



What We Heard: Settlement & Housing Community Discussion

Area C OCP Project | March 3rd 2026 @ Surge Narrows Bunk House

The Strathcona Regional District would like to thank the 30 (approximate) community members who attended the community lunch and discussion on settlement and housing. Your many thoughtful comments have been consolidated. If you have more to add – please contact planning@srd.ca

Staff opened this session with a short overview of the OCP review project, descriptions of the settlement-related land use designations within the current OCP, and a summary of housing themes that have emerged through engagement to date.

Planning staff opened the floor to the community to start the conversation. The following are notes taken by staff while listening to the community discussion.

Notes from Discussion:

This list is a short-hand transcription of comments made, as captured by the note-takers during the session. Though not a verbatim account, staff have tried to use the terms that were spoken and to capture the intent of statements made. These comments will be organized and refined into policy statements for further discussion, especially on matters where the community is divided.

- Residents of Read Island expressed concern over being “grouped in” under the same objectives and policies as Quadra Island. Planning staff explained that the OCP will consist of both text policies and a map with land use designations on a parcel-by parcel basis and that each individual community will have their own specific interests represented separately in the plan.
- The overall vision of the OCP will be guided by the Area C Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)
- A condensed, short-form version of the OCP would be appreciated so residents can quickly and easily understand the proposed draft OCP
- The Outer Discovery Islands residents would like to pursue exploring the possibility of an Advisory Planning Commission or similar committee structure to review development proposals in the Outer Discovery Islands. Planning staff informed those in attendance that Area C has an APC which represents all of Area C and that two members of the APC are from Read Island.
- The importance of representing the Outer Discovery Islands as rural, remote, and off-grid communities as distinct from the rest of Area C, specifically Quadra Island, was highlighted.

- The existing Rural Land Use Bylaw designations have worked well for the Outer Discovery Islands community historically and as such no significant changes to the land use map designations are requested at this time.
- Historic challenges to do with subdivisions in the Outer Discovery Islands was discussed, namely, that the community in Owen Bay (Sonora Island) is lacking a road that connects the entire subdivision from the wharf to access the remainder of the island.
- Sonora Island residents seemed to be supportive of enabling smaller lot sizes (currently 10 acre minimum) in Owen Bay and expanding the settlement area of that community to enable community growth.
- Owen Bay residents expressed interest in enabling new residential lots or exploring mixed land uses (including commercial use) to support permanent residents. This would support long term community building.
- The challenge of parking at wharves was discussed in relation to population growth (both on the upland in vehicles and on the foreshore with personal boats) and capacity issues to be considered both in the Outer Discovery Islands and at wharves on Vancouver Island close to shopping and amenities.
- There seems to be some interest in exploring the possibility of having some small lots or small housing units on the commercial property in Surge Narrows to direct community growth there but still highlighting the importance of community input throughout the development process.
 - o Since there is already a well with good water supply, the possibility of a small, shared water system and septic to support a community hub could be explored with resident's input.
- Read Island residents expressed that development proposals on Read shall continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis (through the OCP amendment process).
- Majority of participants expressed that exporting of water from Area C off of its source site shall continue to be prohibited.
- Majority of participants expressed the high importance of remaining off-grid (no importing or exporting power).
- Read Island residents stressed the importance of their own, independent, power generation, and reiterated that most residents move to the Outer Discovery Islands to enjoy a resourceful and self-sufficient, off-grid lifestyle.
- Majority of participants expressed a continued preference for individual waste management ("you bring it in; you bring it out" policy)
- Read Island residents expressed interest in a hydrology study and ground water assessments for general knowledge and to inform future decision-making regarding development.