



# MODUS

from insight to impact

## DRAFT PRINCIPLES, GOALS & VISION STATEMENT: INTERIM REPORT

Municipality of North Cowichan, OCP Review & Update

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report compiles information collected during the visions and goals stage of the OCP update and presents draft principles, goals and a vision statement.

Establishing a common understanding about our collective community values is crucial to update the OCP. The vision, goals and principals are key components of the update and set the foundation for moving forward into Phase 3 when we focus on growth management and policy development.

The 2011 OCP does not include a long-term vision for North Cowichan. This is fundamental to the OCP and common practice in other jurisdictions. The principles, goals and vision communicate where the Municipality wants to go and how it wants to get there.

The vision statement sets a broad, aspirational purpose to work towards over the life of the OCP. The principles reflect the values of the community members and the goals translate these values into measurable actions.

The draft principles, goals and vision statement presented in this document are informed by:

- Results from the Vision and Goals Survey conducted with the public in August and September 2020. We received 1201 responses on this survey. See the Survey Results document for more information
- The feedback we collected from staff and Council (via a survey) during the gap analysis stage of the OCP update in May and June 2020. See the gap analysis for more information.
- Feedback we received from the OCP Advisory Committee and Community Ambassadors (via meetings and written submissions) in June 2020 and from the OCP Advisory Committee October 28 and November 5, 2020.
- Feedback we received from Council on November 10, 2020. At this meeting the Committee of the Whole recommended:
  - That Council accepts the Vision and Goals Survey Summary Report and receives the Draft Principles, Goals and Vision Statement Interim Report for information.

These draft statements are also informed by and will ultimately align with Council's Strategic Plan, the Climate Action and Energy Plan Update (in process), Housing Needs Assessment (in process) and Master Transportation Plan (in process).

These statements will not formally be adopted until the OCP update is complete in 2021 and may be fine-tuned as we navigate through the remaining stages of the OCP update.

## 2 DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles underpinning a plan reflect the shared values of the community. Such principles give us better assurance that the decisions we make and actions we take are true to those values. The principles reflect what we value, and they shape how we plan to achieve our goals. These principles are critical in guiding the development of all policy, programs and actions pursued under the plan. All principles are connected and must be considered holistically when making decisions.

The changes outlined **in blue text** represent the suggestions from the OCP Advisory Committee from the meeting on October 28, 2020 and their written feedback. The changes in **purple text** represent the feedback from Council on November 10, 2020.

### Sustainability and Interdependence

#### Existing Definition:

Adopting the principle of sustainability means ensuring that decisions balance the right of future generations to a healthy, resource-rich environment with the needs of the current population. Sustainability underpins all of the five key goals, as well as the overall direction of the plan. Sustainability is a fundamental principle in assessing whether or not a particular course of action is appropriate.

Survey Participants indicated the following level of support for the existing definition:

- 65% Support
- 9% Do Not Support

#### Proposed Definition with Tracked Changes:

Sustainability means ~~balancing~~ **creating harmony between** the environmental, social and economic needs of the current population while safeguarding ~~the earth's~~ **our** ecosystem for future generations. It underpins all of the goals, as well as the overall direction of the plan.

Sustainability is a fundamental principle **that must be applied** when assessing whether or not a particular course of action is appropriate. **It acknowledges that we have inherited the earth from our ancestors and must ensure it remains intact protect it for future generations.**

**We must keep in mind the interdependence of ecological systems and human communities and between the natural and built environments. In making land use and other decisions we must consider our goals to both conserve and regenerate the natural environment and to work to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive effects of urban environments on their surroundings.**

#### Proposed Definition without Tracked Changes:

Sustainability means creating harmony between the environmental, social and economic needs of the current population while safeguarding our ecosystem for future generations. It underpins all of the goals, as well as the overall direction of the plan.

Sustainability is a fundamental principle that must be applied when assessing whether or not a particular course of action is appropriate. It acknowledges that we have inherited the earth from our ancestors and must protect it for future generations.

We must keep in mind the interdependence of ecological systems and human communities and between the natural and built environments. In making land use and other decisions we must consider our goals to both conserve and regenerate the natural environment and to work to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive effects of urban environments on their surroundings.

## Economic Opportunity

### Existing Definition:

Ensuring that a positive environment is in place to promote growth and diversity. Jobs and businesses that are the foundation of the municipality remain important but new economic directions are also encouraged to respond to changes in the global economy and the challenges of demographic shifts.

Survey participants indicated the following level of support for the existing definition:

- 58% Support
- 12% Do Not Support

### Proposed Definition with Track Changes:

Economic opportunity means ensuring that a positive setting is in place to ~~attract and retain~~ **foster** great talent, promote local, sustainable jobs and businesses that lead to the prosperity of all of our community members and reduces social and economic inequality.

### Proposed Definition without Track Changes:

Economic opportunity means ensuring that a positive setting is in place to foster great talent, promote local, sustainable jobs and businesses that lead to the prosperity of all of our community members and reduces social and economic inequality.

## Smart Growth

### Existing Definition:

Encourage vibrant communities by planning for development including redevelopment, infill, mixed use and more compact communities. Smart Growth aims to enhance quality of life, preserve the natural environment and, over time, save money.

Survey participants indicated the following level of support for the existing definition:

- 61% Support
- 10% Do Not Support

### Proposed Revision:

This principle has been moved to the goal section.

## Healthy & Safe Communities

Existing Definition: A healthy and safe community is one where access to community services, housing, parks and open space, clean air and water, and other such benefits promote positive interaction and healthy outcomes among all residents.

Participants indicated the following level of support for the existing definition:

- 77% Support
- 3% Do Not Support

Proposed Definition with Track Changes:

A healthy, inclusive, safe and **resilient** community is one where access to community social services, affordable housing, parks, **trails** and open space, clean air and water, locally grown food ~~and other such benefits~~ promote positive interaction and healthy (**physical and mental**) outcomes among all residents.

Proposed Definition without Track Changes:

A healthy, inclusive, safe and resilient community is one where access to community social services, affordable housing, parks, trails and open space, clean air and water, locally grown food promotes positive interaction and healthy (physical and mental) outcomes among all residents.

## Community Engagement

Existing Definition:

Ensuring that Council, staff and citizens keep talking to each other in an open and transparent way to ensure that decision-making is in line with the policies, goals and principles of the plan.

Participants indicated the following level of support for the existing definition:

- 75% Support
- 3% Do Not Support

Proposed Definition with Track Changes:

- Council, staff and community members communicate with each other in an open and transparent way to ensure that decision-making ~~is in line with the policies, goals and principles of the~~ **aligns with the OCP, other plans, policies and bylaws. We actively seek out and listen to quieter community voices so that input is representative of all community members.**

#### Proposed Definition without Track Changes:

- Council, staff and community members communicate with each other in an open and transparent way to ensure that decision-making aligns with the OCP, other plans, policies and bylaws. We actively seek out and listen to quieter community voices so that input is representative of all community members.

## Other Proposed Principles

### 1) Reconciliation and Relationship Building:

- *Strengthening cooperation and mutual support by working collaboratively with First Nations towards respective community goals and objectives is vital to fostering more resilient and connected communities. This important work involves a collective journey towards Reconciliation, as well as revisiting and creating new government to government protocols and processes based on meaningful consultation respecting matters of mutual interest (Source: Squamish OCP)*
- Ongoing collaboration with local and senior governments to implement the OCP's vision, goals and objectives. As a member of the CVRD, North Cowichan is committed to the Regional Collaboration Framework- 2050

### 2) Change, Adaptation and Resilience

- A resilient community means we are able to respond and adapt to emerging issues in a unified way.
- **We recognize the accelerating pace of change and the multiple and shifting challenges we face as a community (health crisis, mental health and addictions, affordability, climate change impacts). Through our planning and actions, we will strive for resiliency in built and natural environments and ensure iterative and adaptive processes that can better respond to change.**

### 3) Climate Change

- Ensure all municipal decisions are made through the lens of the climate emergency.

### 4) Responsible Governance and Active Leadership

- Engage our residents continually, seeking open and transparent input into its decision-making, while demonstrating accountability through prudent management of our shared assets. We embrace opportunities and addresses challenges proactively, recognizing the key role of local government in supporting its community. We provide responsive, efficient, transparent service that contributes value to the community.

### 5) Social Justice and Equity

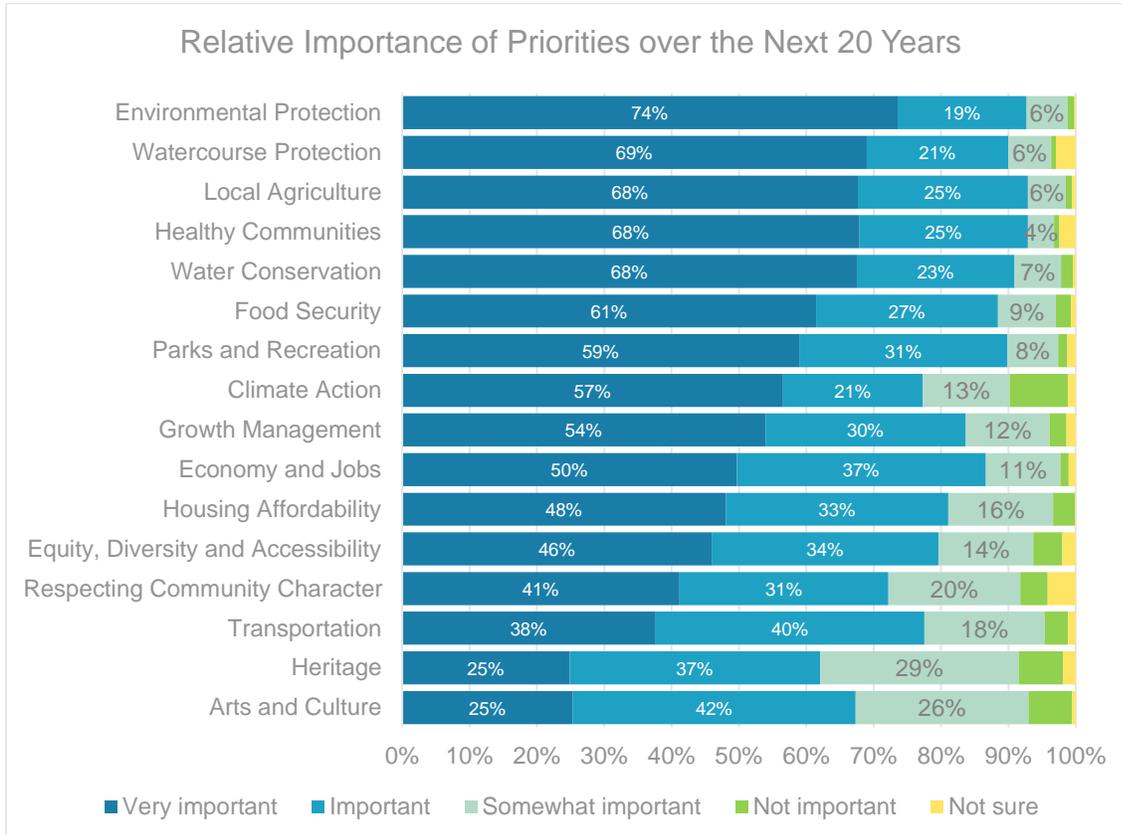
- **Acknowledge the challenges and disadvantages faced by people living on the margins of society and act against chronic inequities in the system.**

### 3 EMERGING PRIORITIES

In the Vision and Goals Survey we asked each respondent to:

*Think about North Cowichan over the next 20 years, how important are the following priorities to you?*

These responses along with other feedback received were used to create the draft goals in the next section.



Approximately 18% of the 1,201 total respondents did not answer this question. Of those who answered, environmental protection was perceived as the most important priority over the next 20 years, with 74% of participants selecting it as a very important priority.

Almost all of the environmentally related priorities (i.e., Environmental Protection, Watercourse Protection, Local Agriculture, Water Conservation, Food Security, Parks and Recreation) were rated “very important” or “important” by 88% - 93% of total respondents.

Arts and Culture and Heritage were the least prioritised by respondents with 62% - 67% of respondents rating them “very important” or “important”.

We also asked survey participants:

*What other emerging priorities should North Cowichan be planning for?*

Responses were categorized into the following key themes:

## Key Themes

- *Accessible Social Services*  
Participants expressed a need for more accessible healthcare, social and mental health services. This particularly relates to a main concern for drug use and homelessness in the community.
- *Natural Resources & Areas*  
Preservation of forested land, wildlife and waterways, specifically Quamichan Lake. Concern for continued harvesting and air pollution from resource-intensive industries.
- *Compact Growth and Development*  
Concern for negative impacts of development and rapid population growth. This includes increased density and the need for additional infrastructure in specific areas, particularly transit, to reduce urban sprawl.
- *Other Topic Areas:*
  - Affordable Housing
  - Sustainability & Green Economy
  - Safety & Policing
  - Natural Disaster Preparedness
  - Jobs & Businesses
  - Public Infrastructure & Municipal Services
  - Tourism & Recreation
  - Improved Transit & Active Transportation
  - Reconciliation & First Nations Partnership
  - Inclusive Communities
  - Support for Families & Children
  - Age-Friendly Communities
  - Education
  - Food Security & Access
  - Covid-19 Informed Planning
  - Political Leadership & Accountability
  - City Self Sufficiency

## 4 DRAFT GOALS

Goals help translate our principles into action. They are important to help direct North Cowichan's action and decision making over the life of the OCP. During phase 3 of the OCP update we will propose targets associated with the goals. It is important to be able to monitor and measure whether we are meeting these goals over the life of the OCP.

Current OCP Goals:

1. Preserve our rural setting
2. Guard our environment

3. Adjust to climate change
4. Encourage economic opportunity
5. Build strong communities

These draft goals below are based on the results from the emerging priorities identified in the above section and from the feedback on the gap analysis. The changes outlined in blue text represent the suggestions from the OCP Advisory Committee from the meeting on October 28, 2020 and their written feedback.

1) ~~Protect and~~ Enhance our natural environment by ~~preserving~~ **protecting** our rural countryside, forests, rivers, lakes and ocean.

**Enhance our natural environment** by protecting our rural countryside, forests, rivers, lakes and ocean.

2) Build ~~strong,~~ **resilient,** supportive, inclusive communities that enhance the health and well-being **and provide opportunities in recreation, arts, culture and access to nature.**

**Build resilient, supportive, inclusive communities** that enhance the health and well-being and provide opportunities **in recreation, arts, culture and access to nature.**

3) Focus growth and development **in established centres** to ~~create~~ strengthen our vibrant ~~mixed-use centres~~ **communities** and to enhance **while respecting** individual ~~community and rural~~ character. Using innovation and best practices to foster liveable, **compact** communities will preserve natural and rural areas and ~~promote less reliance on cars~~ **encourage climate-friendly and active ways to move around. Growth and development will occur in a low-impact, site adapted manner integrating natural features / ecological systems.**

**Focus growth and development** in established centres to strengthen our vibrant communities while maintaining individual character. Using innovation and best practices to foster liveable, compact communities will preserve natural and rural areas and encourage climate-friendly and active ways to move around. Growth and development will occur in a low-impact, site adapted manner integrating natural features and ecological systems.

4) **Encourage and enable a diverse mix of housing types, tenures and levels of affordability** to accommodate the needs of the community.

5) **Support a thriving economy** that focusses on sustainable jobs and **local** businesses including green technologies and ~~small-scale~~ innovative agriculture **which leads to meaningful work and prosperity for all and responds to regional economic change**

**Support a thriving economy** that focusses on sustainable jobs and local businesses including green technologies and innovative agriculture which leads to meaningful work and prosperity for all and responds to regional economic change.



- Preservation of Resources, Green & Natural Spaces*  
 North Cowichan will be...  
 “A leader in conservation of its natural beauty; it will be a livable and affordable community and a place where specialized agriculture thrives.”
- Vibrant & Diverse Community*  
 North Cowichan will be...  
 “A vibrant community which respectfully integrates the perspectives and needs of its peoples while protecting and celebrating its farms and natural areas.

“A diverse and welcoming community, working alongside First Nations, where people can work, live, and play in our amazing and clean natural environment, and where active and sustainable transportation, and sustainable local food systems are the norm”
- Sustainable & Green Industries*  
 North Cowichan will be...  
 “Known as a community that has supported positive growth while maintaining its rich history of agriculture and natural resource industry along with diversity and inclusiveness in population”
- Safety & Support for Families*  
 North Cowichan will be...  
 “A thriving community of families, neighbourhoods & businesses within a well-preserved natural environment that welcomes visitors from all over the world, a pristine holiday and recreational destination.”

## Proposed Vision

The changes outlined in blue text represent the suggestions from the OCP Advisory Committee from the meeting on October 28, 2020 and their written feedback.

### Version with Tracked Changes

North Cowichan’s unique ~~towns and neighbourhoods~~ **communities** are **set in spectacular natural environments defined by** forests, rivers, lakes, coastline and ~~rural countryside~~ **farmland**. As a steward **and leader** of environmental and social wellbeing, ~~North Cowichan~~ **we** will prioritize the conservation of ~~its~~ **our** natural areas, provide supports for a thriving local economy, ~~promote~~ **foster** ~~strong,~~ **resilient , welcoming and inclusive** communities and maintain ~~its~~ **our** attraction as a hub for outdoor recreation. **Our decisions and relationships must be collaborative, transparent, and demonstrate resilience in the face of future challenges and opportunities.**

### Version without Tracked Changes

North Cowichan’s unique communities are set in spectacular natural environments defined by forests, rivers, lakes, coastline and farmland. As a steward and leader of environmental and social wellbeing, we will prioritize the conservation of our natural areas, provide supports for a thriving local economy and foster resilient, welcoming and inclusive communities. Our decisions and relationships will be collaborative, transparent, and demonstrate resilience in the face of future challenges and opportunities.

### Shorter Statement

North Cowichan's spectacular natural areas and pastoral farmlands surround distinct, resilient communities where families and individuals of all backgrounds have the opportunity to thrive and prosper.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This report compiles information collected during the visions and goals stage of the OCP update and presents draft principles, goals and vision. These statements will not formally be adopted until the OCP update is complete and may be fined-tuned as we move through the community character, growth scenario options and the OCP policy updates.