



Time to review the draft Official Community Plan

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

We're almost there! After nearly two years of study and community engagement, Sidney's draft Official Community Plan (OCP) is ready for review. This is your opportunity to consider it closely and see whether it represents a vision for Sidney that you can support.

Developing an Official Community Plan is an exercise in building community consensus around the future of our community. It involves balancing how land is used, how growth is managed, and how a range of important goals are advanced.

The area that is now the Town of Sidney has been inhabited and stewarded by WSÁNEĆ people for millennia. Their connection and presence on these lands and surrounding waters continues today. One of the priorities within the OCP is strengthening our relationship with local First Nations.

The OCP also acknowledges the settlement history that shaped the community from the 1850s. During this time, much of the Saanich Peninsula became farmland, with one of those farms transitioning into the small townsite of Sidney in 1893. From there, the downtown waterfront area became an industrial space with a cannery, mill, and railway terminus. While the railway eventually closed, local marinas and ferry terminals were built, along with a major highway and international airport. With all that activity, Sidney's downtown area grew into a commercial hub, and it continues to serve residents and visitors from the region and beyond.

The draft OCP seeks to improve upon the aspects of Sidney that community members have told us they care about, including Sidney's vibrant downtown, seaside charm, livable neighbourhoods, and natural environment, to name a few.

We recognize that there are community members struggling to afford a place to live in Sidney. This contributes to staffing challenges in the business community and weighs on families whose children have to leave Sidney to find housing. While this issue can't be solved on the municipal level alone, there are policies in the OCP that take steps toward finding solutions.

Within this Town Talk, you will find a pull-out Land Use Map that shows how we propose to manage growth through land use planning to preserve community character and facilitate active transportation. New areas of Sidney have been proposed for multi-unit housing - such as townhomes - near services and transportation options. In downtown Sidney, there are new limits on building heights, along with improved design guidelines. Within residential neighbourhoods there are additional opportunities for rental housing such as garden suites.

Through a range of new and updated policies, we are charting a path forward for making our Town a better place. This is the great potential of an OCP.

We continue to seek and value your input as we move toward finalizing the plan.

WHAT'S IN THE OCP?

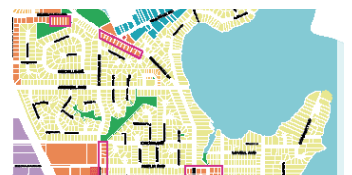
SIX KEY GOALS [SEE PAGE 3](#)



DESIGN GUIDELINES [SEE PAGE 4](#)



PULL-OUT MAPS [SEE INSIDE](#)



Visit www.sidney.ca/ocp to review the draft OCP in detail including proposed policies and more. The public review period closes April 11th.

Ask a Planner

BY: COREY NEWCOMB
SENIOR MANAGER OF LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Featured Planner Bio : I grew up on Vancouver Island and took an interest in urban planning while riding the train to work through Osaka, Japan. Looking out the window of the train, I noticed how the design of a community influenced people's lives; a well-planned city allows people to conveniently shop, stay connected to neighbours and loved ones, and give their children a taste of independence. I returned to Canada knowing I wanted to help foster vibrant communities in my own country.

I feel extremely lucky to work for a beautiful, walkable community like Sidney. I began working for the Town 11 years ago and have been leading the OCP process since 2020.

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a bylaw that guides how we will use land and grow as a community over the next 20-30 years. The updated OCP will reflect what we care about and what we strive to be as a community; it will describe our community's shared vision and goals. These goals will guide the plan's policies, which will in turn guide decision-making on projects, infrastructure, and investments by Town Councils into the future.

HOW IS IT USED?

The OCP functions as a kind of blueprint for the community. Sometimes it has a gentle influence, prompting the Town to work toward general goals such as enhanced sidewalks or initiatives that lower greenhouse gas emissions. In other situations, the OCP has more concrete influence, setting limits on building heights, density, and where activities such as industrial and commercial enterprises can occur.

By designating lands for certain uses and developments, the OCP provides the community with a level of confidence in where and how future development will occur; for a development proposal to deviate from the OCP, there is a process in place to ensure it is carefully considered before it is approved. The proposal must come before Council and involve a public engagement component, including a Public Hearing, before a change can be made.



Town planners engaged the community in many different ways to ensure a range of voices were incorporated into the development of the draft OCP including pop-up information booths, an open house, virtual workshops, meetings with local First Nations and stakeholders, an online survey, and more.

WHAT MAKES THIS OCP DIFFERENT FROM PAST ONES?

The draft OCP is a reflection of the values, vision and concerns that I heard expressed again and again throughout the public engagement process, mixed with a thoughtful planning approach to managing future change in the community. The plan charts a new path forward in a number of key policy areas, including:

- Setting new parameters for the scale of development in the downtown.
- Increased environmental protections for coastal and riparian areas with more properties added to Environmentally Sensitive Areas (Check out the inserted map).
- Plans to respond to the challenges of climate change and sea level rise.
- Improved development guidelines to help achieve quality architectural design.
- Adding opportunities for rental housing in Sidney's residential neighborhoods.

HOW SHOULD I REVIEW THE OCP?

OCPs are big documents. My suggestion is to review the draft OCP in a way that works for you and your schedule. While some people will be able to download the whole document and read every page, others might have 15 minutes to check out the goals, maps, and design guidelines in this edition of Town Talk. If you prefer to view a presentation, check out two videos on our website.

We have developed an online survey for feedback. You can also simply send an email to ocp@sidney.ca or call me at 250-656-1725. Just make sure you share your thoughts by April 11th so your perspective can be considered for the final draft. There will be another opportunity for public input once the OCP bylaw is before Council for adoption.

There are more details for getting involved on the back page. You know your own learning and feedback style, so please do what works for you. The draft OCP is important, and I'm glad you're part of the process.

Six distinct goals were developed based on community input to help guide the direction of the OCP. Within the plan, each of these goals forms the heading of a policy chapter.



GOAL 1: A REGIONALLY CONNECTED, VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

Downtown Sidney is the heart of the community. Historically a place of industry and commerce, downtown has evolved into a vibrant area combining its role as a regional commercial centre with a growing residential neighbourhood, and other community services.

The objectives and policies of this goal seek to strengthen and support the downtown in its many functions.



GOAL 4: A DIVERSE AND BALANCED COMMUNITY SUPPORTING A THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY

Local jobs are a key ingredient to a vibrant local economy. Local businesses contribute to the municipal tax base, which help fund core municipal services, operations, and public infrastructure. A diverse and demographically balanced community of customers, employees, and business owners is essential for the long-term health and resilience of Sidney's local economy.

The policies under this goal advance local economic development and specifically address employment lands.



GOAL 2: A DISTINCT SEASIDE CHARACTER REFLECTING LOCAL HISTORY, CULTURE, AND RECONCILIATION

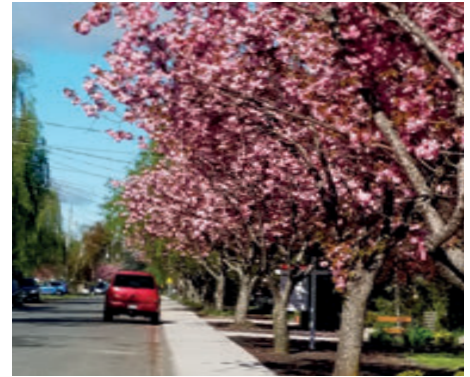
This goal seeks to strengthen the physical, social, and cultural elements that contribute to Sidney's seaside character and to recognize and celebrate Sidney's / SET, TINES' many histories, stories, and cultures in the context of Truth and Reconciliation.



GOAL 5: BIODIVERSE AND CONNECTED ECOSYSTEMS INFORMED BY TRADITIONAL, LOCAL, AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The OCP plays an important role in managing land use and development to maintain the long-term health of the natural environment and community. Healthy, connected ecosystems promote biological diversity and increase resilience in the face of an unpredictable and changing environment. Much of the work being done to protect and enhance the natural environment and ecosystems is being done collaboratively between volunteer organizations, First Nations, higher education institutions, and Saanich Peninsula municipalities.

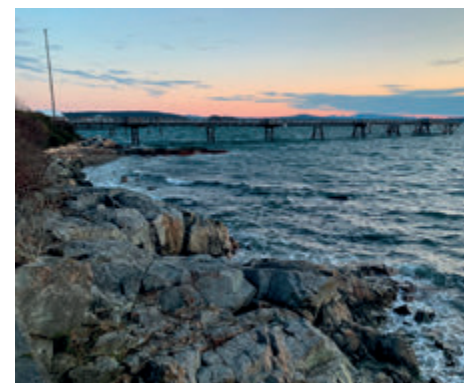
The OCP contains objectives and policies to support this shared responsibility.



GOAL 3: CONNECTED, ACCESSIBLE AND LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Sidney is a developed, urban community with neighbourhoods that continue to evolve through infill development. Sidney's existing neighbourhoods already provide a wide range of housing quality, choice, and affordability - all of which are essential for a healthy, diverse, and prosperous community.

This goal seeks to support the evolution of Sidney's neighbourhoods to be even more complete and liveable through housing choice and affordability, transportation options, and by meeting residents' daily needs.



GOAL 6: A HEALTHY, RESILIENT COMMUNITY THAT TAKES ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

A changing climate has many implications for the community – affecting our health, infrastructure, private property, ecosystems and species, and marine environments.

The objectives and policies in this goal build on Sidney's commitment to climate action with a strengthened policy framework and renewed greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets that reflect the 'net zero carbon by 2050' goal recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

THE OCP PROCESS

MAY - AUGUST 2020

PHASE 1: Project Initiation

- Background research
- Stakeholder interviews
- Land use analysis

Deliverable: Background Report

SEPTEMBER 2020 - AUGUST 2021

PHASE 2: Explore Options

- Launch event
- Multi-day design workshop
- Community design survey
- First Nations engagement
- Stakeholder workshops
- Youth engagement
- "OCPizza Night" workbooks

Deliverable: Key Directions Report

SEPTEMBER 2021 - MARCH 2022

PHASE 3: Draft the Plan

- Develop first draft
- Present to Council
- Re-engage with public
- Incorporate feedback

We are here

Deliverable: Revised draft of OCP

APRIL - MAY 2022

PHASE 4: Finalize the Plan

- Bylaw readings
- Public hearing
- Bylaw adoption

Deliverable: Final OCP



In downtown Sidney, new policy will limit building height to three storeys on Beacon Avenue between Fifth Street and Second Street. Elsewhere downtown and east of Fifth Street, buildings will be limited to four storeys with the fourth floor either set back or incorporated into the roofline, similar to these buildings in Oregon. Photo Credit: David Calveley

NEW DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

An important part of Sidney's character is the design of its buildings. During the OCP engagement process, many community members asked for an update to the Town's development design guidelines to ensure the architecture of new buildings fit with the community's expectations, enhancing streets and neighbourhoods. When Council reviews a proposed development, it will consider - among other factors - whether the building meets the design guidelines for the area. Below are some examples:

- New sustainability guidelines ensure that newer buildings are designed to reduce energy and water use.
- New public realm guidelines pay attention to how developments relate to the street and public spaces, including details like sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and opportunities for public art.
- In Environmentally Sensitive Areas, new guidelines look to balance the protection of natural assets with the desire of property owners to develop and enjoy their properties.
- In Residential Areas, new guidelines focus on dwellings having a connection to the street with quality exterior materials, a visible entrance, outdoor spaces facing the street, as well as attractive landscaping and pathways.
- In Commercial Areas, new guidelines focus on small-scale store fronts that provide visual interest for passing pedestrians. On Beacon Avenue between Fifth Street and Second Street, buildings will be limited to three storeys. Elsewhere downtown and east of Fifth Street, buildings will be limited to four storeys, with the fourth floor either set back or incorporated into the roofline. West of Fifth Street in the downtown, there is a possibility having a fifth floor with an affordable housing component.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD OPEN UNTIL APRIL 11TH

As the process chart above demonstrates, public engagement has been a central part of developing the updated Official Community Plan. Your perspective continues to be important. The plan will not be finalized until the community has reviewed the draft version and provided feedback. Here's how you can get involved:

LEARN

- All resources available at www.sidney.ca/ocp
- Download the draft Official Community Plan
- Download a PDF information package
- Check out video presentations of the OCP

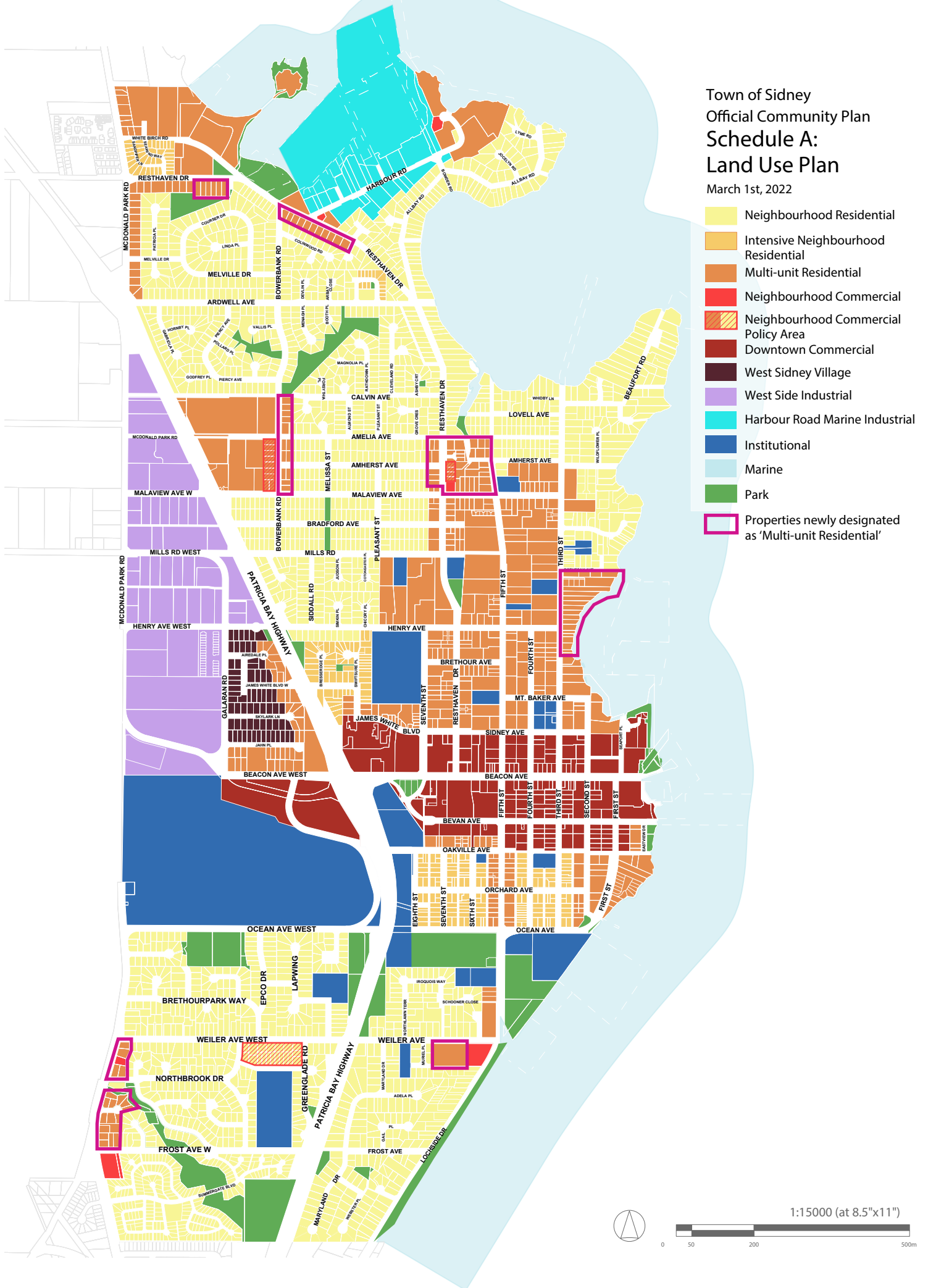
SHARE

- Take the online survey
- Email the Town at ocp@sidney.ca
- Speak to a planner by calling 250-656-1725

Town of Sidney Official Community Plan Schedule A: Land Use Plan

March 1st, 2022

- Neighbourhood Residential
- Intensive Neighbourhood Residential
- Multi-unit Residential
- Neighbourhood Commercial
- Neighbourhood Commercial Policy Area
- Downtown Commercial
- West Sidney Village
- West Side Industrial
- Harbour Road Marine Industrial
- Institutional
- Marine
- Park
- Properties newly designated as 'Multi-unit Residential'



1:15000 (at 8.5"x11")



Town of Sidney
 Draft Official Community Plan
 Schedule D:
 Environmentally
 Sensitive Development
 Permit Areas

- Marine Foreshore Area
- Riparian Area
- Properties proposed to be added to the ESA's

