



OCP Engagement & Consultation Plan

Updated April 2022

This plan proposes an engagement and consultation strategy for Bylaw No. 4373 – Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas.

Goals

1. Build strong inclusive relationships.
2. Build community understanding of land use planning.
3. Partner with First Nations in the pursuit of shared objectives and joint ventures.
4. Create a regional vision.

Principles

Open | Be willing to listen and explore new ideas.

Inclusive | Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas and information.

Prepared | Ensure the design, organization and process serve a clearly defined purpose.

Transparent | Be clear and honest about the process.

Collaborative | Encourage participants to work together to advance the common good.

Background

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is developing a modernized Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas (OCP/Bylaw No. 4373). This work involves creating one official community plan (including complementary area plans) for the following nine electoral areas:

- Area A – Mill Bay / Malahat
- Area B – Shawnigan Lake
- Area C – Cobble Hill
- Area D – Cowichan Bay
- Area E – Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora
- Area F – Cowichan Lake South / Skutz Falls
- Area G – Saltair
- Area H – North Oyster / Diamond
- Area I – Youbou / Meade Creek

Bylaw No. 4373 Development

Bylaw No. 4373 Schedule A includes eight policy areas:

1. Mitigate & Adapt to the Climate Crisis
2. Manage Infrastructure Responsibly
3. Make Distinct, Complete Communities
4. Expand Mobility Options
5. Protect & Enhance Natural Assets
6. Strengthen Local Food & Agricultural Systems
7. Enhance Regional Prosperity
8. Improve Governance & Implementation

Bylaw No. 4373 includes the following map schedules:

- Schedule D – Agricultural Lands
- Schedule G – Growth Containment Boundaries
- Schedule L – Land Use Designations
- Schedule N – First Nations Reserve Lands
- Schedule T – Transportation and Major Roads

Further schedules will be added over the next six months.

Legal Requirements

Local governments are required under section 475 of the *Local Government Act* to follow a consultation plan when developing or amending an official community plan, and to hold a public hearing, as well.

Consultation during development of official community plan

- 475 (1) During the development of an official community plan or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, the proposing local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the local government must
- (a) consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing, and
 - (b) specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:
 - (i) the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;
 - (ii) the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - (iii) the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - (iv) First Nations;
 - (v) boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards; and
 - (vi) the provincial and federal governments and their agencies.
- (3) Consultation under this section is in addition to the public hearing required under section 477 (3) (c).
- (4) If the development of an official community plan or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan might affect agricultural land, the proposing local government must consult with the Agricultural Land Commission.

First Nations Engagement

Requirement to Consult

As noted above, the *Local Government Act* (s. 475) requires that local governments consult with First Nations on the development of an official community plan. There is also a duty to consult and meaningfully engage with First Nations based in the spirit of reconciliation, and in acknowledgement of Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act* in BC (DRIPA).

Consultation

The CVRD is located on the unceded territory of distinct First Nations that have occupied the lands and waters since prior to the arrival of settlers. Reaching out to First Nations communities requires an understanding of and sensitivity toward our colonial history.

While the CVRD's public engagement activities welcome participation from all community members, focused consultation will occur with the ten First Nations communities with reserve land that are within the CVRD's electoral areas.

- Cowichan Tribes
- Ditidaht First Nation
- Halalt First Nation
- Lyackson First Nation
- Malahat Nation
- Penelakut Tribe
- Stz'uminus First Nation
- Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nation
- Pauquachin First Nation
- Pacheedaht First Nation

We acknowledge that there are Nations beyond those identified above who have territorial interest in the CVRD. First Nations entering treaty negotiations with the BC Treaty Commission submit a Statement of Intent (SOI) map indicating their traditional territory which extends beyond the limits of reserve land established by the *Indian Act*. The Nations listed below have registered SOI maps that extend into the CVRD. For these Nations, we will formally communicate the intention to adopt an official community plan for the CVRD's electoral areas.

- Hupacasath First Nation
- K'omoks First Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Te'mexw Treaty Association (which includes Malahat Nation)

Objectives

The objectives of consultation with First Nations governments with reserve land in the CVRD include:

- Review the draft OCP content
- Invite input
- Learn about respective First Nations land use planning initiatives
- Explore potential alignment of planning initiatives.

First Nations Consultation Phases for the OCP

Consultation with the ten First Nations with reserve land in the CVRD will occur concurrently with the OCP community circles events. CVRD staff will adjust to meet the needs, interests and capacity of individual First Nations.



Phase	Communication & Engagement Activities
Informal Referral March 2022 to June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual meetings with ten First Nations. • Extend subsequent invitations to meet. • Maintain written record of consultation.
Formal Referral (TBD)	Formal referral of Bylaw No. 4373 to all First Nations with reserve land and territorial interests.
Reporting (TBD)	A summary of First Nations consultation will be presented to the Board along with the results of Bylaw No. 4373 communications and engagement.

Public Engagement Activities

Public engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. The CVRD welcomes and encourages participation from all residents. This plan was created to include best practices and models from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and is consistent with the CVRD Public Engagement Strategy and Toolkit. Based on the IAP2 spectrum, the level of stakeholder and public engagement throughout this engagement is *inform*, *consult* and *involve*. The following table summarizes engagement activities by project phase.

Phase	Communication & Engagement Activities
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD led community circles – policy goals – two rounds • Community led community circles – policy goals/area plans – ongoing • Social media campaign and print ads continue
May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual meeting of APCs to present the Bylaw • CVRD led community circles – area plans – one round • Community led community circles – policy goals/area plans – ongoing • Social media campaign and print ads continue
June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual meetings with each APC
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish new APCs post-election
November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Ideas Book (summary of workbook submissions). • Celebrate community at Ideas Fair (presenting Ideas Book and amended Bylaw No. 4373/OCP)

Engagement Considerations

The following table summarizes risks and opportunities associated with this engagement plan.

Risks	Opportunities
Limited participation due to lack of interest on the topic	Fun and engaging videos to spread awareness on a variety of planning concepts.

Limited participation due to engagement fatigue and competing priorities	Easy access to virtual options to get involved
Digital divide	In-person sessions within existing family/social groups in addition to virtual participation.
Unequal representation across different demographics	Understand and acknowledge where unequal representation exists and refine future opportunities.

Public Engagement Tools

Community Circles

Key Dates | April & May 2022

Community circles are small group discussions guided by a toolkit. CVRD led circles are held virtually. An explanatory [video](#) has been developed to aid community groups and provide consistent information.

There are CVRD led community circles and community led community circles, explained below.

CVRD led Community Circles

The CVRD will continue to lead community circles throughout April and May.

In **April**, the CVRD led community circles will focus on the OCP policy goals. There will be two opportunities to participate in the discussion on each policy goal.

In **May**, the CVRD will lead community circles based on area plans. There will be one opportunity to participate for each electoral area in May, and additional opportunities in November 2022.

Register to participate at planyourcowichan.ca at least one day prior to the event. Contact us at communitycircles@cvr.ca.

Community led Community Circles

Community led community circles can be hosted by volunteers in the community. Gather with an existing group or bring together a group based on shared geography or interest in a common topic. Four Community Circles Facilitation training sessions have been held. Please contact us at communitycircles@cvr.ca for more training opportunities.

Toolkit

The community circles are supported with the following:

- Q&A Info Sheet – A question and answer sheet to provide important background information about each policy goal and support informed discussion.
- Draft Bylaw No. 4373 Schedule A and maps.
- Workbook – The place to record thoughts and ideas alongside participation in a community circle, whether CVRD led or community led. We encourage participants to complete and submit workbooks online, but the workbooks may also be emailed or delivered to the CVRD office.



- Facilitator Guide – A guidebook to support volunteer community circle facilitators. We encourage facilitators to register their community circle with the CVRD at communitycircles@cvrd.ca. After hosting a session, facilitators should ensure completed workbooks are submitted (online, by email or delivered) to the CVRD.

PlanYourCowichan.ca

PlanYourCowichan.ca is the new online engagement platform used to share information and enable community circle event registration. The platform generates analytics to see how well we are engaging with our communities, so we are better able to make changes where necessary. To date as of writing, there have been 787 visits. Learn more at planyourcowichan.ca.

Ideas Book & Ideas Fair

Ideas Book | A document devoted entirely to the community's feedback through community circles will be published. This book will help shape the OCP.

Ideas Fair | A celebration for the community and opportunity to share the Ideas Book will take place in November 2022.

Participation in CVRD led Community Circles to Date

- Total registrations for CVRD led community circles to date are 450 people over 21 events = approximately 20 people per event.
- Facilitator training sessions were well attended – 27 people, with attendance rate of 84% of people who registered.

Projections

- It is estimated that 130 - 160 people will participate in CVRD led community circles.
- In addition, if each volunteer community circle facilitator (27 have participated in training) organize one circle with at least ten people, that will result in 270 - 300 participants. This number is likely conservative, as most volunteer facilitators indicated their intention to facilitate more than one circle.
- Total number of participants (CVRD led and community led) is anticipated to be 460+ conservatively for the initial community circles. This compares reasonably to the open houses conducted for the harmonized OCP Bylaw No. 4270 in fall 2020, where total participation rate was 500 people over four in-person events and does not include additional community circles in the fall, 2022
- Additional community circles in-person for Fall, 2022 will increase the overall consultation with an additional 200-300 increasing the total to exceed 700-800.

Print & Social Media Update for Community Circles

Print Media

The community circles project team has been inserting weekly informative advertisements in the *Chemainus Courier*, *Cowichan Valley Citizen*, *Ladysmith Chronicle* and *Lake Cowichan Gazette*



newspapers since March 3, 2022. These advertisements have included an overview of the community circles initiative, important dates and registration information. Similar advertisements were published in March and April in the *South Cowichan Life Magazine*, *Cowichan Valley Voice* and *Take Five* magazines.

There was a noticeable increase in the number of registrations after the print advertisements were released in the magazines monthly, as well as each Thursday when the newspapers were released.

Social Media

The community circles initiative has also been advertised on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The Facebook videos have been the most successful in terms of engagement and viewership from residents. Many of the videos have had reactions (e.g., “Like” icon), have been shared, or have comments from viewers. The number of Instagram followers has increased by approximately 30 followers (10%) since the advertising campaign started. Each week has included the following content:

Facebook

- Weekly videos that highlight one of the OCP policy goals accompanied by relevant interesting facts about the CVRD. The advertisements also include information on how to become involved in a community circle and a link to the planyourcowichan.ca website for those interested in finding out more information, to register for facilitator training sessions to host their own community circle, or to join a scheduled CVRD led community circle.
- Videos with Director Iannidinardo and Electoral Area Directors explaining and promoting the community circles events.

Instagram

- Weekly videos with the same information as in the Facebook posts mentioned above (cross-posted).
- A second photo post that speaks to one of the OCP policy goals accompanied by an interesting fact or question about the CVRD.
- Instagram stories with Director Iannidinardo and Electoral Area Directors explaining and promoting the community circles events.

Twitter

- Weekly “Did you know” fun facts with information on how to become involved in a community circle and the links to register.

Radio

Thirty-second radio advertisements have been broadcasted throughout March and April on the local radio station 89.7 Juice FM. The radio ads encourage CVRD residents to visit planyourcowichan.ca to register for one of the 14 community circle events.

- Advertised four times/day in March and three times/day in April.

Videos

Videos have been created for the spring 2022 public engagement including [Learn How to Form Your Own Community Circles](#) and [How to Form a Community Circle \(in one minute\)](#)

Engagement Summary and Evaluation



A summary report of engagement events will be made available on the CVRD website with the Ideas Book.

Community Circle Virtual Events

The public is invited to participate in the following CVRD led virtual community circle events. Individuals can register for any or all sessions covering each policy area and/or area plan.

Schedule of upcoming CVRD led Community Circles

Community Circles CVRD Led - Policy Goals – April		
Policy Goals (Round 2)	Date	Time
Manage Infrastructure	Tuesday, April 19	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Make Distinct Complete Communities	Wednesday, April 20	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Expand Mobility Options	Thursday, April 21	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Protect and Enhance Natural Assets	Saturday, April 23	10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Strengthen Local Food and Agriculture Systems	Saturday, April 23	1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Enhance Regional Prosperity	Tuesday, April 26	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Mitigate and Adapt to the Climate Crisis	Wednesday, April 27	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Community Circles CVRD Led – Local Areas Plans – May		
Local Area Plans	Date	Time
Electoral Areas A/B/C	Saturday, May 14	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Electoral Areas D/E/F	Saturday, May 14	2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Electoral Areas G/H/I	Sunday, May 15	2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Electoral Areas B/E	Saturday, May 17	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Conclusion

Some of the most valuable information we can learn is the information offered by the community we live in. This engagement and consultation plan is our way of ensuring the communities have a voice throughout the modernization of the official community plan. As we endeavour to make the first steps of this plan a reality, we encourage everyone to get involved and have their say. Whether we realize it or not, we are all affected by land use decisions every single day. The importance of this should not be understated and it is for this reason we are hopeful to hear from a diverse Cowichan region. We look forward to the next steps and hope to see you there.

“Community is much more than belonging to something; it’s about doing something together that makes belonging matter.”

- Brian Solis (author)