

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

North Cowichan Official Community Plan



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WHY WE ARE ENGAGING

CONTEXT

In March 2019, the North Cowichan Council adopted a Strategic Plan that sets out Council's focus and strategic priorities for the 2019-2022 term and beyond. One of the Strategic Plan's key actions is to re-write the 2011 Official Community Plan, which will form the basis for new and updated local area plans throughout the diverse communities of North Cowichan. Council has also endorsed an OCP Engagement Strategy that includes the creation of an OCP Advisory Group and eight Community Ambassador Teams to reach as many voices and perspectives as possible.

The goal of the OCP project is to undertake a community driven review and update of the current OCP to better address local area planning and to modernize the OCP in the face of policy, demographic, environmental and technological changes. Concerns due to COVID-19 will also be addressed and broadened to cover other possible public health emergencies.

Key to the success of this process is good policy alignment with Federal, Provincial and Regional policy direction and data, including the Cowichan 2050 Regional Collaboration Framework. The primary outcome will be a revised OCP that reflects local values and expectations related to growth and development in North Cowichan.

COVID-19 CONTEXT

We are currently living in unprecedented times that will impact our efforts to engage with the public and the OCP volunteers. Not only because there may be physical distancing measures still in place during this engagement window, but because of the anxiety that might prevent individuals participating in person for quite some time.

Because of these concerns on March 18, 2020 Council implemented a 90-day pause on public engagement due to the COVID-19 crisis. On April 15, 2020, Council decided to reconsider this pause, and directed staff to liaise with the OCP consultants to explore ways to resume engagement digitally in a safe and fulsome way. On May 6, 2020 Council asked staff to engage with the OCP volunteers on the Engagement Plan, specifically about moving ahead with digital engagement. We met with the OCP Volunteers on June 5 and June 11, 2020 to seek their input.

The COVID-19 pandemic and required public health measures necessitate a thoughtful, intentional approach to online engagement until it is safe to resume in-person activities and events. Information and requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic are changing daily and while it is difficult to plan for engagement during this crisis, we have provided options to in-person engagement where possible.

When considering virtual engagement during this time we need to be sensitive to the digital divide, how digital engagement might amplify existing discrimination. We must also be sensitive to the state of mind

of the public and volunteers. In light of these challenges the following principles guide our work in this time:

- Assess and be sensitive to the state of mind and competing priorities that may impact ability to engage and proactively address barriers to participation
- Provide mixed interactive virtual methods (online, by phone, by mail) to access different audiences
- Pay attention to accessibility of online methods and mobilize advocates or specific supports to increase participation
- Create safe spaces for online participation by establishing ground rules and active moderation

Our Engagement Plan is designed for virtual events and meetings for the next few months and provides some ideas on engagement options that follow physical distancing requirements. As we move into the various phases outlined by the Province in managing the transition to our new normal and physical distancing and self-isolation requirements begin to relax, we may conduct some smaller in person activities.

To provide further context for engagement during the pandemic a research study by Hill + Knowlton Strategies on *Public Consultation & Engagement in the Era of COVID-19* (March 27-29, 2020) provides some insight and direction that we will apply to the OCP process:

- 61% of respondents believe that engagement with local government is more important now
- 79% believe that government consultations online can be as effective as in-person
- 58% agree that engaging citizens on issues not related to COVID-19 is still important at this time.

Further, respondents had the following suggestions for effective engagement:

- 81% asked for objective fact-based information on the issues
- 79% asked for the ability to ask questions of subject-matter experts
- 77% asked for the opportunity to hear arguments from various sides of an issue

Online surveys and discussion forums were the most appealing platforms with the ideal length taking under one hour.

The top five barriers to online consultations included:

- Being too shy to voice opinions (29%)
- Being reluctant to voice my opinions (24%)
- Lack of time (24%)
- Lack of interest or motivation (23%)
- Access to appropriate technology (22%)

NORTH COWICHAN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

In July 2019, Council endorsed the OCP Engagement Strategy. The Engagement Strategy includes a distinct framework to engage both the North Cowichan community and Council and staff, see the graphic below. The engagement framework and approach is intended to create internal (organizational) and external (community) ownership of the OCP. The OCP will be shaped by a diverse community and an inter-disciplinary staff approach. While staff and Council involvement is extremely important the focus of the Engagement Plan is on engagement with the community (i.e. external engagement).

Community (External)	Organization (Internal)
Advisory Group of North Cowichan focused district leaders from various sectors and communities	Project Steering Committee of senior leaders representing each department who will provide strategic engagement and promotion of the plan
Ambassador Teams champion local communities	Project Team of staff who will prepare technical information and draft policies for inclusion in the OCP

Figure 2 : Engagement Framework from Council's Engagement Strategy

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with the local First Nations will be built at the government to government level i.e. the municipality (rather than consultants) will approach each First Nation to enquire about their capacity and interest in participation in the OCP process. By using this approach, we acknowledge the varying capacities of individual nations whose traditional territory intersects the boundary of North Cowichan. The municipality will work to build a relationship with each Nation, with an openness to acknowledge unique needs of each Nation.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The following engagement objectives provide clear directions which shape the actions and tactics.

AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING

- **Raise broad awareness** of the planning process, what an Official Community Plan is and why it is being reviewed and updated (note: this has already started in Phase 1)
- **Provide clear information** about key issues and opportunities; and
- **Build a shared understanding** of what the OCP will look like 'on the ground.'

OPPORTUNITY & INPUT

- **Provide a range of meaningful engagement opportunities** for the public to learn about the project, share input, and participate in conversations around key issues.
- **Gather ideas and input** from a diverse range of community members and stakeholders to inform the OCP update.

PROCESS & ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Document our process** with clear and transparent information about what we did, who participated, what we heard through engagement activities and how input was used to influence the OCP update.

The Municipality has also identified the following procedural objectives for the OCP project:

1. Vetted Deliverables and Workshops

- Present all deliverables and workshops first to the OCP Advisory Group, then to the Project Steering Committee, then to Council, prior to sign-off by the Project Director. In this way, Council and the Project Director benefit from insight of these OCP engagement groups.
- The Community Ambassador Teams provide local knowledge in the planning and design of public consultation processes, and deliverable development.

2. Meaningful Public Consultation

- Undertake public and stakeholder consultation in consideration of the vetted deliverables and workshops objective.
- Maximize use of Community Ambassador Teams in the development and execution of public consultations.
- Residents and community partners (i.e. businesses and not-for-profits) understand what the OCP is and why it is important and have influenced the development of the OCP.

3. Project Alignment

- The project works to align with and set the stage for success in other major policy projects under development or revision through the project life cycle.

4. Creating an Accessible Plain Language Plan and Planning Process

- The planning process, and the Plan itself, and any other project deliverables use accessible language and avoids technical jargon.
- Clearly define the application of all plan elements (policies, maps, etc.).

5. Intergovernmental Consultation

- Consistent and appropriate consultation is undertaken at key stages of the project plan.
- Consultation processes are designed and executed in a way that generates useful input.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Based on the International Association of Public Participation, we suggest using these proven engagement principles to guide the OCP project:

1. Participation is **meaningful** - the questions used are genuine and the input gathered impacts the policy, plan, program, design, or service in question.
2. Participation is **scoped and scaled** appropriately to the issue's importance (or potential impacts), degree of conflict possible, and the diversity of opinion it may engender.
3. Participation is **informed** - framing of the issues and sharing of research, facts and options supports thoughtful contributions for all concerned.
4. Participation starts **early and continues** throughout the process - input opportunities are integrated into all stages.
5. **Active outreach** is designed to reach those most likely to be interested in or impacted by the project - awareness raising and "go-to-them" approaches are key.
6. **Diverse voices** are heard and conflict is reduced - a range of tools helps to access a wide range of information, ideas and opinions and is not restricted to the 'usual suspects'.
7. The process is **transparent and communication-rich** - sharing of information/options, documenting input received, communicating resulting decisions and actions.
8. The process is **sufficiently resourced** by the organization - human and financial assets are assigned, while capacity limits are respected.
9. Ensure **proper roles** for individual residents, stakeholder and community groups, municipal staff, and council members in designing processes, gathering input, making decisions, and taking action.
10. The **cultural context** of participation must be appropriate, relevant and recognize diversity.
11. The process helps build **organizational and community capacity** for participation, dialogue and collaboration and supports cross-learning and learning-by-doing, taking a long-term view."

An additional to the principle that has emerged from Council's recent directive is:

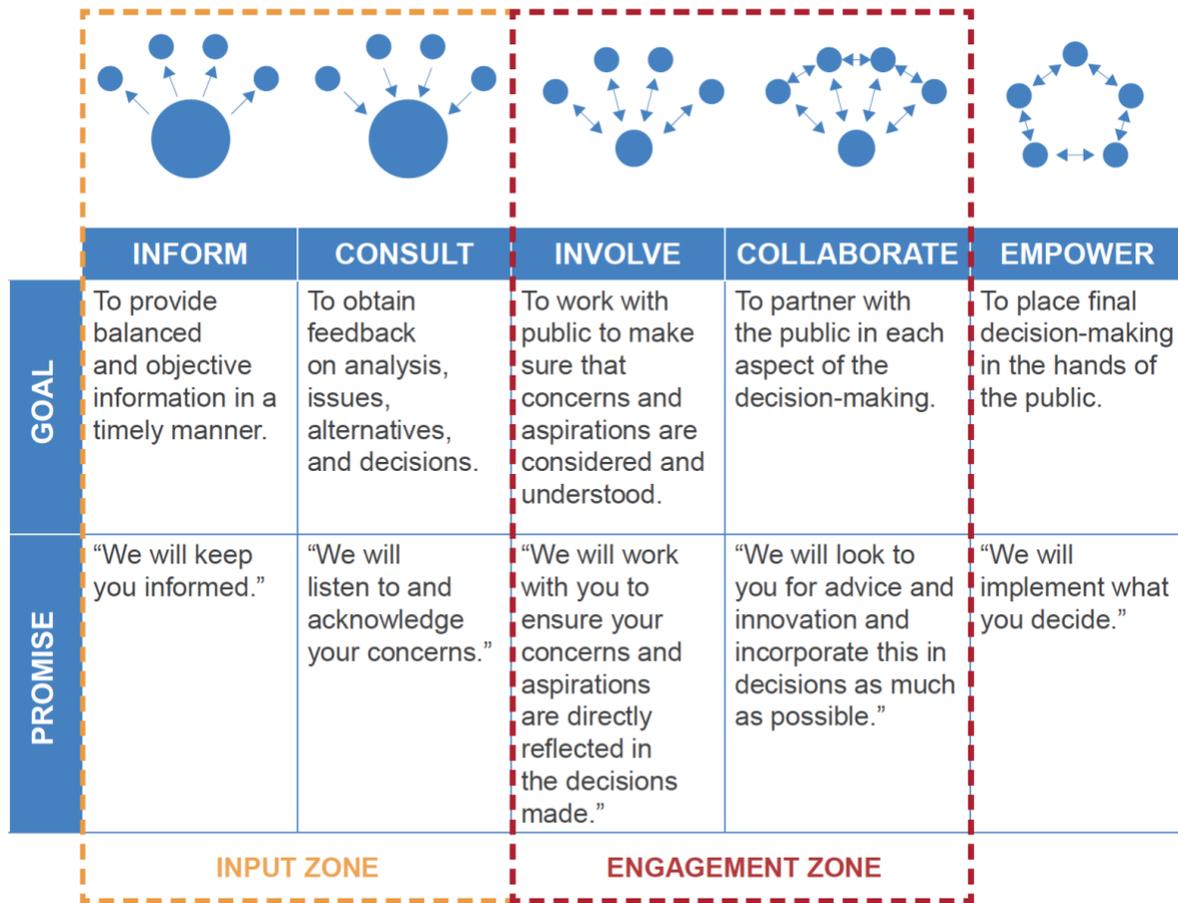
Engagement should be conducted with due regard for **individuals' safety and should be consistent with public health orders regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Council's Strategic Plan includes Engagement as a strategic priority which is relevant to the OCP engagement:

- Through collaborative relationships with other governments, Indigenous peoples, stakeholder partners and engaging the community at large, we achieve optimum outcomes for all.

KEY CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum describes the various levels of participation and the public's role in any public participation process. The level of participation will vary throughout the project and will depend on the objective for each stage of the process. For example, early on, we will be looking to simply "Inform" residents and stakeholders about the process. This will quickly lead to 'Consult" and 'Involve" on future issues and ideas and "Collaborate" with the OCP Ambassadors and Advisory Group. While there will be many opportunities for the public and stakeholders to influence the OCP, we will stay within the input and engagement zone (see graphic below) with the public. Council will be the final decision-maker.



International Association of Public Participation

Figure 3: IAP2's Spectrum on Public Participation

It is important to recognize that public and stakeholder engagement is only one stream of influence on the project. The OCP is also influenced by technical expertise and subject to ultimate approval by Council. The diagram below, 'The Weave' shows how this information informs the final decision.

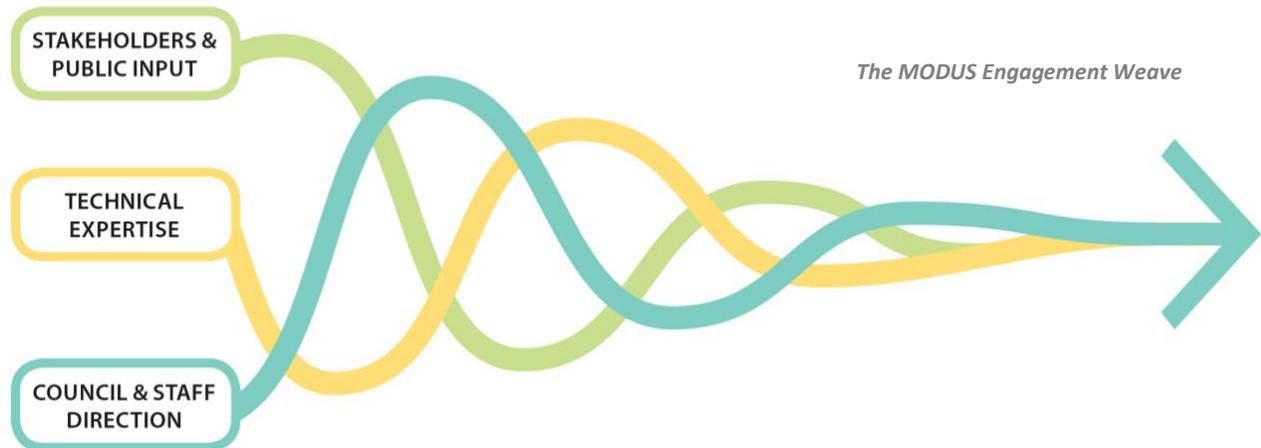


Figure 4: The Engagement Weave

KEY TOPICS FOR ENGAGEMENT

To effectively engage community members and stakeholders and deliver on the project's objectives, it is essential to take a transparent approach to engagement so that expectations are clear and consistent.

Certain elements of the planning process are already established by existing Municipal policy and procedures, as well as other technical considerations. With that in mind the engagement strategy clearly identifies where and how the public and stakeholders can influence the Official Community Plan update. The Municipality has already identified the following thematic objectives that will frame the OCP Update:

1. Revising our Approach to Growth Management
2. Respect Individual Community Character
3. Incorporate Climate Adaptation, Mitigation, and Resilience
4. Strengthen Natural Environment
5. Consider Employment and Economic Changes.

Through the OCP process more thematic objectives may be identified such as 'social resilience and well being', particularly given the COVID-19 context.

WHO WE ARE ENGAGING WITH

This process will seek to involve a broad range of community members and stakeholders to ensure a diversity of views and interests are represented. The ‘engagement staircase’ shows the progression to implementation.

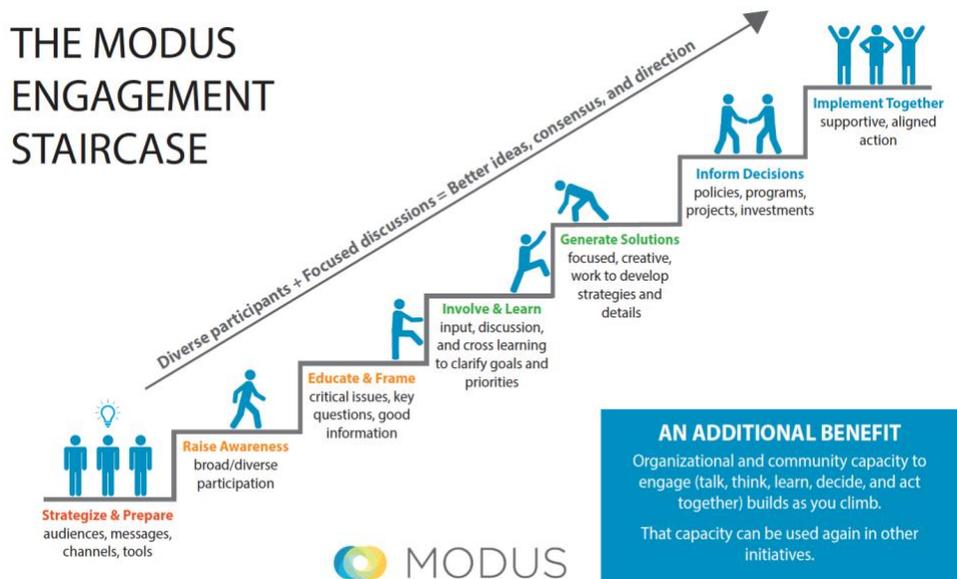


Figure 5: The Engagement Staircase

AUDIENCES

MUNICIPALLY APPOINTED GROUPS

OCP Advisory Group’s purpose is to provide advice to the OCP steering committee and consultants through all phases of the community planning process. It consists of community members with experience in key sectors: climate, small business, industry, transportation, health, education, housing, agriculture, water, community design, forestry heritage, arts & culture.

The Advisory Group operates under the following principles in carrying out the functions and activities associated with advising formulation of the Official Community Plan for North Cowichan.

- **Transparency** – Transparency is built on the free flow of information and ensures access to relevant, timely and reliable information.
- **Respect** – Respect is the appreciation of individual participation in the Advisory Group process in a manner acceptable among members.
- **Accountability** – Accountability is the requirement to accept responsibility for carrying out assigned roles.

- **Consensus** – Consensus is a commitment to work towards general agreement on matters considered by the group.
- **Communication** – Members will commit to regular meetings and will respond to any other communication in a timely manner.

Within the context of COVID-19 we will need to meet virtually until it is safe to have in person meetings.

Community Ambassadors Teams represent the various unique geographic communities within North Cowichan. The purpose of each is (1) to gather, consolidate and feed community-specific information into OCP policies; and, (2) to review draft OCP directions and policies for community impact and relevance. The Ambassador Teams will represent the diverse segments of the community and include individuals who represent the diversity and local interests of the community. The above principles apply to this group.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

External stakeholders are defined here as individuals, groups, or representatives of organizations (including other government agencies, business interests, and community groups, and residents).

To help determine how we will communicate and engage different groups, a ‘stakeholder mapping’ exercise was completed with the OCP Advisory Group and Community Ambassador Teams at their orientation in October 2019. In this exercise, stakeholders were identified in order to inform the engagement strategy. This list and outreach tactics will continue to be built upon with further discussions with staff, Council and the OCP volunteers.

We will group, expand, and organize the stakeholders into the following categories which will inform our engagement tactics and specific methods to reach out to these groups:

- **Collaborate:** High interest and high influence groups who will be strongly encouraged to attend our events and to help share information with their networks and encourage others to participate.
- **Involve:** High interest and low influence groups will be invited to our events and encouraged to participate in our surveys and share information with their networks
- **Keep Informed:** High influence and low interest groups will be kept up to date and encouraged/invited to participate in our events and surveys

The ‘**general public**’ also includes many different subsets of people and groups. These people and groups typically take extra efforts to reach as they require the project team/ volunteers to meet them where they are in the community, rather than inviting them to typical open house style evenings. We can plan the process to include several activities that will seek to reach a broad and diverse range of participants including:

- A range of age groups (youth, young adults, families, seniors)
- People who get around by different transportation methods (pedestrians, people on bikes, transit users, drivers)

- People who live or work in the study area or nearby (residents, commuters, etc.)
- People with mobility challenges (walkers, mobility scooters, wheelchairs, strollers)
- “Seldom heard” populations (homeless / at-risk, women and children, new immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities). This may include translating documents/ survey and going to venues to connect with people directly to get their input on surveys.

KEY INTERESTS & CONSIDERATIONS

Council’s Strategic Plan identified a number of key trends and issues that are important considerations in the OCP update

Positive Trends

- New recreational facilities
- Growing culture and diversity
- Focusing development within urban containment boundary and greater collaboration with developers
- Increased focus on the environment, tourism, agriculture, arts and culture
- Revitalization of core communities
- Increased retail opportunities
- Enhanced community and Indigenous consultation
- Growing public participation in local governance
- Use of local expertise for work within the community

Challenging Trends

- Loss of high-paying natural resource jobs
- Urban sprawl
- Consistent application of urban containment boundary
- Environmental degradation
- Increasing income disparity
- Opioid crisis
- Challenge of communicating Council’s vision to the community
- Lack of affordable housing

Key Future Issues

- Responding to all facets of climate change
- Limiting environmental degradation
- Cleaning-up industrial brownfield sites
- Enhancing community planning
- Enhancing asset management
- Crime
- Attracting and retaining skilled workers
- North Cowichan’s popularity as a retirement destination

- Homelessness, and capacity of homeowners to pay property taxes
- Potential loss of industrial tax base
- Increasing costs for local governments

To add to this list and to help determine local interests and considerations for engagement on the OCP in North Cowichan, we identified the following opportunities and challenges with the staff group at our initial meeting. These included:

- Community Boundaries
- Current OCP
 - Current OCP has lots of good, relevant content but is bulky and hard to navigate. Needs to focus and streamline and be directive
 - We need policies and goals that are attainable. Current OCP has 60 indicators.
 - There is 2015 Baseline Report that review progress against many indicators
- Growth Management
- Climate Action
- Housing affordability
- Community Wellbeing
- Regional Alignment
- Transportation Planning

The OCP Advisory Group and Community Ambassador's kick-off session included brainstorming the following issues and opportunities:

Issues:

- agriculture key to rural character and economy (food security)
- growth - different communities have different ideas unique "grow own way"
- outside forces drive growth (city folk/refugees)
- services/roads for populations
- lack of affordable housing
- road capacity study/maple bay road
- safety security/crime
- water, flood and groundwater
- seniors housing/aging in place
- urban sprawl and high density

Opportunities:

- create a unified view of District
- alternative and active transportation
- reconciliation and treaty making
- railroad corridor as connector
- renewable energy
- how to plan/ encourage for diverse population

Further questions, like the ones below will be asked of the public and stakeholders through the OCP process:

1. What are the top issues the updated OCP should address? Why are these important to you?
2. What's the biggest opportunity you see for the OCP?
3. What would be a realistic outcome you'd like to see? (what would be different? what would success look like?)
4. Do you have any concerns about updating OCP?
5. What's the best way to engage you and your network? (e.g., newsletters to use to help get the word out, existing events that we might be able to coordinate on? Can you put us in touch with the right person?)
6. Who else do you think is important to engage in this process? How could we best involve them?

HOW WE ARE ENGAGING

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The OCP update includes four phases. MODUS is leading phase 2 & 3. Public engagement detailed in this Engagement Plan occurs in three of these phases, as per the diagram on the next page.

- **Phase 1: Project Background** consisted of background research, the creation of Background paper, and the start of the project. This included creating an OCP Advisory Group of volunteer residents, and Community Ambassador Teams for each community within North Cowichan.
- **Phase 2: Community Vision & Local Character Mapping** includes engaging on policy gaps, vision and goals, and community character and values.
- **Phase 3: Plan Development** focuses on creating the updated OCP. We will develop and engage on growth scenarios and policy directions, including options and selection of urban containment boundaries, land use designation, and growth targets, and development of final policies and maps.
- **Phase 4: Plan Consideration** will include the final revisions to the updated OCP and the legislative process to adopt the OCP, including a Public Hearing and Council Meeting.

PHASE 2

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Summary: The Engagement Plan identifies key stakeholders, articulates objectives, integrates with the project timeline, outlines engagement methods, tools and levels of engagement, and describes commitments for reporting. We have created a separate Digital Engagement Plan with alternative tactics to respond to the COVID-19 crisis that is attached to this document. The initially planned workshops scheduled for March 12 and 13, 2020 on the Engagement Plan with the Steering Committee and OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors were cancelled due to COVID-19. Council had the

opportunity to provide input on the Plan framework on March 12, 2020. On May 6, 2020 Council reviewed the Digital Engagement Proposal.

Approximate Date: March to May 2020

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	March 12 & May 6 (digital engagement) & mid-June
Steering Committee	N/A	No meeting due to COVID.	N/A
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	N/A	Rescheduled due to COVID-19- Virtual meeting	Early June
Public Engagement	N/A	N/A	N/A

POLICY GAP ANALYSIS

Summary: The Policy Gap Analysis will include a thorough background review of all relevant policies and strategies and include analysis and general recommendations for initiatives to be considered through the OCP planning process. This will include proposed policy changes to the OCP document, necessary internal resources, and refinement to the work plan. As part of development, we will facilitate an opportunity with the Steering Committee for their input. Once the Policy Gap Analysis is complete, we will have a virtual meeting with Council and the OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors to present the Policy Gap Analysis Report. We initially envisioned an online survey with the public during this phase but due to the COVID-19 crisis this has been delayed. We suggest including questions on the gap analysis during vision and goals public engagement.

Approximate Date: April to June 2020

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Mid-June
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Mid June
OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Early June
Public Engagement	N/A	No general public engagement due to COVID (will be included in next stage)	N/A

VISION AND GOALS

Summary: Subject to Council approval, late June to July we propose a 'light' outreach to the public to re-introduce the OCP project and help them become familiar with the digital tools that we propose to use, such as Place Speak. This timeline will also allow extra time for people with competing priorities to review materials when they are able. This deliverable will include the first broad public engagement period, with an online survey via Placespeak, as well as further engagement with key internal and external stakeholders and decision-makers. The timing will depend on Council's comfort with proceeding with public engagement.

This period would involve updating the website with the background papers, social media to generate interest, mail drops, local media outreach and newsletter updates. We suggest targeting the end of July for our first public survey which gives the public time to become familiar with the digital tools and the context for the OCP update.

During this deliverable, we will confirm principles, assets and challenges, and establish a vision statement, goals, and identify critical themes to consider.

Approximate Date: June-August 2020

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Late July
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Late June
OCP Advisory Group and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual meeting	Mid July
Public Engagement	Notices with property tax assessment Social media Website update Press release for local media Print advertisement (posters) Advertisement on radio Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Online survey via PlaceSpeak	July-August

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND VALUES

Summary: For this deliverable, we will identify unique aspects that identify individual community-character and values, creating profiles for eight communities (including boundaries, characters, and individual values). These will start to inform community planning and policy development. To do this, we will engage with members in each community, using a community-driven approach, with workshops (virtual or in-person) in each community and online character mapping. In addition, we are proposing self-guided exercises to help the public get fresh air and exercise and look at their community from the perspective of the project's thematic objectives. This might include photo and video submission, self-guided tours, and other activities that people can do while practicing social distancing.

We will also facilitate interactive workshops with the Steering Committee and OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors. Ambassadors may also help facilitate the workshops in each community, if feasible.

Approximate Date: September to October 2020

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Mid September
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Late September
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Print advertisement (posters) Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Online character mapping with visual preference survey on PlaceSpeak or Workshop with community mapping and walking tour	October

PHASE 3

GROWTH SCENARIO OPTIONS

Summary: During this deliverable, we will create growth scenarios for North Cowichan. We will engage the public, Advisory Group, and Ambassadors on growth scenario options, where growth should go in the District, and potential impacts for the different scenarios. To do this, we will facilitate interactive workshops, and create “kitchen table” workbooks (facilitated by Ambassadors as well as publicly available on the website) to reach a larger number of residents, including those unable to join the interactive workshops.

Approximate Date: November to January 2021

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct Invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Late November
Steering Committee	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Early November
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Mid December
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Print advertisement (posters) Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Virtual or in person Focus group interactive workshops on growth scenarios “Kitchen table” workbooks (hosted by Ambassadors and available online)	January

DRAFT OCP POLICIES

Summary: We will create a framework for the OCP and draft policies for each theme in the OCP. We will engage with the OCP Advisory Committee and Community Ambassadors on discrete pieces of draft OCP policy in order to garner their feedback. Building on the workshop feedback, we will draft policies for each theme/chapter of the OCP. We will then offer a comment period for further feedback on draft policy, and send the draft OCP for referrals to other governmental bodies.

Approximate Date: February to March 2021

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct Invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Late January

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Steering Committee	Direct Invite	Virtual or in-person meeting	Early February
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct invite	In-person interactive workshop on policy options and trade-offs	Mid February
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Advertisement in local media and radio Print advertisement (posters) Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Online survey review of draft OCP at high-level	March
Intergovernmental	Direct email or phone call	Referral of draft OCP	Late March

COMPLETE DRAFT OCP AND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Summary: Based on feedback on the draft OCP, we will revise policies as needed. This phase includes a workshop to Council on the revised draft OCP and implementation tools, intergovernmental referrals, and a presentation of the revised draft OCP to the public.

Approximate Date: April 2021

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Council	Direct Invite	In-person meeting	Mid April

Group	Notification Tactic	Engagement Tactic	Approximate Date
Steering Committee	Direct Invite	In-person meeting	Early April
OCP Advisory Committee and Ambassadors	Direct Invite	In-person meeting	Early April
Public Engagement	Social media Website and newsletter update Word-of-mouth from Ambassadors Direct invites to key stakeholders	Public presentation of revised draft OCP	Late April
Intergovernmental	Direct email or phone call	Referral of revised draft OCP	April

PHASE 4

FINAL OCP CONSIDERATION

Summary: Based on additional feedback on the draft revised OCP, we will complete final revisions to the OCP. This phase includes the legislatively required public hearing, and final Council Meeting to approve the updated OCP. This phase will be run by the Municipality of North Cowichan, and so further details are not included in this Engagement Plan.

Approximate Date: April to July 2021

HOW WE ARE COMMUNICATING

BRANDING

North Cowichan invited submissions from local artists to create a logo and a tagline. The following logo was developed based on submissions and will be included on all public-facing material.



BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers on the key theme areas that the project will address are now being developed by staff and will be uploaded to the website as useful information and context. They will also use questions to prompt conversations among participants, which is key to engagement success.

KEY MESSAGES

1. **We are updating the District of North Cowichan's Official Community Plan!**
 - a. The Official Community Plan is a guide to how we will use our land and manage growth as a community over the next 20-30 years.
 - b. Official Community Plans typically cover topics such as housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, parks and recreation, community and social well-being, arts and culture among other important aspects of life in our community.
 - c. Official Community Plans reflect what we care about and what we strive to be as a community. These values are directly reflected in the Plan's vision, goals and policies, and will guide decision-making into the future.

2. **Local and global trends may mean that life in North Cowichan may not be the same as it always was. As we "ThinkForward," how might we adapt to the future together?**
 - a. The Official Community Plan lays out a roadmap for our community's change over the next 20-30 years. How the world has changed over the past 20-30 years may be an indication of the pace of change we should expect over that time span.
 - b. A changing climate may mean rising sea levels, hotter and drier summers with more extreme weather events.
 - c. The changing nature of work and an uncertain economy may mean we need different infrastructure to accommodate new businesses and attract new workers
 - d. Having a comprehensive plan that reflects our shared values will help us navigate our future together.

3. **Updating the Official Community Plan means thinking forward as a community**

- a. At the heart of any Official Community Plan is our community's shared values. Living in North Cowichan, what brings us joy? What makes life challenging? What do we care about now? What might we care about in the future? What will life be like for our children and grandchildren?
- b. Having conversations with our family, friends, neighbours -even those we haven't met yet - will help us discover what these values are.
- c. While we may not always agree, listening and learning with others will help us create a Plan that will allow us to grow together for the years to come.

4. Let's "ThinkForward" together!

- a. Have your say on the future of North Cowichan! Visit our [website](#) or [PlaceSpeak](#) for more information.
- b. For more information be sure to like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/northcowichan and/ or Twitter.
- c. Looking for exciting Friday night plans? Host a dialogue with your friends on the future of North Cowichan (virtual connections for now).
- d. What are the top issues the updated OCP should address? Have you thought about how North Cowichan may adapt to rising sea levels and more extreme weather? How will we manage growth in our communities? What is your vision for North Cowichan for the next 20 years? What is unique and special about your community that we need to preserve and protect? What sort of jobs are needed to provide a stable economic base for North Cowichan residents? What impacts will COVID-19 have in planning for our future? Take our survey to share your ideas!

COMMUNICATION TACTICS

Any tools that we use for digital engagement and the information collected will need to meet the requirements of BC FIPPA. We will work with MNC's IT department on this requirement.

OCP PROJECT WEBSITE

The OCP project website will be updated throughout the process, sharing information out and sharing back reports and findings. It will also invite participation in various engagement activities. We recommend the following to make the webpage more successful:

- Create a large button in the Quick Links area during notification periods, and then under Community -> Current Topics -> Official Community Plan
- Include events on the District's calendar
- Locate the webpage under "Your Government" then "Projects & Initiatives" in the navigation
- Include event announcements in the rotating banner on the homepage
- Webpage could include:
 - **Short link:** Link to page should be easy and relate to the brand, like
 - **Video:** quick explainer video would widen participation and understanding

- **Purpose:** Brief introduction to the project
- **Engagement Process:** Summary of the engagement process, with a visually appealing and simple timeline image describing each stage in high-level terms
- **Get Involved:** Summary of current opportunities to get involved (i.e. sign up for updates, link to questionnaire, event details)
- **Background:** Information for the layperson to become more informed of the issues, process, etc.
- **Contact:** Who to contact for more information

NOTIFICATION TOOLS

PLACESPEAK

PlaceSpeak is a web-based platform used currently by the MNC and has about 3000 registered users. It has number of features (surveys etc.) that we can incorporate into the process.

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

An email newsletter should be maintained, with sign-up forms at all public events and on the website, for people to receive regular updates on the process and engagement opportunities.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The engagement team will provide North Cowichan with a simple social media strategy including content for posts and a schedule of posts.

PRINT MEDIA

The engagement team will work closely with the North Cowichan Communication Team at major stages of the process to provide timely information about public input opportunities and summary reports for circulation in local print media.

Ongoing media relations (press releases, story starters, briefings, photo ops).

FACE TO FACE

Direct interviews with key stakeholders may provide an opportunity for face to face engagement later in the process if deemed safe by public health authorities. Ambassadors will be trained to provide additional opportunities for face to face promotion. There may an opportunity to convene existing seniors, youth, children, parent groups etc. for meetings.

RADIO

Major public events can be advertised on local radio, 30-second ads, road and weather tags, “What’s On” calendar of events, digital advertising and interview opportunities are all possible.

SIGNAGE

Posters will be considered to ensure community members are aware of the project and opportunities to get involved.

OVERVIEW OF TACTICS FOR ENGAGING & COMMUNICATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION

The risks associated with moving to more online engagement are:

- Some people don't have access to technology such as computers (need to ensure mixed methods such as mail drops, paper surveys)
- Engagement is less relationship-focussed than when it is conducted in person
- People may be distracted and focussed on other priorities right now
- It may be harder to reach some audiences while we cannot offer in-person activities.

The benefits are that:

- More people may become more involved since there is less time and travel commitment
- Engagement may be more accessible for people with mobility challenges
- Families with young children may have more time/ ability for online engagement rather than attending an event.

Beyond the issues we have described with COVID-19, we think that speaking clearly to the public on planning issues and avoiding jargon will be essential. Clarifying and stressing the benefits of the updated OCP will be key to encouraging participation, as will talking about then most critical issues and trends. Using the strong branding to get awareness in the early days of the project will be essential, as will timely response to inquiries throughout the project. Finally, profiling engagement successes and the inputs of various citizens and groups will build awareness and trust, as will showing progress on substantive issues.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

At the OCP Volunteers sessions the following measures of success were developed:

- A guiding OCP with a clear implementation plan

- Bold, creative long-term solutions
- Measurable objectives with clear indicators and review points at regular intervals
- Still as excited about committee and plan in 2021 as we are today
- Engaging physical document with accessible language and visuals and direct quotes
- All opinions are considered
- Clear plan for marginalized communities to be involved.

The Council session on March 12, 2020 garnered the following measures of success:

- Process where community can be proud of outcome
- A plan that all of Council can support
- Full of creative, big ideas for innovative planning
- Transparent and inclusive public engagement
- Full community buy-in
- Broad engagement that includes all of the community
- An inclusive process that values the input of youth as well as all other demographics.