and easy to understand**;
- contains **measurable targets** based on goals and objectives, and that are monitored for achievement annually;
- informs how the **OCP relates to sub-area plans**;
- contains **criteria for developing sub-area plans**. For example, areas subject to change and redevelopment may need a sub-area plan, whereas other areas may not;
- includes a **consistent level of detail and process for establishing Sub-Area Plans (SAPs)**, and clearly **articulates the relationship between SAPs and the OCP**;
- is supported and reinforced by **policies programs and bylaws that are consistent with the OCP**;
- is **realistic and implementable**. Detailed implementation policies can reside in other strategic plans (Housing Action Plan, Transportation Plan, Social Strategy etc.);
- features a **user-friendly and accessible** format; and
- includes criteria for **review, adjustment and amendment of the OCP**.

4.4 The relationship between the OCP and sub-area plans

The District currently has nine sub-area plans in place, commonly known as LAPs. The LAPs provide detailed information regarding land use and density, requirements for servicing, and amenities pertaining to geographic sub-areas. In the absence of a strong and up-to-date OCP, the LAPs have played an important role in setting the direction of various neighbourhoods, and their development has been accompanied with a great amount of public discourse and community capacity building. The LAP areas are: Alpine Area OCP (1990); Upper Capilano (1996); Maplewood Local Plan (2002); Lower Lynn OCP (1993); Lower Capilano (1999); Seymour Local Plan (2003); North Lonsdale Delbrook OCP (1995); Lynn Valley Plan (1998); and Lynnmour/Interriver Local Plan (2006).

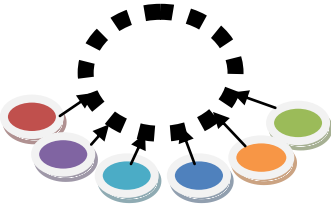
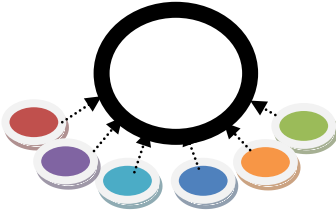

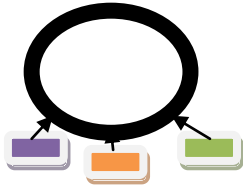
We acknowledge and applaud the passionate effort that has gone into the development of the LAPs by members of our communities. However, we have also identified some major challenges with the current LAPs structure in relation with the OCP. Given that there are no established and consistent guidelines for the development of these LAPs, the nine plans exhibit different values, levels of detail and community involvement leading to inconsistencies in policy and programming across the District. More importantly, the LAPs are not all consistent with an overall vision for the District as a whole. An important part of the OCP review process is to address the relationship between the sub-area plans and the OCP to ensure that overall District issues are addressed and District-wide goals are reached, while respecting the different conditions and needs of various sub-areas. We offer our thinking on a way to position sub-area plans with the new OCP for consideration and as a starting point for discussion during the public consultation phase of the OCP review.

Sub-area plans are where the OCP's Vision, Principles, Goals and Objectives, Targets, and Policies and Guidelines are put into practice. They can take many forms. As an example, such plans can be Local Area Plans, Town Centre Plans, Corridor Plans, or Neighbourhood Plans, etc. The locations, nature and extent of each plan should logically evolve through the development of the OCP.

For sub-area plans to be effective and positive, there must be vertical consistent within the pyramid described in Section 5.1, which is to say that they must reflect an the overarching vision and direction, as well as the principles, goals, objectives, policies and action that logically follow from that vision and provide for its implementation. Since the broad community vision will be articulated in the new OCP, the sub-area plans must be consistent with the OCP. Otherwise, the long-term aspirations and goals of the community may not be achieved. Sub-area plans that are inconsistent or ambiguous may also create conflicts in the community.

Where an area has been identified, but its planning and growth criteria remain less clear or resolved, such areas may be designated in the OCP as *Areas for Special Study*. Dedicated sub-area plan processes may then follow, subsequent to the adoption of the OCP.

The following table illustrates a variety of approaches to sub-area plans:

OPTION 1: EXISTING CONDITION	OPTION 2: LOCAL PLANS AS STRATEGIES	OPTION 3: SUB-AREA POLICIES WITHIN THE OCP	OPTION 4: OCP WITH SUB-AREA PLANS
			
<p>OPTION 1: EXISTING CONDITION</p>	<p>OPTION 2: LOCAL PLANS AS STRATEGIES</p>	<p>OPTION 3: SUB-AREA POLICIES WITHIN THE OCP</p>	<p>OPTION 4: OCP WITH SUB-AREA PLANS</p>
<p>The OCP is the overarching document that provides broad policies for the entire community. LAPs provide more detailed policies for smaller geographic areas. The LAPs are attached as schedules to the OCP and are part of the OCP.</p>	<p>The OCP is the overarching document that provides broad policies for the entire community. Under this option the LAPs continue to exist, but as “Strategies,” (which may or may not be adopted by bylaw) that are not legally binding under the OCP.</p>	<p>The OCP is the overarching document that provides broad policies for the entire community. Under this option the LAPs are replaced by policies for specific geographic areas that now reside in the OCP itself.</p>	<p>The OCP is the overarching document that provides broad policies for the entire community. A limited number of Sub-Area plans are developed for those areas subject to change/ growth. These may include Town Centre Area Plans or Corridor Plans. These Sub-Plans are adopted by bylaw and form part of the OCP.</p>

OPTION 1:	OPTION 2:	OPTION 3:	OPTION 4:
Issues and Challenges	Issues and Challenges	Issues and Challenges	Issues and Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAPs are required to be consistent with OCP policies, but over time as either the OCP or the LAPs become outdated inconsistencies may become apparent. • OCPs and LAPs are required to be updated however this cycle of updates takes many years to complete. • Land use and transportation etc. policies in the OCP are very broad-based and do not provide the level of direction as in the LAPs. LAPs are used as the primary plans and the OCP is secondary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option is problematic in that the “Strategies,” if they are not part of the OCP, will have no formal legal status. • If Strategies have no legal status there is limited value in their providing detailed directions for land use etc. within specific geographic areas. • There are no requirements to update Strategies so the LAP Strategies could become inconsistent with the OCP or perhaps even obsolete over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OCP becomes the primary tool for guiding the future of the community. • Any potential inconsistencies between LAPs and the OCP are eliminated. • The OCP would need to be more detailed and prescriptive than that in options 1 and 2. • Amendments to the OCP may need to occur more frequently particularly for specific geographic areas that may be subject to growth and change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OCP becomes the primary tool for guiding the future of the community. • Any potential inconsistencies between LAPs and the OCP are eliminated. • Fewer Sub-Area plans would be needed as compared to LAPs and would therefore take less time to cycle through updates. • Sub-Area Plans or Town Centre Area Plans can include greater detail re land use, implementation, design guidelines etc. and can be more readily updated and amended than the OCP.
Public Process	Public Process	Public Process	Public Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any amendments to the OCP or LAPs would require full consultation and public hearing processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any amendments to the OCP would require full consultation and public hearing processes. • Amendments to Strategies do not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any amendments to the OCP would require full consultation and public hearing processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any amendments to the OCP would require full consultation and public hearing processes.

Section 5 – Public Engagement and the OCP Review

Informed and inclusive public engagement in the Official Community Plan review is critical as it will help to ensure that the resulting OCP reflects the aspirations and ideas of a full spectrum of community interests, increasing the probability that the decisions guided by the OCP that follow will receive a broad base of support. As such, the Community Planning Working Group recommends that effective engagement be considered as a key priority for this OCP review.

Recognizing the effort of those who have participated passionately in previous consultation processes in the District, there remains a challenge in achieving widespread public engagement in community planning. Failing to address this challenge will result in incomplete input and potentially skewed outcomes. It is clear that planning for public consultation for the OCP review requires thoughtful consideration of a number of issues, including:

- The ineffectiveness of traditional methods of engagement to successfully reach the full spectrum of the community;
- The busy lives that many District residents lead, and the limited time they have available to engage in community planning processes;
- The lack of public awareness and understanding of planning related issues in the District, and the way in which consultation outcomes will impact their future;
- The mistrust among members of the public in government in general and public engagement processes in particular, coupled with a widespread belief that their participation will not have any impact on outcomes;
- The peril of rushing the public consultation process, resulting in a less effective OCP and limited support for implementation;
- The danger of exhausting the participants through an inefficient process
- Given the interest on the part of Council and staff in advancing a sustainability-supporting OCP, a lack of understanding on the part of the public of what ‘sustainability’ means and the implications of such an OCP with respect to their daily lives.

Consultation efforts should target the following group (not an exhaustive list):

- Families and children
- Youth (high school and early college)
- Young adults (20-35)
- Community Associations
- Business community
- Social agencies
- Recreation-based organization
- Faith groups
- The arts and culture community
- New-comers
- Seniors
- Leaders in social networks
- Those who don’t live here but might live here someday
- Those who work in the District
- First Nations
- North Vancouver School Boards
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Metro Vancouver
- Regional Not-for-profits
- City of North Van and District of West Vancouver
- Ministry of Highways and other relevant senior government agencies
- Port Metro Vancouver
- TransLink

5.1 Proposed Public Engagement Principles

We felt that it would be useful to put forward a set of principles to guide the public consultation process for the OCP review. An overarching guiding idea we identified is that the consultation process must *show integrity, commitment, fairness, objectivity and impartiality*.

The seven proposed public engagement principles are as follows:

1. The process is relevant, authentic, engaging and understandable;
2. The process is transparent and responsive, allowing participants to clearly understand how their input influences decisions;
3. The process is inclusive and reaches out to the public in its full diversity;
4. The process is based on informed engagement, using evidence-based information about current conditions;
5. The process allows for conversation among community members and decision makers;
6. The process allows for balanced participation by all interests, for example those of new Canadians and youth; and
7. The process invites public involvement early on and throughout the process until and after the plan is adopted.

5.2 Proposed Public Engagement Strategies and Tactics

To put the above-mentioned principles into practice, we identified various strategies and tactics to ensure public trust and broad engagement in the consultation process. Our recommended strategies include:

1. Identifying and tapping into all forms of social networks;
2. Posing inviting and appreciative questions;
3. Using creative ways to educate the public about what is going on and the need for change;
4. Considering a variety of innovative planning tools and approaches that invite discussion on community directions in a non-threatening way that builds ownership and captures the creative energy of participants. (e.g. scenario planning);
5. Presenting community issues and opportunities in ways that inspire people to engage, using a

Potential public engagement tools include (not an exhaustive list):

- Web surveys
- Lunch time surveys in schools
- High profile keynote speakers
- Community values survey
- Community profiles publications on existing facts and trends
- Public Ideas Forum (mapping, sketch design, hot dot exercises, word pairing)
- Charrettes
- World Café and Dialogic workshops
- Community Mapping / Futures Mapping
- “Person on the Street” Random Surveys
- Stories to bring the future alive
- District Dialogue in the North Shore News
- Ongoing column in the local news papers
- Workshops with Council and stakeholder groups including multi-stakeholder meetings
- District website
- Weekly community television
- Visualizations (3D drawings, sketches, concept plans)
- Mailing list and regular newsletters

- balance of narrative and analytic approaches;
6. Ensuring that outreach efforts attract the traditionally engaged and those not usually engaged;
 7. Being clear about the ‘givens’ (e.g. requirements of the Local Government Act with respect to OCPs);
 8. Ensuring that the content provided through the OCP consultation process does not create the perception that decisions on specific solutions have already been made; and
 9. Designing in opportunities to keep the dialogue going beyond the OCP process timeframe.

5.3 Potential Approaches and Implications

The question of how to ensure an open, inclusive and meaningful OCP Review public process that also advances public ownership of the changes that are needed to manifest a healthy community is a difficult one. In designing and implementing a public consultation process for the OCP Review, it will be important for District Council and staff to ensure that the public have ample opportunities to understand the issues facing the community and, in some cases, the need for bold action to address them. A delicate balance will need to be struck between the exercising of leadership in setting out a bold sustainability vision on the one hand, and ensuring that there is ample opportunities and time for all voices to be heard on the other hand.

We identified three general approaches that can be taken to the public engagement process for the OCP Review. In reality, these represent illustrative points along a spectrum, rather than three distinct possibilities to choose between.

- The Blank Slate Approach - Inviting the public to craft its own vision for the future and how to get there, providing only limited information on current issues, being silent on the need for sustainability ‘thinking and doing’, and allowing whatever results from this effort to determine the nature and scope of the OCP, regardless of whether the OCP addresses current issues;
- The Middle Ground Approach - Raising public awareness of current issues facing the District, the need for sustainability ‘thinking and doing’, and the implications of different intensities of change (e.g. no change, moderate change, high change), ensuring that the public is given ample opportunity to contribute to and own a shared vision for the future and solutions to get there; and
- The Strong Advocacy Approach - Raising public awareness of current issues facing the District, the need for sustainability ‘thinking and doing’, the implications of different intensities of change (e.g. no change, moderate change, high change), and the putting forward of specific givens (eg. Vision, principles, goals) as well as very specific proposals for change, with the public providing its input to and critique of what is being proposed.

We recommend the ‘middle ground’ approach to public engagement, as it likely affords the best opportunity to ensure public trust and engagement in the process while advancing the sustainability direction of the District.

The detailed design of the “middle ground” approach would best be determined through District staff consulting with qualified expertise with experience in undertaking public consultation processes that support advancement of sustainability goals and objectives.

The question of leadership within the context of good process is an important consideration. An otherwise well-designed process that does not allow for clear demonstration of leadership at the political level will not necessarily lead to a good outcome. There is a place for leadership on the part of District Council and staff to help steer the process so that it delivers on a number of needs, particularly the need for the new OCP to actually address the issues facing the community while also seizing its most promising opportunities. Sound public engagement does not need to imply a purely publicly-driven result, but can deliver on a publicly supported OCP if it makes space for building a shared understanding and acceptance of a well articulated vision. A properly designed OCP Review process can also help ensure that there are opportunities for leadership to come from citizens and community groups historically not engaged in matters within the District.

It is also worth noting the tremendous grass-roots success of the Obama campaign. It is recommended that District Council and staff consider – although on a much smaller scale – that there may be an appetite for positive change within the District if it can be harnessed through innovative approaches.

5.4 A Potential Public Engagement Process

Following from the principles of engagement and strategies being recommended above, we have also developed a draft outline of what a public engagement process could look like, with the understanding that this is one of many possible approaches that the District could use, informed by the public consultation expertise that it retains in due course.

a) Identification of Interests

It is particularly important that sufficient up-front work be done to identify key interests and ways and steps to engage them. A general communication strategy to raise the public’s awareness of the upcoming OCP review process, as well as strategies to target specific audiences are needed.

b) OCP Review Launch

A formal and highly visible launch of the OCP Review is recommended to ensure that a broad cross-section of the public understands the what/ why/ how/ when/who and where of the OCP review process. Multiple communication methods need to be used to maximize profile and generate interest. A public gathering with media presence may be convened as an official ‘launch’ event. Information provided through the announcement and other forms of outreach would include:

- What is an OCP
- What is an OCP review process
- Timelines/ milestones/ avenues for engagement
- The current profile of the community and why the OCP review – and the public’s voice – is needed

Invitations to participate in the process would be extended in ways that reach all audiences, including those who historically have not engaged in public consultation processes. The OCP Review process needs to be positioned in a manner that attracts participation (eg., interesting, fun, inclusive and “a great way to meet people in your community”).

c) Visioning Exercise

To build trust in the OCP review process and capture the aspirations of the community in an inclusive, non-prescriptive manner, a visioning event or events could be a first post-announcement step in the OCP Review consultation process (possibly including other activities such as the Educate and Inform step below). This visioning opportunity will allow the public the ‘free-form’ opportunity to articulate their ideas for an ideal future for the community and discover areas of shared interest.

d) Educate and Inform About Current Reality

We believe that it is essential that the public, through its participation in the OCP review consultation process, be well-informed about the current reality in the District and beyond through the sharing of credible information about issues and opportunities at different scales (e.g. global, regional, local). A key issue that needs to be resolved is how to convey information about current reality to different audiences in an understandable form, in ways that actually reaches them, and in a manner that supports engagement (e.g. not being overly negative).

e) Building Ownership of Solutions

A critical step in the OCP Review process is to engage the public in a dialogue around ways to bridge the current reality with a desired future or futures. This is where the public develops its ideas around the changes that are required, informed by content provided via the process, including information about the future implications of current issues and trends under different change conditions.

Conversations around change might be structured in the following step-wise manner:

- Start with a shared understanding of a desired future or futures (vision),
- Identify the general strategies, goals and objectives that will help achieve the desired future;
- Confirm the principles that should guide the pursuit of these strategies, goals and objectives; and
- Establish indicators of success, targets and specific action plans to achieve targets

At every step of the way, it will be important for records of discussion to reflect where there is agreement, but also where there are alternative perspectives that represent, in essence, opportunities for further collaboration and refinement.

f) Facilitating the Ongoing Conversation

An updated OCP is not a finite static thing – it is a work in progress. It will be important to ensure that public engagement – although intensified during the review process – does not terminate with completion of the OCP. It is important to provide opportunities for the public to continue to be engaged as the OCP is implemented, perhaps playing a monitoring role. Various outreach and engagement measures could be put in place in this regard, for example, the formation of advisory committees and the posting of regular website updates.

The concept of the OCP being an on-going, evolving process responding to changing circumstances is a very engaging and responsive quality which promises to be very 'powerful' in being creative and meeting changing needs over time.

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference - Community Planning Working Group

(Revised, May 14, 2008)

Purpose

To provide advice to staff on a range of community planning processes and issues leading to the review of the Official Community Plan (OCP).

Duties and Responsibilities

- Share expert opinions related to key areas of interest with other participants on the Working Group and offer advice and recommendations to the Steering Committee and Council.
- Provide advice on the development of a draft community vision and principles for a sustainable community for further development and consultation through community engagement processes for the OCP Review.
- Provide advice and recommendations on the strategic framework for the OCP Review process.
- Offer advice on the possible design of and participate in community engagement activities and dialogues to gather broad input on key OCP related planning issues.
- Provide recommendations on issues identified by the Steering Committee.

Establishment

The Community Planning Working Group is to be established by a Steering Committee that will direct the work program and overall functioning of the Working Group.

Membership Composition and Selection

The Community Planning Working Group (CPWG) will consist of a Steering Committee and citizen Working Group. The Steering Committee will include the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Director of Sustainability, Planning and Development and the Chair of the Working Group. Two council members will be appointed as liaisons to the Steering Committee and the Working Group (described below).

The Working Group will include approximately 25-30 citizens who bring professional expertise as well as represent a broad range of community interests (listed below). Geographic representation from the Seymour, Lynn Valley and Capilano areas of the District will also be considered through the Working Group membership within the specific areas of community interest. Sub-groups may be formed to work on specific issue areas and tasks.

Community Planning Working Group members will be selected by the Steering Committee through an advertised application process and in a manner that ensures a broad range of community interests are reflected on the Working Group.

Steering Committee

- CAO
- Director, Sustainability, Planning and Development
- Chair, Working Group
- 2 Council liaisons

Working Group

Citizen members representing the following interest areas:

- Housing
- Youth & Children
- Arts and Culture
- Planning
- Community Engagement
- Transportation
- Seniors
- Environment
- Development
- Business
- Community Health
- Social Well-Being and Recreation
- Education and Academia

Authority

- The Community Planning Working Group will be asked to make recommendations on strategic planning initiatives as identified by the Steering Committee.
- The Working Group role will not include advice on day-to-day, operational planning issues and decisions.
- Updates on progress of the Working Group will be provided to Council at key milestones.

Organization

1. A professional facilitator will facilitate the meetings.
2. A simple majority of the existing sitting members shall constitute a quorum.
3. If any member misses three regularly called consecutive monthly meetings without giving a reasonable cause to the Chair in advance, she or he will be deemed to have resigned.
4. Any unexpired, vacant memberships will be filled by the Steering Committee.
5. All points of procedure not specifically provided for in these Terms of Reference shall be decided and determined in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
6. Municipal staff shall provide professional advice, as needed.
7. The Working Group may establish sub-groups to work on specific tasks as needed.

Meeting Procedures

1. Community Planning Work Group meetings are anticipated to occur monthly. More frequent Working Group meetings may be needed, as required.
2. Specific meeting dates and the length of each meeting may vary to accommodate the agenda topics and the needs of committee members. Meetings will be held at the District of North Vancouver (DNV) Hall.
3. The Steering Committee will be responsible for preparing agendas for upcoming Community Planning Working Group sessions.
4. Community Planning Working Group meetings will be facilitated by an independent facilitator. The facilitator will be responsible for distributing agendas, focusing discussions and producing Working Group meeting notes.
5. Agendas and information pertinent to meeting discussions will be made available to Working Group members one week prior to the meeting so as to allow members an opportunity to review the information in advance of the meeting and to enable meaningful discussions at the meeting.

Committee Term

The initial term of the Community Planning Working Group will expire on March 31, 2009.

Remuneration

Members will not receive remuneration.