

DISTRICT OF OAK BAY OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN RENEWAL – DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Note to Reader

This document contains draft versions of the goals and objectives for the OCP, including the context. The goals and objectives are presented for review by the community during February and early March. Following this stage of engagement, the goals and objectives will be refined based on the input received, and more detailed policies will be prepared for each topic.

Many of the OCP objectives, and policies to come, are already in effect by the District to varying degrees, partly because this is an OCP renewal. Rather than use the words ‘Continue to’ in front of all or some objectives and policies, those words are implied where work is in progress.

In the final OCP, the order of sections may be changed, new section headings may be added, and content may be juggled among topics. The layout will also be completely different and graphics will be added. The purpose of this review is to focus on the content of the goals and objectives. Did we get it right in terms of reflecting the input of the community to date?

Table of Contents

- Note to Reader 1
- Table of Contents 1
- Context 2
- OCP Renewal Process to Date 2
- Vision 3
- Goals 3
- Demographics and Growth Management 4
- Natural Environment 6
- Neighbourhoods and Housing 7
- Built Environment 10
- Parks and Recreation 11
- Community and Social Well-being 13
- Transportation 15
- Business and Commerce 16
- Utilities and Services 18
- Emergency Management 19
- Climate Change and Energy 20

Context

The District of Oak Bay ('the District' or 'Oak Bay') is a compact, seaside community of just over 18,000 residents located at the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The municipality is one of 13 local governments in the Capital Regional District (CRD) and is an integral part of the regional planning strategy. The District acknowledges and respects that it lies within the territory of First Nations.

Oak Bay is defined by its attractive residential neighbourhoods, historic character, natural environment, and strong sense of community. The municipality includes Oak Bay Village, a vibrant hub of arts, culture, and business, Estevan Village, and other smaller commercial centres within neighbourhoods.

This *Official Community Plan (OCP)* sets out a vision and goals that express the community's values and wishes. These values and wishes were ascertained through public engagement that included a survey of all households, focus groups, and open houses. The vision and goals have been developed through this extensive input from the community, OPAC (Official Community Plan Project Advisory Committee) consideration, and District leadership.

While many of Oak Bay's core qualities have remained consistent since the OCP was first adopted in 1981 and updated in 1997, Oak Bay has also seen many changes during this time. Change is inevitable; while it can be challenging, it is often beneficial. For example, changes to local government policies and practices can help the community respond to the shifting needs of the population as long as the change is managed effectively. An OCP can serve as a key planning tool for setting out policies to help guide, and adapt to, changes over the long term. While building on the foundation established by the 1997 OCP, the renewed OCP adopts principles that are relevant to today's context and expectations for the future.

OCP Renewal Process to Date

The process of renewing the OCP has included the following engagement activities to date:

- May 2013 – 7 visioning workshops, 111, participants
- May and June 2013 – two community open houses - #1 – over 100 participants, #2 – over 50 participants
- Fall 2013 - Community survey sent to all 7,947 households, 2,650 responses, 33.3% participation rate
- February 15, 2014 – Community open house to review draft goals and objectives

Vision

The vision statement is expressed in the present tense, as it represents the community's aspirations for how Oak Bay will be described in the future.

Oak Bay is a vibrant and safe community located in a spectacular natural setting. Residents are proud of the many qualities that make Oak Bay one-of-a-kind, including its sense of community, streetscapes, village charm, residential character, natural coastal environment, enviable quality of life, vibrant arts and culture scene, high quality educational opportunities, heritage values, and well-conserved historic architecture.

Oak Bay is a dynamic community that respects and enhances the existing community structure and core characteristics that make it distinct from adjacent communities, while supporting the changes necessary to meet current and future needs. These features are central to Oak Bay's resilience and sustainability; protecting the best of what we have and adapting to embrace the future.

Oak Bay is a community that values and supports diversity in its population. It offers a broad range of residential, social, and cultural opportunities as well as commercial activities for its residents and strives to be sustainable in its practices. Oak Bay's residents are active contributors in local decision-making, working collaboratively with municipal Council and staff to ensure that Oak Bay will continue to thrive for years to come.

Goals

The goals are organized in accordance with the sections of the OCP.

1. **Natural Environment** – Protect and enhance the natural features that make the community special, including the land and marine ecosystems, foreshore habitats, ocean vistas, creeks, watercourses, and tree canopies.
2. **Neighbourhoods** – Sustain the characteristics of Oak Bay's neighbourhoods that contribute to a sense of place and attachment to the community.
3. **Housing** – Encourage and support the development of diverse housing options that accommodate residents of all ages, incomes, and family situations, including those with special needs.
4. **Built Environment** – Conserve the community's architectural and streetscape heritage while also embracing creative new design approaches that complement the community's character and reflect changing needs.
5. **Parks and Recreation** – Maintain and enhance parks and recreation amenities, including trails and walkways, and provide opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy the natural beauty of the municipality and to pursue active and healthy lifestyles.

6. **Community and Social Well-being** – Encourage and support community and social facilities and services that benefit residents of all ages and needs, foster interaction across generations and cultures, and strengthen community networks and services in health and well-being, safety, education, arts, culture, and heritage.
7. **Transportation** – Offer a diverse range of transportation options and encourage alternative modes of transportation to enhance safety, mobility and access within Oak Bay and to improve connections to surrounding communities.
8. **Business and Commerce** – Support the improvement of Oak Bay’s economy through strategic opportunities that enhance the villages and other commercial centres and encourage new businesses to establish and flourish.
9. **Utilities and Services** – Provide effective and reliable utility infrastructure and services to meet current and future demands.
10. **Emergency Management** – Engage in emergency management to protect lives, property and the environment.
11. **Climate Change and Energy** – Work towards mitigation of climate change, water and energy conservation, reduction of greenhouse gases and other appropriate green initiatives and measures.

Demographics and Growth Management

Context

Oak Bay’s population has changed very little in the past 20 years, since the first OCP was prepared (see Figure 1). The housing mix is also very similar, with about 64% single detached houses and 36% multi-family units.

Future population will therefore be influenced by District policies, particularly this OCP. The District could continue to choose a ‘no-growth’ approach or it could consider some growth as a tool for meeting the vision, goals and objectives expressed in this plan. The CRD’s *Regional Growth Strategy* forecasts Oak Bay’s growth by 2038 to include 680 more dwellings, a population increase of about 2,000, and over 1,600 new jobs.

The characteristics of the population are changing. Increasing numbers of residents are 55 or older. The school-aged population is slightly less than it was 20 years ago. The population is becoming ever more stable; in 2006, 88% of residents had lived in the same home for over five years. While this may be positive for those who care about the community, it is also difficult for those who may want to relocate into Oak Bay.

Because there has been so little new development in the District in recent years, the housing mix is also fairly stable. About two-thirds of houses are single-family detached, with the remainder being multi-family dwellings.

Population	1991 - 17,815	2011 - 18,015
Population 55 or older	1991 - 40% of residents	2011 - 56% of residents
School-aged children	1991 - 17% of residents	2011 - 15% of residents
Resident of same dwelling for over 5 years	1991 – 55%	2006 – 88%

Figure 1: Key Population Characteristics

There are also changes happening within and surrounding Oak Bay that affect planning within the District, as follows:

- Increasing density in the region has resulted in more vehicles travelling within and through Oak Bay.
- Shifting family situations are resulting in new needs, especially related to housing. In general, housing costs are increasing in relation to income. Single- and multi-family houses are aging and maintenance costs may exceed the resources of older, single residents. Housing options for seniors and those with disabilities are limited.
- There is more commuter biking and more interest in walking, outdoor recreation and environmental protection.
- Climate change is causing rising sea levels and more frequent storms.
- Taxes are mostly from residents due to the small amount of commercial land. While this has historically been the case, the taxes are stretched due to demands such as renewal of aging infrastructure.

The community survey identified several fundamental themes that underlie, connect, or subsume all the other themes expressed in the survey. The fundamental themes, which are the shared values of people who live in Oak Bay, are passion for Oak Bay, kinship with / living in nature, and an action theme - do it right.

The community's major concerns and priorities were also expressed in the survey. These include floods and threats of future flooding, replacement and repair of aging infrastructure, high or higher taxes, high real estate prices, and an absence of sufficient housing choices for seniors who are downsizing, small households, young families, and those with modest incomes.

Growth Management Objectives

- Consider increases in density while protecting the values that make Oak Bay an attractive and environmentally rich community.
- In general, follow the existing patterns of land use, considering expansions of higher density areas where appropriate.
- Support limited and well managed increases in commercial use to support the needs of residents and tourists.
- Plan for growth that adapts to changing population characteristics and lifestyles.

Natural Environment

Context

Oak Bay is characterized by its spectacular setting and rich natural environment that includes the ocean shoreline, Bowker Creek and other watercourses, the Garry Oak ecosystem, other environmentally sensitive habitats, trees, parks, and green space. Such features offer many environmental benefits, including cleansing of air, soil and water, support for fish and wildlife species, provision of habitats for rare species, and climate change mitigation. The natural features also form the core of Oak Bay's identity, and they are fundamental to the desirability of Oak Bay as a place to live and a destination to visit. The community places high values on the natural environment and recognizes that environmental conservation and stewardship are core elements of community sustainability.

Oak Bay is unique in that its natural characteristics extend throughout much of the populated areas. During public consultation related to the Oak Bay Heritage Plan, Oak Bay's most significant heritage values were identified as: established streetscapes and neighbourhoods (cited by 65.7% of survey respondents) and natural landscape features and ecological heritage (cited by 33.3% of survey respondents). The tree canopy and plantings are an integral part of the streetscapes, and they also support urban wildlife such as birds, mammals, insects and other living beings.

The District's natural environment also faces challenges, which include tree removal, tree pruning issues (e.g., not enough pruning along sidewalks or too much pruning on trees), planting inappropriate species, increased impervious areas, foreshore erosion, and climate change. Sound planning, policies and practices can help to protect and enhance a vibrant natural environment for current and future generations.

Preserving and enhancing the natural environment was a core component of the 1997 OCP. The OCP noted that parks, open spaces, recreation, and golf courses comprised the second largest land use in the District (at 18% of land) after single-family residential. Over 15 years later, this statement remains true.

Guided by the direction established in the OCP, Oak Bay has taken significant strides to protect its natural environment since 1997. Some initiatives include the following:

- *Tree Protection Bylaw* amendments
- Oak Bay Climate Change Task Force report to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (2008)
- Oak Bay Green Committee (2009) public forum on urban forests and watersheds

- Participation in the CRD Regional Sustainability Strategy, support of the Bowker Creek Initiative, and partners in the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership
- Oak Bay Heritage Plan (2013)
- Urban Forest Strategy (2013)

This OCP aims to complement and expand upon these efforts through objectives and policies specific to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Because of Oak Bay's limited land area, if an OCP goal is to retain the natural environment and greenspace, future growth needs to be accommodated, for the most part, within the existing footprint of the built environment.

Natural Environment Objectives

- Protect and manage Garry Oaks and other trees on public land.
- Encourage and promote environmental stewardship and the protection and management of Garry Oaks and other trees on private property.
- Protect and restore native ecosystems on public land and encourage similar initiatives on private land.
- Encourage and support public awareness and education regarding the natural environment.
- Conserve and manage the shoreline to protect its structural and environmental integrity.
- Minimize air, noise and light pollution.
- Integrate environmental considerations into planning and design processes to enhance community sustainability and environmental protection.

Neighbourhoods and Housing

Context

Oak Bay is a community of neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods have evolved over time and what we see today is the legacy of a long history of change. The first settlements were First Nations peoples followed by farms and vacation cottages in the late 19th century. By the early 1900s, a housing boom was producing what are now known as the major heritage houses, built for wealthier people moving out of downtown Victoria.

Over the next 60 years, whole neighbourhoods appeared in succession as large tracts of land were developed – the farms of south and central Oak Bay, the Willows Fairgrounds, the Landsdowne slopes, the Uplands, and later on the Henderson area in the north. Each of these areas was developed for unique reasons, at different times and with varied economic drivers. Neighbourhoods built before the Depression often included large and expensive houses in keeping with the relative affluence of the times. During the Depression and after the Second World War, smaller, simpler houses were built on more modest budgets and much of Oak Bay became a relatively inexpensive working class community.

In the 1960s and onwards, the increasing affluence of Victoria's middle class led to larger houses on larger lots, particularly "rancher" houses with living areas on a single floor, most of which were built in the northern parts of Oak Bay. At the same time, a massive boom in multi-family apartment construction

began, and continued into the 1970s and 1980s. This changed the community from almost completely single family housing to one in which almost a third of its residents lived in apartments of various kinds.

By the 1980s, most of the available land in Oak Bay had been built out and construction shifted to replacement of older houses. Property values began to rise faster than in neighbouring municipalities as Oak Bay became more and more desirable to upper middle class families. In the 1990s and into the 2000s, this pattern continued with mainly single family redevelopment in older areas. Multi-family development largely tapered off and by the time the 1997 version of the OCP was written, Oak Bay had started to call itself a "mainly single family community".

Over the last decade, this focus on single family housing has led to an increasing misfit between the housing stock and both the people who live here and the people who want to move here. Rising property values have made it more difficult for young families with children to afford a single family house, but there are few other options. At the same time, Oak Bay has become home to more and more people over 65, the demographic least likely to be looking for older single family houses with stairs and significant maintenance requirements. Similarly little housing has been developed for people with physical challenges or mental disabilities. The result is that a demand has built up for other forms of housing.

Some in the community feel that there is no need to change because there are always buyers or renters for the housing that is here. Others think that the lack of diversity in housing types has led to the exclusion of people who would benefit the community, not the least of whom are the children who have grown up in Oak Bay and can now not afford to live here.

Another feature of Oak Bay's housing stock is the availability of rental housing within single family residences. It is recognized that Oak Bay has many secondary suites despite such suites not being regulated within the District. The suites provide housing to post-secondary students for the most part and help homeowners financially bear the high cost of buying single family houses in Oak Bay. The extra rental income allows some seniors who are house-rich but on fixed incomes to remain in their houses.

While this form of housing fills a needed gap, because it is unregulated it may not meet today's standards for safe housing and it can cause community concerns such as parking impacts and overuse of services and infrastructure. The District initiated efforts to address the issue of secondary suites through its Secondary Suites Review Committee. The Committee's 2010 *Final Report* notes that secondary suites are an increasingly common practice among BC municipalities, and the report contains information on the policies and regulations used by other communities to manage secondary suites, and recommends further consultation. The more recent 2013 OCP survey showed that a majority of residents are in favour of some form of regulation of secondary suites.

The 1997 OCP focuses on single family neighbourhoods and a very slight increase in multi-family housing. It says very little about special needs or affordable housing, a mandatory requirement of new OCPs. Providing meaningful policy direction on these subjects requires that attention be paid to new housing options.

Meeting housing needs in any community is a complex issue. More work will be required to address housing issues beyond what can be covered in an OCP and it is likely that a detailed Housing Strategy will follow the OCP.

Neighbourhood Objectives

- Respect and enhance the sense of place of neighbourhoods and other special locations within Oak Bay.
- Encourage planning and investment in public and private spaces that create desirable and memorable community gathering places to strengthen and sustain neighbourhoods.
- Provide opportunities for increases in density, such as duplexes, townhouses or laneway houses, where appropriate in single family neighbourhoods.
- Encourage and support living and live/work units above commercial uses in designated commercial areas.
- Link increases in density with the provision of community amenities that contribute to community sustainability and resilience.
- Consider changes to parking requirements where there is good access to public transit and where residents tend to use alternative modes such as walking, biking, and public transit, especially if this will be replaced with other community amenities.

Housing Objectives

- Recognize and communicate that in a sustainable community, housing options should be available to meet housing needs.
- Encourage diverse housing forms that respond to needs as they change over time, with consideration for affordability and accessibility.
- Work towards regulation of secondary suites, recognizing that this will be a process requiring time and community engagement.
- Encourage and support the upgrading and retrofitting of older and heritage houses.
- Encourage and support more housing options suitable for seniors.
- Encourage and support more housing options suitable for those with mental or physical disabilities.
- Consider increases in the number of multi-family housing units in areas designated multi-family residential.
- Consider a limited expansion of multi-family areas in locations such as along arterial roads, near transit, and near commercial and recreation services.
- Encourage affordable housing in multi-family developments.

Built Environment

Context

Oak Bay's buildings and structures, the 'built form' of the community, have changed considerably over time, as described in Neighbourhoods and Housing. This is typical, as buildings have a limited lifespan. Architecture evolves in response to community and residents' needs, market demands, the evolution of design and building technology, and economics.

Oak Bay is a unique and special place composed of locations and neighbourhoods with their own character and identity. Oak Bay Village, Estevan, Uplands, Willows Beach, and McNeill Bay are examples of identifiable places. The important elements of built form for Oak Bay include respecting the context and providing a 'sense of place'. The latter term refers to those characteristics that make a place special or unique, as well as to those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging. Places that exhibit a strong sense of place have an identity and character recognized immediately by a visitor and valued deeply by residents. Sense of place is a key concept in planning for more sustainable and resilient communities as it recognizes that the built form of private and public spaces can help to create significant and memorable community gathering places that provide social, economic and environmental benefits for the community.

Some residents of Oak Bay are concerned about new developments that they feel are inconsistent with neighbourhood character, such as larger houses on small lots and removal of too much landscape. Respondents of the OCP survey indicated that design that "fits in" with the neighbourhood is the gold standard for any new construction in this community. Some said that Oak Bay's distinctive character derives from a traditional heritage look and feel, which is largely responsible for the community's widespread appeal. The *Oak Bay Heritage Plan* (2013) identified 'Established Streetscapes and Neighbourhoods' (cited by two-thirds of survey respondents) and 'Historic Buildings and Structures' as two of the community's top five heritage values. Conserving the existing built environment – including streetscapes, neighbourhoods, and historic buildings and structures – is the central goal of the *Heritage Plan*.

Many survey respondents stated that good design and architecture are more important than consistency in appearance. There is a widespread belief that quality architecture should prevail in any new or renovated buildings, whether single family houses, townhouses, apartments, or commercial developments. Some people said they preferred to have a mixture of high quality building designs that reflect different architectural styles in neighbourhoods. A few residents pointed out that many architectural styles are represented in Oak Bay's older houses and a mix of styles is nothing new in Oak Bay. The main concerns of many residents are to do things well - the details of design, setbacks, landscaping, etc. An OCP can include design guidelines for multi-family and compact single family housing, but not for low density single family houses. Zoning regulations can establish setbacks for landscaping.

The regulatory framework for the management of built form in a community includes Development Permit guidelines for form and character in the OCP, and zoning regulations. The Development Permit section of the 1997 OCP establishes general objectives for built form, but it does not provide direction on building design. The Zoning Bylaw was established in 1986 and the regulations related to built form have not been substantively reviewed since that time. The result is that these tools and regulations need review to meet current needs. This contributes to the tension over new development in the community.

There are some duplexes in single family neighbourhoods. Since the 1960s, this has not been permitted, but prior to that time duplexes were allowed on large lots.

It is a common practice for municipalities to review and update their Zoning Bylaw following an OCP update. This enables zoning regulations to be molded to fit the objectives, policies and design guidelines of the OCP.

Built Environment Objectives

- Encourage and support new commercial, residential and mixed use buildings that address the changing needs of the community.
- Encourage the conservation, stewardship and acknowledgement of streetscapes and neighbourhood character, including historic buildings and structures, and their gardens and significant landscape features, with consideration of the *2013 Heritage Plan*.
- Reconsider regulations related to home sizes in residential areas.
- Develop design guidelines for commercial development that address topics including neighbourhood character, streetscape, tree protection, landscape, accessibility, lighting, parking, traffic and noise.
- Prepare design guidelines for multi-family and higher density single family development that address topics including neighbourhood character, streetscape, tree protection, landscape, accessibility, lighting, parking, traffic and noise.
- Encourage new development to include sustainable and green building technologies such as solar panels, solar hot water, rainwater collection, and recycling of materials from demolished buildings.

Parks and Recreation

Context

Parks and recreation are vital components of life in Oak Bay. The community has outdoor and indoor spaces and facilities that offer a wide range of recreation opportunities to residents and visitors of all ages, interests, and abilities. The spaces and facilities include the District's parkland, trails and paths, and recreation centres. Complementing these are public and private amenities such as the Victoria, Uplands and Henderson Golf Courses, Oak Bay Marina and Royal Victoria Yacht Club. The shoreline itself functions as a form of parkland and supports extensive recreation activities such as beach visits, swimming, kayaking, fishing, nature appreciation and walking.

Parks have a strong inter-relationship with community sustainability. Oak Bay's parks help to protect important habitats and species, and environmental protection and enhancement is a key component of park management. Natural features such as shorelines, creeks, forests and Garry Oak uplands that are recreation attractions require careful planning and management to allow human access while protecting the environmental values. Parks staff are responsible for managing trees on public land, and these trees are a vital component of the urban forest that enhances the environmental values and livability of Oak Bay.

There are also important connections between parks and recreation and Community and Social Infrastructure. Parks and recreation amenities often serve as venues for programs that cater to all age groups and those with varying needs; education, arts, culture and heritage are also inter-related with parks and recreation.

The community indicated that trails and paths are the most important recreation amenity, and this is consistent with municipalities across Canada. The District manages eight unique walking trails, but in general, Oak Bay is a highly walkable community. Many community members indicated that walking and biking are their primary modes of transportation because it is relatively easy and pleasant to walk and bike within Oak Bay. The shoreline is a particular attraction for walking and biking routes, but access along the shoreline is not continuous.

The District is home to 29 parks, which are grouped into four unique types, as follows:

- Parkettes, such as the Native Plant Garden and Lokier Park
- Neighbourhood Parks, such as Quimper and Lafayette Parks
- Community Parks, such as Anderson Hill
- Municipal Parks, such as Uplands Park

Oak Bay's five recreation centres provide a wide range of opportunities including ice, aquatics, fitness, gymnasium, indoor sports field, teen centre, seniors centre, child care, and meeting room amenities. In addition to providing and maintaining high quality facilities, Oak Bay's Parks and Recreation Department offers multiple programs and activities to encourage an active and engaged community. Its seasonal *Active Living Guide*, *Oak Bay Walking Trails* map, and comprehensive website (<http://oakbay.ca/parks-recreation>) are invaluable resources for Oak Bay residents and visitors alike.

Parks and recreation was a central component of the 1997 OCP, which highlighted the contribution of such amenities to Oak Bay's high quality of life. Building on past efforts, the OCP put forward a strategy to protect and enhance the District's parks and recreation infrastructure and programming.

Since 1997, the District has completed and advanced a number of the objectives set forth in the OCP, such as upgrading existing playgrounds, improving sitting areas, and ensuring that natural park areas are maintained in their natural condition. The *Recreational Use of Oak Bay Parks & Open Spaces: Report of the Parks Vision Committee* study, published in 2005 and updated in 2011, serves as a key source for information regarding the character, uses, policies, and potential directions of Oak Bay's parks and open spaces.

Despite the continued growth and success of Oak Bay's parks and recreation offerings, challenges remain. These include the limited connectivity of the existing trail and path system, few opportunities for urban agriculture such as community gardens or vegetable plots, invasive species in natural parks, dog management issues, and a desire by some for expanded tourism and recreation amenities. The recreation centres are fairly old, and though they remain highly popular, it may be time to plan for changes to meet evolving needs. The District has never undertaken a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan that engages the community to understand their specific interests and needs.

Parks and Recreation Objectives

- Expand and upgrade the trail/path system, including public trails to and along the shoreline.
- Conduct a comprehensive overview of parks and recreation in the community and set directions for the next decade.
- Encourage, plan and implement opportunities for urban agriculture such as community gardens on public lands.
- Update and maintain infrastructure along trails and in parks, including sports fields.
- Support the development of tourist and recreation facilities that serve residents and attract visitors to Oak Bay, especially at waterfront locations.
- Ensure that there are appropriate dog management strategies and regulations within parks and public spaces.
- Promote and provide information about trails/paths, parks, and recreation opportunities within the community to improve personal well-being and community sustainability.
- Recognize the importance of marinas in supporting water-based recreation for residents and tourists.

Community and Social Well-being

Context

The topic of Community and Social Well-being addresses the facilities, services, programmes, events, and social networks that support a community's well-being and help to form its identity. Parks and community centres, related to this topic, are covered in the Parks and Recreation section.

Community sustainability depends in part on effective initiatives that support community and social well-being. Partly due to the length of residency and low population growth, Oak Bay is viewed as a very cohesive and stable place in which to live, recreate and work. The District also boasts a diverse range of community and social services and organizations that enhance livability.

Because community and social services are delivered by a broad spectrum of organizations, effective engagement within the municipality and cooperation with regional stakeholders that provide complementary services can be of mutual benefit. Oak Bay collaborates with the Capital Regional District (CRD) on services related to arts and culture, library, housing, waste management, health, environmental protection and transportation. Each Council member is assigned as Council Liaison to CRD Committees and the Mayor is a Director of the CRD Board, strengthening these regional connections and partnerships. There is also effective engagement with regional authorities such as the University of Victoria, Vancouver Island Health Authority, and BC Transit.

Over 20 community groups are active in Oak Bay. These groups offer support and advice to District decision-makers, they provide direct services, and they host multiple events. The District's volunteer and faith-based groups also help to support vulnerable populations.

Oak Bay has excellent community spirit as demonstrated by the level of community participation in numerous festivals and special events. These include uniquely Oak Bay events such as the Oak Bay Tea Party, Garagellenium, Christmas Light-up, Summer Market on the Avenue, classic car shows, sail-pasts and the Oak

Bay Half Marathon. Neighbourhood enthusiasm and cohesiveness is symbolized by the numerous block parties, Block Watch and the Mayor's welcome activities for new residents.

The community's arts and culture organizations and performing arts venues host a vibrant arts and culture scene. Oak Bay is home to the Canadian College of Performing Arts in addition to numerous independent artists, many of whom open up their studios each year for the Oak Bay Artists Studio Tour and display their works during the annual Bowker Creek Brush Up.

Oak Bay's residents have access to a variety of health services, including the 150-unit Oak Bay Lodge residential care centre, which provides care for older adults with chronic and complex conditions.

Oak Bay's educational services include the University of Victoria, Camosun College, Oak Bay High School with a catchment area that extends beyond District boundaries, and Monterey Middle School. Oak Bay is also home to various private schools, such as the Glenlyon Norfolk School, Saint Michaels University Junior School, as well as non-traditional schools such as Willows Elementary, a public French immersion school dating back to 1910, the Oak Bay Parent Owned Pre-School and other thriving pre-schools.

Oak Bay's community and social infrastructure is expanding. Examples include the newly built David Foster Foundation Theatre and the new Oak Bay High School, which, when complete, will house a theatre and Neighbourhood Learning Centre in addition to serving 1,200 local and 100 international students.

There is a strong cultural heritage in Oak Bay, which is greatly valued by its residents. The District supports and is becoming more proactive in conserving its community heritage through the work of its municipal volunteer bodies such as the Heritage Commission, the Heritage Foundation and Municipal Archives. Key cultural aspects include the streetscapes and neighbourhoods, historic buildings and structures, cultural and natural landscape features, and unique history. The District has been taking the initiative in protecting its heritage, evident in the recent Heritage Strategic Plan Report (2013). The document provides a detailed framework to ensure that Oak Bay's heritage and special character is maintained for years to come; this strategy has helped to inform various policy directions within the OCP.

The community has identified a number of remaining challenges that, if addressed, will further strengthen Oak Bay's community and social well-being, including expanded services, programmes and facilities for seniors, families and people with developmental, physical and mental challenges, additional support for arts and culture activities and education, and new initiatives that sustain volunteer activity.

Community and Social Well-Being Objectives

- Augment and refine community facilities and services, including health care, social programs and other services for adults, seniors and families.
- Engage persons with developmental, physical and mental challenges and provide appropriate opportunities for community inclusion, support services and facilities.
- Enrich community facilities and social programming for youth.
- Enhance public education opportunities that relate to arts and culture, nature interpretation, First Nations and heritage.
- Engage and build stronger relations with local and regional partners, First Nations, education institutions, and other significant organizations.
- Reinforce Oak Bay's unique community identity by strengthening policies on heritage that reflect the 2013 Heritage Strategic Plan.
- Support the expansion and vitality of arts and culture in the community.

Transportation

Context

Oak Bay is a walkable community with interesting streets and laneways. Its road network contains a mix of traditional grid, modified grid, and cul-de-sacs/non-grid roads. Many streets are quiet; however, as the number of vehicles has increased, traffic and parking on some roads has changed so that the condition, traffic, and speed are of concern to residents. District roads are divided into four types –Arterial Roads, Collector Roads, Local Roads and Special Roads (OCP will include a map).

Oak Bay is largely a residential community, with the majority of residents employed outside of the District. As a result, there is a significant outflow/inflow of residents during peak commuting times. Car travel is the predominant mode of transportation for commuters, those enjoying retirement, and others moving through the community. Parking for cars is widely available throughout the community, but several local areas including the Village, the Oak Bay Recreation Centre and the Monterey Centre have experienced significant parking demands.

Residents have expressed an interest in improving the options for alternative modes of transportation, particularly safe pedestrian routes throughout Oak Bay and cycling on major routes. The District is well-suited to such active forms of transportation due to its gentle topography, compact nature, and short distance to downtown Victoria. Bike lanes have been built on some roads but the network lacks continuity and needs improvements. Active transportation has become a growing priority in the District, as indicated by the recent Active Transportation Plan (2011).

As a result of Oak Bay's aging population and decreases in personal mobility, many of its residents require a more varied transportation network. This may include increased public transit options and more accessible and versatile pedestrian infrastructure such as ramps, longer walk signals, and wider sidewalks to accommodate motorized scooters. Public transit is limited because it currently focuses on connections between Oak Bay, the University of Victoria, and the City of Victoria and not on connections within the community. Unless other options are developed, Oak Bay has limited ability to change this situation as the transit system is operated by a regional authority.

In the previous OCP, a central goal was to balance making driving easier for motorists with preserving Oak Bay's unique neighbourhood character and streetscapes, including its narrow roads and irregular street layout. Previous objectives focused on improving walkways and sidewalks; enhancing pedestrian and automobile safety; increasing transit services both internally and externally through cooperation with regional neighbours; and supporting the development of cycling infrastructure. Skateboards and longboards are another form of transportation for younger residents and are used by many attending the learning facilities in the community.

Transportation Objectives

- Design and operate roads as “complete streets” as adopted by Council policy, with all users in mind, including vehicles, cyclists, transit, motor scooters, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
- Improve sidewalks for better accessibility, especially in commercial and high-use locations.
- Address the safety of the road network through management of speed and improvements to road conditions.
- Provide more and safer options for commuter and recreation bike routes and infrastructure, including bike racks and signs on bike routes, recognizing possible effects on driving lanes and parking.
- Advocate for improved transit services from the regional authority and where possible look for opportunities to provide other modes of public transportation to improve connections within the community (e.g., local mini-bus loop).
- Address needs for access to the Village, Estevan Village, and other commercial and recreation centres, balancing business interests with the move towards additional and diverse transportation modes.
- Collaborate with other municipalities and businesses on ways to accommodate tourist buses and commercial delivery vehicles while minimizing conflicts and impacts on the community.

Business and Commerce

Context

Business and commerce in Oak Bay is vibrant and varied. The District is home to approximately 1,750 licensed businesses in sectors such as retail, services, tourism, arts, education, and home-based occupations. Its commercial centres are home to local, unique, and neighbourly businesses.

Oak Bay’s primary commercial centre is ‘the avenue’ or ‘the Village’, and it is located along Oak Bay Avenue between Foul Bay Road and Monterey Avenue. There are a number of smaller commercial centres such as ‘Estevan Village’, on Estevan Avenue around Musgrave Street. The villages and smaller commercial centres offer a variety of shops and boutiques, art galleries, restaurants, and entertainment options. The newly constructed Oak Bay Beach Hotel and historic Oak Bay Guest House provide distinct accommodation options for visitors to the District.

Many residents value the easy access to these commercial centres. Residents are able to obtain many goods and services within the boundaries of Oak Bay, thereby strengthening the social and economy vibrancy of the community while enjoying the convenience of shopping and obtaining services close to home in outdoor attractive settings. The economic viability of the District is valued as a component of community sustainability.

Oak Bay is well-known for its festivals and public events, many of which are sponsored and supported by local merchants and the Oak Bay Improvement Association. These events attract participants from far and wide and are a key source of business and commercial activity in the District. While the majority of residents enjoy these events, care needs to be taken to respect neighbourhood and business concerns such as traffic, parking, access and noise.

Despite its vibrant commercial centres, there are challenges. The relatively small amount of commercial land in Oak Bay restricts the District’s tax base to primarily residential properties. Previous applications to expand commercial uses have often been denied due to neighbourhood concerns such as traffic, parking, noise, and neighbourhood character. Additional challenges identified by the community include concerns of local business owners over the number of Oak Bay Avenue and Beach Avenue closures for special events, current regulations that set strict limits on home-based businesses such as prohibiting bed and breakfasts, and outdated bylaws and regulations.

While business and commerce is relatively healthy in the District, there are opportunities to further strengthen this sector. Such opportunities may include provision of more flexibility for home-based businesses, encouraging commercial expansion with appropriate provisions, and continuing to strengthen and enhance the village character. Changing patterns of consumerism such as online shopping are a threat, potentially addressed by creating a shopping ‘experience’ that offers social and healthy living values.

Business and commerce was a key component of the 1997 OCP. General policy directions included maintaining the amount of existing commercial land, supporting residential development above commercial uses, improving the physical environment of shopping areas, and support for home-based businesses. The OCP also put forward policies specific to the primary village business and shopping area – policies such as increasing ground-level activity, improving the pedestrian experience through design and public spaces, increasing vitality outside of business hours, and providing adequate parking on-site or nearby.

Many of these policies served the community well. The opportunity now is to refine objectives and policies to reflect changes in the needs of businesses and their clientele.

Business and Commerce Objectives

- Support a modest expansion of commercial uses within Oak Bay while addressing concerns such as tree protection, parking, traffic, noise, effects on other properties, and neighbourhood character.
- Plan and design commercial centres to attract and meet the needs of shoppers and clientele.
- Enhance the physical environment of local shopping areas with a focus on providing adequate and safe space for pedestrians and other non-vehicular modes.
- Require building designs that support activity and interest at street level within the Village.
- Support mixed-use buildings that include commercial and residential uses.
- Encourage and support home-based businesses that are respectful of other residents and neighbourhoods.
- Support the planning and location of festivals, events and street closures in the District, while taking care to minimize impacts on residents and businesses.
- Encourage and support more “street corner” neighbourhood commercial establishments.

Utilities and Services

Context

The District's Engineering and Public Works Department designs, builds, maintains and is responsible for the District's physical infrastructure assets. These include roads, water mains, storm drains, sanitary sewers, street lights, sidewalks, public amenities, vehicle fleets, traffic services and solid waste collection infrastructure.

The District provides residents with bi-weekly garbage and kitchen waste collection, while the CRD is responsible for recycling services. The Oak Bay Police Department has protected residents since 1906 and contracts with the Saanich Police Department for major crime investigations. The Oak Bay Fire Department has provided emergency and non-emergency services since 1937. The District has prepared an *Emergency Response and Recovery Plan*, most recently updated in 2011.

Oak Bay operates a municipal yard and recycling facility, commonly referred to as 'the dump'. This facility is highly valued by the community because it is convenient, tax-funded, and it allows disposition of excess refuse (beyond the bi-weekly pick-up allowances) and encourages conscientious recycling.

Oak Bay's utilities play a vitally important role in supporting the community. Like other communities in BC that were founded more than 100 years ago, a significant amount of the District's underground infrastructure is in its latter years of service so there is ongoing need for renewal. Oak Bay actively monitors its underground services and prepares annual plans and budgets for the renewal process.

One major ongoing issue for Oak Bay is the inflow and infiltration of storm water into the regional sanitary system, which the provincial government has required to be eliminated over time. Oak Bay has been carrying out significant work on this issue in South Oak Bay and continues to work on a plan to separate the combined storm/sewer lines in part of the Uplands.

Additional concerns identified by the community include road maintenance, surface water runoff, and shoreline erosion. The District allocates funds for annual road maintenance. It is monitoring shoreline erosion and has established a contingency fund to address the issue. The community supports moving utility wires underground and some of this has been achieved; however, concerns related to buried archaeological remains and artifacts make this challenging.

As was noted in the 1997 OCP, new construction in Oak Bay is primarily infill and redevelopment, so utility and servicing priorities remain focused on continued improvements to the existing system. Additional objectives of the 1997 OCP included reducing the overall street lighting energy consumption as well as installing decorative lamp standards. One area identified in the OCP as suited to decorative lamps was the Estevan Avenue commercial centre; today, this area boasts unique street lamps in line with its village character.

Utilities and Services Objectives

- Renew and develop Oak Bay's utilities in sustainable ways to meet the community's needs.
- Repair and replace water and sewer lines on an ongoing basis.
- Plan for and undertake shoreline management.
- Pursue sustainable stormwater and rainwater management technologies on public land, such as bioswales and rain gardens.
- Reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in municipal works.
- Use and require "dark sky" street and building lighting to reduce light pollution.

Emergency Management

Context

The ultimate purpose of emergency management is to save lives, preserve the environment and protect property. To meet this objective, emergency management is comprised of four interdependent risk-based functions: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The District of Oak Bay is actively engaged in becoming a ‘disaster-resilient community’. This is a community that provides for the protection of public safety, health, the environment, critical infrastructure, property and economic stability. While no community can ever be completely safe from hazards, the District can minimize its vulnerability by applying the principles of risk management in community planning.

The delivery of protective and emergency management services in Oak Bay are community based. The emergency program, fire and police departments have a strong community focus and tailor their emergency services programs and priorities to align with the needs of the residents and businesses in the District.

The intention of emergency management in Oak Bay is to manage the risks of major emergencies and disasters through forethought, planning and preparedness on behalf of residents. Managing risk extends beyond emergency response planning to include risk assessment, land use policy, mitigation, business continuity and recovery. Oak Bay has adopted the following basic principles in undertaking the responsibility for emergency management:

- **Teamwork** – Council has created and empowered the Emergency Planning Policy Committee, through bylaw, to support emergency management decisions in the District.
- **Comprehensive Approach** – The District is committed to the BC Emergency Response Management System as supported by Emergency Management BC, the provincial agency responsible for ensuring compliance with emergency management provincial legislation.
- **Public Involvement** – The District directly engages residents in understanding threats, mitigation, risks on their properties and preparing themselves for response and recovery.
- **Regional Partnerships** – Oak Bay fosters formal partnerships with other core municipalities in the region, and local, regional and provincial agencies with inter-related or shared emergency functions work cooperatively, although they retain full authority within their jurisdictions.
- **Funded Priorities** – The District funds emergency management through general government funds, continually seeks other available sources of program funding to support and enhance public safety in the community, and contributes to the collective efforts of volunteer groups actively promoting emergency management in the District, under the auspices of the Oak Bay Emergency Program.

Emergency management in Oak Bay considers the entirety of the District including all lands, facilities, infrastructure, businesses, institutions, federal and provincial lands, and addresses all types of potential emergencies including earthquake, severe storm or major fire. Oak Bay is most vulnerable to two natural hazards, earthquake and severe weather incidents. The District is located within Seismic Zone 5, and is at risk of a damaging earthquake that could threaten critical infrastructure such as sewers, water mains, gas mains, power lines, roads, municipal buildings, service facilities and institutions. The rain storms and wind incidents have been increasingly intense in recent years.

Oak Bay Emergency Management recognizes its leadership role in prevention/mitigation and preparedness initiatives in the community to upgrade buildings and infrastructure to the most current seismic codes and to provide the most current preparedness information and education to residents. The District of Oak Bay is committed to providing the community with an emergency plan that is continually reviewed and updated with the most current information for mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Emergency Management Objectives

- Prepare and implement emergency management plans, policies and protocols in consideration of public safety, health, the environment, critical infrastructure, property and economic stability in pursuit of community disaster resiliency.
- Increase community resilience through mitigation of natural and constructed hazards.
- Consider existing and potential hazards in all municipal business decisions regarding development.
- Coordinate planning, education and information sharing of emergency management concepts with local, regional, provincial, federal governments and non-government agencies, service providers, community organizations and volunteers.
- Include the four pillars of emergency management – prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery – in all district planning decisions, policies and bylaws.
- Engage with staff, community groups and citizens to enhance their personal preparedness in residences, work places and community events.

Climate Change and Energy

Context

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that climates around the world are changing, and identifies the human activities of deforestation, waste decomposition and fossil fuel combustion as the primary causes. Since 2006, the Province of British Columbia has recognized that local governments are vital partners in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and BC's Local Government Act was amended in 2008 to require all OCPs to set targets for GHG reduction, as well as policies and actions to achieve the targets.

There are two primary methods through which municipalities can reduce GHG emissions, through land use planning that results in less community energy consumption and through reducing GHGs associated with corporate operations.

In 2007, the Ministry of Environment launched a GHG reporting system called the Community Energy and Emissions (CEEI) inventory. This tool provides inventories of municipal energy consumption and GHG emissions estimates for three key sectors: on-road transportation, buildings and solid waste. In 2010, Oak Bay's GHG emissions sources were as follows:

- on-road transportation 59%
- buildings 34%
- solid waste 7%

An Oak Bay Climate Change Task Force, with a mission to analyze and report to Council on ways and means of promoting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions within the District of Oak Bay, both in the community at large and within the municipal organization, prepared a final report in 2008. The Task Force provided recommendations related transportation, lifestyle, and buildings and land use. The CRD has been working on regional strategies to address climate change in collaboration with the member municipalities.

In general, Oak Bay has a relatively energy efficient land use form due to the compactness of the community. The District is fairly walkable with commercial centres available to meet most everyday needs. Transportation emissions for those living within the community is also likely less on average than for most communities. Where Oak Bay suffers is along the Foul Bay – Henderson corridor, which connects the University of Victoria with the City of Victoria and other municipalities in the region.

Some examples of potential climate change impacts in Oak Bay include damage to property from more frequent and intense storm events or sea level rise, adverse health impacts in vulnerable populations due to increased incidence and intensity of heat waves, and loss of ecosystem functions due to warmer, drier summer weather or scouring of watercourses from intense rains. Objectives and policies throughout this OCP relate to mitigation of climate change impacts and reduction of GHG emissions; such topics include protection and enhancement of environmental resources, support for active transportation, improvements to stormwater management, and guidelines for building design.

Climate Change and Energy Objectives

- Plan and implement measures to support and enhance energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction in buildings, transportation and solid waste.
- Conduct climate change adaptation planning to reduce future impacts on public health, property and the natural environment.
- Manage community energy consumption and generation to give priority to conservation and efficiency, diversification of supply, renewable energy and low carbon fuels.
- Collaborate with the CRD on planning, education and community engagement related to climate change and energy, encouraging conservation of water and energy, and reduction of GHGs.