

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC VISION FOR OTTER POINT, SHIRLEY & JORDAN RIVER

INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 9 – APRIL, 2008

**Economic Development – Recreation – Land Use – Community Services
Taxation – Community Development – Governance – The Environment**

Welcome to the ninth **Information Bulletin** for the Developing a Strategic Vision project. These regular bulletins will keep you informed of the activities taking place in our community as we work towards the development of a strategic vision for the communities of Otter Point, Shirley & Jordan River.

This Information Bulletin is now being distributed by e-mail to about 200 individuals, organizations and businesses in the Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River area. You can receive this **Information Bulletin** by contacting Arnie Campbell @ d.acampbell@shaw.ca.

1. FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The first Community Participation workshop happened on Saturday morning, April 5th. It was a productive event and allowed many of us to talk about and share our ideas about a vision for our community.

The second workshop is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 19th and there are still a limited number of spaces available. Ideally everyone participating should have been available for both workshops; but that hasn't been possible for some. If you missed the first workshop and would like to attend the second one, contact Wayne Fritz @ 642-0440 or e-mail WLFRTZ@SHAW.CA.

The doors at the Otter Point fire hall will be open by 9:00 a.m. and refreshments will be available for the early arrivals. The workshop begins @ 9:30 a.m. and concludes by 12:30 p.m.

This is the final public event before the Steering Committee begins the task of drafting the report of the Vision project. A first draft of the report will be circulated by the end of May and a second by the end of June. The final report should be ready by early September.

2. BACKGROUND MATERIAL THAT WILL DISCUSSED AT THE WORKSHOP

The community participation workshop on Saturday, April 19th will be looking at five themes: Social Development; Economic Development; Water & Environment; Rural Land Use and Governance.

Participants will be sharing their ideas on:

- What we want to keep the same or change.
- The strategies that we will need to either retain the status quo or bring about change in each of the theme areas.
- The challenges that we need to overcome.
- Who needs to be consulted if we want to achieve our vision for our community?

The following background material has been prepared for the workshop.

Economic Development in Otter Point, Shirley & Jordan River

Highlights from the Economic Development Forum on October 4, 2007

Community economic development is defined as a process whereby people living in a community work together to create a diversified and sustainable local economy.

Local residents need a voice as they seek maximum social and economic benefits from economic development in their area.

Community groups as well as individuals can gain and/or lose with economic development.

Within communities, different approaches can be used to address differing points view:

- a conflict approach, which is characterized by anger, suspicion and mistrust within a divided community – and few win; or
- a conflict resolution approach based on clear, trustworthy information, a clearly defined decision-making process, and negotiation amongst all involved groups with a focus on finding solutions.

A community needs pragmatic economic development strategies and a vision based on a consensus approach.

An understanding of the local economy and the economic multiplier effects of different kinds of development is important.

The area is developing a more service-based economy built around B&Bs, new residents and small businesses that depend on the local population and their expenditures.

The area should have a clear list of community priorities and be prepared to negotiate with developers for community amenities.

Residents should know their local zoning bylaws.

Leadership and accountability for decision making about community planning and economic development are essential.

Concluding advice from the guest speakers:

- Develop a vision that addresses the quality of life in your community.
- The community vision should project 20 years into the future with provision for periodic reviews and revisions.
- Build sustainability issues into a plan for all socio-economic groups.
- Carry out an inventory of community assets and the landscape.
- People need to feel heard or they won't buy into a solution.
- People need to take time to talk about shared values rather focus on differences. Values are real and most people find that they share common values.

Economic Development Background Information

1. According to the CRD, the rate of growth during the past five years in Otter Point has been about 4% – slightly less in Shirley/Jordan River. This is the fastest rate of growth within the CRD.
2. Substantial residential developments are now underway or are being planned for Otter Point (e.g., DeMamiel Estates, 3L Development, Canadian Horizons Development) and Shirley/Jordan River (e.g., Wildwood Terraces Development, Shores Development), which, when fully built out, could add up to 500 new dwellings and over 1,000 new residents to the area.
3. Forest companies with large land holdings in Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River have sold some – and are likely to sell more – of their forestlands for residential and other forms of development.
4. The estimated number of businesses in Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River are: Otter Point – 83; Shirley/Jordan River – 58; Combined – 141.
5. Major business sectors in Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River include: forestry (logging, reforestation); tourism (B&Bs, eco-tourism, fishing charters); arts & crafts (design, production, marketing); home-based businesses; Internet-based businesses; pet care; personal services (spas, esthetics); agriculture (agro-tourism; organic food production; honey producers); non-forestry harvesting (seaweed, wild mushrooms, salal, berries); mining (gravel extraction); construction/real estate.

6. Local business infrastructure concerns identified in a local Economic Development Commission study include:

- the absence of high-speed Internet services throughout Shirley/Jordan River and part of Otter Point;
- limited cell-phone reception throughout Otter Point & Shirley/Jordan River;
- limited public transportation in Otter Point & Shirley/Jordan River;
- unpaved sections of the Marine Circle Route, which deter some tourists; and
- an inadequate and non-/secure supply of potable water in parts of Otter Point and Jordan River, which deters some development.

7. Recommendations made in that local Economic Development Commission study include:

- the development of a multipurpose organic farmland sharing system incorporating an on-site market, a community gathering site, an apprentice program, and agriculture tours;
- the development of a year-round, self-guided art studio tour to encompass East Sooke, Metchosin, Sooke, Otter Point and Shirley;
- community lobbying for improved communication and transportation services; and regional collaboration to develop and market sustainable business development.

Social Development in Otter Point, Shirley & Jordan River

Social development might be described as the possible areas or points, opportunities available in a community that allow or cause residents to come together. It is also the glue that joins us, as a community.

This joining may be generated in a place, a community hall or spiritual centre, to express celebration of music, other cultural arts or community events. This locale could also be used in times of emergency to provide safe, communal space for those in need of assistance or care. Hopefully, there will be new places in our communities to expand into, to allow for healthy recreation facilities that will appeal to all age groups.

Social development, especially when considering the levels of community participation, is greatly affected by a myriad of aspects, some of which were presented in the Vision forums: Rural Land Use; Economic Development; Water and the Environment; and Governance Options.

Demographics must be carefully considered when making plans to meet the needs or expand social development in a community. Is the population comprised of full-time residents who live and work and have families in their homes? Are they part-time residents or individuals of retirement age? Who will we be relying on to support our needs and to create a healthy community?

Our rural communities rely heavily on volunteerism, participation from community members, including emergency services such as ambulance and fire services, to work effectively. For people to participate in these essential services they must have the time, energy and, most important of all, the goodwill to generously donate their time to do so. Residents are more inclined to volunteer when they feel good about the community they live in.

A strong sense of community is created when a community is able to attract people of diverse income, age, abilities, lifestyles and skills and when these individual are able to stay and prosper within their communities. Recognition for historical sites and for the many individuals, especially to the senior citizens who greatly contributed to our community, is another way to promote pride and social development.

To foster community benevolence, aspects of the physical environment (water, land, wildlife, air quality and sound) should be strongly considered and respected to allow for the good continued quality of life, sustenance. These basic needs must also be balanced with community economic development and the rights of property owners to fulfill their goals for their properties. When all these aspects are not continually threatened and are in balance, it allows for this protective energy to be utilized differently. It allows for an energy shift, perhaps to a broader opportunity – to fully partake and advance in social development.

When people feel fairly represented, treated and heard, harmony and participation are welcome byproducts, which can only encourage and increase community social development.

What is environment?

Take a look around you. When you look out of your window each day what do you see that you value? How much of what you value is on your property or is in your control? As you leave your property and move through the community what is it that you enjoy? What would you miss? How do you spend your leisure time? What brought you to this area and what keeps you here?

This area is changing rapidly. In the summer of 2006, the museum curator at Neah Bay told me that our coast must be really developing because they could see new lights everywhere. The storms of 2006/2007 made profound changes, with thousands of trees coming down, more having to be removed because they are unsafe, and still more removed because people are feeling unsafe. In the last

five years, the forests along Otter Point and West Coast roads have been disappearing, changing the landscape dramatically.

Changing land use to housing is not likely to stop, but is it necessary to remove the forest, or the feel of the forest? As you drive into Victoria, can you see the subdivision up the slope of Mt. Matheson in East Sooke? There every owner has signed a contract to maintain the tree cover. The whole region benefits, as we do not see a wall of housing. The official community plans of both Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River speak to the value of retaining the native vegetation in developed areas. However, in Otter Point the current release of large blocks of logged land for residential development does not permit retaining the forest scapes. The same clear-cut treatment is occurring in smaller developments along Otter Point Rd. This practice changes the land-scape permanently; it is not going back into forestry and does not provide natural habitat for native species.

Our OCPs describe both Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River as having 17 different well to rapidly draining soil types. (Fairbridge soil found in Otter Point is the exception). These soils do not retain water effectively. Native vegetation – trees in particular – plays a key role in the retention of water. Loss of vegetation leads to quick water runoff, silting and erosion between November and March, and parched soil in the summers, leading homeowners to water more frequently. “The generally steep slopes [maximum elevations of 300 m. in Otter Point and 500-600 m. in Shirley] combined with the wet climate of the area result in many areas having unstable banks or showing indications of past slumping or sloughing.” Parts of West Coast Road exhibit these effects. Changes to the local water cycle and sources intensify with development.

According to our OCPs, Shirley /Jordan River has a total land area of 3,815.2 ha., with 66.6 ha. of parks and open spaces including the 56 ha. of French Beach Provincial Park. This represents 1.8 % of the land area. Otter Point has 6 parks encompassing 8.6 ha., representing approximately 0.3 % of the land area. Otter Point also has 634 ha. of Crown Land currently serving as a nature preserve, but this is not protected land. Its use could change over night. Guidelines suggest a minimum of 12 % of the land needs to be set aside for the protection of native species and the recreation of people. Do we have the mechanisms to achieve this goal? Do we want to?

The area has not been mapped for flora & fauna. We have few records and do not know what we have that needs protection. There are 24 named streams, seven of which are listed as spawning grounds. There are numerous seasonal creeks. Sport fishing supports the local economy and depends on healthy streams and lakes. Fish stocks are declining. Are current riparian regulations doing an adequate job of protecting aquatic flora & fauna? Are the regulations even being enforced?

Paul Beier's research on cougar movement shows that cougars and bears need green corridors at least 415 m. wide to move through areas without troubling residents, and the corridors need to follow the animals' traditional routes. Both OCPs speak to the value of wildlife and the need to provide habitat and connective corridors. Otter Point has not identified a corridor. Shirley has identified the Goudie-Frenchholm streams, but this area is in a well-used provincial park. Outside of French Beach Park, the widest protected corridors are those in riparian zones with 30 m. of buffering for a maximum of 60 m., which does not work for cougars and bears. If the protection of wildlife is a value, we have many decisions to make as the area develops.

Locals, surfers, wind surfers, kayakers, and swimmers enjoy our coast, but only 15 of the 26 official beach accesses could be developed to provide access to the Strait; the rest are unsuitable. Many residents are interested in horseback riding, hiking, cycling and off-roading, but we have no dedicated trail systems to support this recreation.

Our environment – wildlife, wild landscapes, and opportunities for outdoor recreation – has social and economic value. What do we in Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River want it to be like in 2015? How do we achieve it?

Water Supply – “From Source to Tap”

Most of the following is based on material presented by Trevor Wicks at the forum “Water and the Environment,” 27 November 2007.

Summary

1. Water supply affects property value: You can't live without water.
2. Research continues to demonstrate that the hydrological cycle is complex: Don't take water for granted.
3. There are few legal protections for domestic water: No one has taken real responsibility for management of water resources.

Water Supply: Water Licenses, Wells and Other Means of Supply

The community water systems in Otter Point and Shirley take water from open watersheds with a license. Numbers given below for domestic wells and water licenses are estimated from examining BC Water Resources maps. All watersheds are open and minimal protection exists.

- Water licenses: 50 for Otter Point, 35 for Shirley, 2 for Jordan River
- Wells: 150 for Otter Point, 50 for Shirley, 50 for Jordan River [most not yet in use]
- Cisterns: effective but no information on the use of cisterns in the area
- Purchase and delivery: water is brought to the site by vehicle; no information on the extent of this practice

Protections for Water Supply

Quality: Most things that contaminate a stream or pond will contaminate ground water. Research shows that groundwater may travel underground for several kilometres and that suspended solids and dissolved chemicals are not filtered as the water moves.

Quantity: Winter rain is the basic water supply for our area. Local soil types promote rapid runoff or absorption underground. There is a need for better mapping to promote stewardship and perhaps regulation of the water supply. An aquifer is not an endless supply of water. It is important to maintain the contours, vegetation and drainage features that keep the precipitation in the area where it falls so that there is some residual to recharge streams and well fields in the summer months. Slowing runoff also reduces erosion and maintains good quality in water and habitat. Vegetation and ditches are part of the overall water system. A drainage system designed to carry water quickly from an area may result in less water being available there in the summer months. A loss of vegetation can cause the air over an area to be extra hot, and there will be less precipitation over such an area.

Legal Protections: At this time, no level of government seems to have the will or the way to adequately protect our domestic water supply. For example, the Riparian Area Regulations guide residential development activity near fish-bearing streams in our area. The mining, forestry and agriculture sectors each have their own water management regulations. The Vancouver Island Health Authority oversees wells and septic systems. The Ministry of the Environment's groundwater protection regulations are about sealing wells from surface water contamination, not about the actual supply of groundwater to the well. The CRD issues development and building permits. The Ministry of Transport is responsible for our local roadways and ditches. Coordination and enforcement among all these interests and agencies are difficult.

Questions Facing us as a Community: How do we secure and sustain our water supply? Who pays for the water supply, and at what point do they pay? A community needs regulations to manage its water supply and water users, to set priorities and to ensure that there is responsibility and accountability.

Rural Land Use in Otter Point, Shirley & Jordan River

Highlights of the Presentations at the Rural Land Use Forum, June 19, 2007

Deborah Curran – “Principles of Smart Growth”

- The development of 1.5-acre lots is likely rural sprawl.
- A working economy and environment are both critical to a rural community.
- General planning principles:
 - Plan for a community – not just to build houses.
 - Maintain a working rural environment with large lots (100-acre minimum).

- Keep urban and country areas separate.
- Limit the size of village footprints.
- Increase transportation options.
- Maintain citizen involvement in the planning process.
- Establish development plans and require annual public reports about their implementation.

John Ranns – “The Metchosin Experience”

Lessons learned from Metchosin’s experience in maintaining itself as a rural community:

- Incorporate yourself as a municipality rather than rely on the CRD.
- “Rural” needs to be identified as maximizing lifestyle choices, not as the environment.
- People want to live in a rural area, but they have different reasons for this preference.
- Support for rural living comes from people who want to do as they choose on their property.
- Rural is not high-density living in rural enclaves with urban transportation and environmental standards that destroy rural living.
- High population density areas should be avoided as they lead to high tax levels to support more population growth.
- An official community plan with a strong philosophy is important for holding local politicians accountable and avoiding incremental change.
- Remaining rural is not just a matter of official community plans and zoning bylaws but also of many other community values.

Bruce Lemire-Elmore – “Is It Possible To Be Rural, Smart and Fair?”

- Rural living means trees and green spaces, living on large lots, and living in rural peace.
- The Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River OCPs lack a future vision for our communities.
- Preserving our rural lifestyle may not be environmentally sustainable, affordable or equitable, as our current development plans lead to rural sprawl and much road travel in gas- guzzling vehicles. It is a lifestyle dependent on tax support from others.
- An example of sustainable rural living is found in small villages linked by narrow winding roads, usable by foot or vehicles.
- New planning approaches for rural living need to be developed which:
 - look at a rural village model of development;
 - make a paradigm shift to deal with environmental change;

- use a planning body of community representatives and technical experts;
- recognize owners' property rights; and
- use of a planning tool, "Transferable Property Rights," that allows rural landowners to sell some of their property rights to urban landowners. and achieve greater fairness.

Background Information (Sources – local OCPs)

Total land area: Otter Point 4,409.2 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 3,815.2 ha.; total 8,224.9 ha.

Settlement containment area: Otter Point 685.1 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 87.9 ha.; total 773 ha.

Marine shoreline area: Otter Point 240.1 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 582.3 ha.; total 822.4 ha.

Agriculture land reserve: Otter Point 307 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 81.1 ha.; total 388.8 ha.

Parks and open space: Otter Point 8.6 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 66.5 ha.; total 75.2 ha.

Roads: Otter Point 104.3 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 58.7 ha.; total 163 ha.

Crown lands: Otter Point 634 ha.; Shirley/Jordan River 0 ha.; total 634 ha.

Land Use Planning Issues in Otter Point, Shirley & Jordan River

- Our population has been growing at about 4% annually over the past six years, the highest rate in the CRD. Growing populations require more land for housing, roads, services, etc.
- Ongoing and planned residential developments in Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River could add several hundred new dwellings and over 1,000 new residents.
- Market incentives, particularly for further residential development, are likely to grow as housing demand increases in neighbouring areas and the large forest companies continue to sell their private forestlands to development companies.
- Very little mapping of watersheds, environmentally sensitive areas, animal habitat and wildlife corridors is available for land use planning purposes in this area.
- Although the CRD has developed the Regional Growth Strategy (in part to contain urban sprawl), it has no regional plan for non-forestry, rural development on southern Vancouver Island and does very little planning for regional parks and trails and environmental and watershed protection in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (JDFEA).

- The CRD Board makes local land use regulations on behalf of Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River residents through an elected JDFEA Land Use Committee (with two of the seven members locally elected) and three CRD Board members (i.e. the Regional Director and representatives from Metchosin and Central Saanich).
- The recently updated official community plans for Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River established broad land use goals, created settlement containment areas (where future residential growth is to be clustered), and established general development policies. The existing zoning bylaw for the area has not been comprehensively publicly reviewed since 1992 although periodic ad hoc changes have been made with little community input, sometimes resulting in controversial local reactions.
- If local residents wish to have a stronger community voice in local land use planning decisions, they need to develop a community consensus about the kind of land use they support and encourage their local government to support that position.

Governance Options

The following is based on presentations at the forum “Governance Options for Otter Point, Shirley & Jordan River,” February 19, 2008.

- 1. The purpose of governance:** Governance has two functions: political representation at the CRD Board and to the province; and provision of services to the community.
Note: Is this all that we expect from our model of governance?
- 2. What are the governance choices?**
 - Remain as an electoral area (with or without some changes to the Land Use Committee and Advisory Planning Commissions).
 - Introduce a commission form of governance.
 - Self-incorporate.**Note:** Two other options not mentioned: become a Trust such as the Gulf Islands; or amalgamate with the District of Sooke, which is another form of incorporation.
- 3. Figure out what you want.**
 - Identifying the needs you are trying to meet can help determine the model of governance you want or need. Match the *most important services* to the governance model that is best able to provide them.
 - Do you want more or merely different representation?
 - Do you want more, less, different or consolidated services?
- 4. What services do you need?** Prioritize the services the community needs:

• Water (acquisition, protection, distribution)	• Land use planning
• Roads (building and maintenance)	• Domestic animal control

- Recreation facilities (development and maintenance)
- Parks & trails (acquisition and maintenance)
- Fire protection
- Environmental protection
- Bylaw enforcement

Determine what services the taxpayers will support? How will these services be paid for?

5. Important things to do:

- Develop an OCP that identifies what you want to look like over time. This gives everyone the same message. It should include mapping of special areas that need protection. Once you have decided upon an OCP, stick to it!
- Develop zoning that enforces the values and principles identified in the OCP.
- Develop master plans for priority areas such as parks, trails and growth centres.

6. Things to consider:

- Plan your OCP, zoning, community priorities and model of governance early. The voter base changes over time. Along with growth comes a change in values as different ideas about community services, land use and zoning come into the community.
- What is important to your community now? Is it affordable housing, green space, sustainability, low taxes, protection of the environment? (Look at the straw poll themes)

7. Understand the process.

- Engage the community early and often.
- Understand the issues.
- Expect trade-offs but don't lose perspective.

OTTER POINT, SHIRLEY & JORAN RIVER GOVERNANCE - KEY DATES & DEVELOPMENTS

- 1965 The Sooke Electoral Area is established encompassing Sooke, East Sooke, Malahat, Otter Point, Shirley, Jordan River and Port Renfrew. It has one elected director and land use decisions are made by this director and the director of the Langford Electoral Area.
- 1999: District of Sooke incorporates. Remainder of the Sooke and Langford Electoral Areas are combined to form the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (JDFEA). Now left with one regional director, the whole CRD Board was required to vote on local land use issues.
- 2001: Ben Marr report is commissioned by CRD Board in response to their concerns dealing with JDFEA land issues – particularly Silver Spray and community's dissatisfaction with existing governance and decision-making process. Two strategies are proposed: incorporate each of the JDFEA communities into an adjoining municipality or incorporate Willis Point, Malahat and East Sooke into adjoining municipalities and incorporate west of Sooke into a new municipality. The CRD Board rejects the idea of adding another municipality to an already large and complicated CRD board structure.
- 2002: Sooke Boundary Restructure Committee is formed: initial study includes East Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley, Jordan River and Port Renfrew.
- 2005: Residents of East Sooke, Otter Point and Shirley vote 80% against joining Sooke with estimated 55 - 60% voter turnout.
- 2005: Otter Point & Shirley Governance Committee forms to lobby province for funds for a governance study.

- 2006: Funding approved but local Governance Committee declines to proceed as the terms of reference do not include studying incorporation as one of the options.
- 2006: JDFEA survey conducted by CRD Planning Services and Regional Director indicates that majority of Otter Point & Shirley respondents are **dissatisfied** with the present governance model; **do not** prefer a municipality with mayor and council; **do not** agree with joining Metchosin; are **not satisfied** with the current land use process in the JDFEA and are **opposed** to further annexations of land in the JDFEA by the District of Sooke.
- 2006: 453 residents of Shirley and Otter Point petition province for a governance study. Province and CRD agree to study but limit options. Offer rejected.
- 2007: Otter Point & Shirley Developing a Strategic Vision Project initiated to develop a strategic vision, including governance, for Otter Point & Shirley.

GOVERNANCE RELATED PROBLEMS IN THE JDFEA

- Key decisions on Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws and land use are made, in part, by CRD directors from other areas.
- The CRD has not exercised its proper local governance role in identifying and protecting local water sources, watersheds and environmentally sensitive areas or public greenspace for conservation and recreation.
- The JDFEA does not control its planning services
- Sub-division decisions must be approved by the province through Ministry of Transportation.
- The JDFEA is too geographically scattered to be adequately represented by one elected representative. It needs broader elected representation.
- Properties bordering other municipalities can be annexed.

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SEAPARC Parks & Recreation Commission – meeting space.

Sooke Region Museum – meeting space.

CRD Planning & Regional Planning Services – CRD information access.

John Horgan MLA – provincial information access

A Point-of-View B&B – Guest Accommodation

Tugwell Creek Honey Farm & Meadery – Presentation Gifts

4. WHAT IS A STRATEGIC COMMUNITY VISION?

A strategic community vision is a document that outlines the major goals that a community sets for itself for a 5 -15-year period and identifies key strategies for achieving those goals.

The community goals normally reflect the community's priorities and can focus on diverse issues including: governance, land use, recreation (e.g. parks and trails), community services (e.g. water, fire protection, communications, transportation and roads), taxation, economic development, community development and environmental preservation.

The strategies to achieve such goals are generally broad and inclusive, link to a wide range of groups and organizations both within and outside the community, and may include timeframes for initiating certain activities.

In some respects, the process of developing a strategic community vision can be more important than the document developed, if it brings community residents, businesses, groups and elected leaders together in a process to clarify what they want for their community and how to pursue those goals.