



What is an OCP?

A guide to the OCP Process

What is an OCP?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is defined in the Local Government Act as “a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan”.

An OCP is intended to be the community’s vision for the future development and growth of an area. The Regional District Board, staff, and others use the OCP to guide their land use and development decisions. An OCP also provides the public and developers with information on how their community may develop.

What issues can be addressed in an OCP?

An OCP must deal with the following issues:

- The location, amount, type and density of residential development.
- The location, amount and type of commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational, and public utility land uses.
- The location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction.
- Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development.
- The location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems.

- The location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites.
- Housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.

An OCP can contain policy statements on the following:

- Social needs, social well-being and social development.
- The maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area or in an area designated for agricultural use in the community plan.
- The preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Need More Information?

Come visit the Planning Department!

We are located at the RDBN Office at 37 3rd Avenue, Burns Lake, BC.

Call us at: (250) 692-3195 or toll free in BC 1-800-320-3339 Fax: (250) 692-3305

What issues can't be addressed in an OCP?

An issue which is not within the jurisdiction of the local government (forestry, mining, crown land issues etc.) can not be addressed through policy in an OCP. The plan may only state broad objective with respect to those matters.

What are typical OCP goals?

The local government act identifies the following as possible goals for an OCP (where these issues are addressed):

- avoiding urban sprawl and ensuring that development takes place where adequate facilities exist or can be provided in a timely, economic and efficient manner;
- settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles and encourage walking, bicycling and the efficient use of public transit;
- the efficient movement of goods and people while making effective use of transportation and utility corridors;
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas;
- maintaining the integrity of a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural land reserve;

- economic development that supports the unique character of communities;
- reducing and preventing air, land and water pollution;
- adequate, affordable and appropriate housing;
- adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement;
- protecting the quality and quantity of ground water and surface water;
- settlement patterns that minimize the risks associated with natural hazards;
- preserving, creating and linking urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas;
- planning for energy supply and promoting efficient use, conservation and alternative forms of energy;
- good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

However, the Regional District, in consultation with the community, identifies and establishes the community's vision and goals, and the policies intended to meet those goals. This is done through the OCP review process.

Who is creating the OCP and What is the Process?

The Planning Department of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako undertakes the OCP review process. The Electoral Area Director and the Electoral Area Advisory Planning Commission (appointed by the Electoral Area Director) oversee the process in consultation with RDBN staff. The Regional District Board must approve the final document as a Bylaw.

A working group that includes any interested community members will provide advice to the Regional District and will work to create drafts of the new OCP. This group will be chaired by the Director of Planning. The group is intended to be open to all members of the community willing to commit to the process. Should the number of people wanting to participate in the meetings get too large a selection process may be necessary to limit numbers.

A draft of the OCP will be brought back to the greater community for review and comment at a public meeting or open house prior to official consideration by the Board as a bylaw. A Public Hearing is also required as part of the OCP adoption process.

How Can I Get Involved?

Your input matters!

- Fill out our survey!
- Fill out a comment sheet!
- Participate in the Working Group!!

Watch the RDBN website and local newspapers for upcoming public meetings and open houses on the OCP.