

PROJECT SIGN-OFF DEVELOPMENT
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN RECALIBRATION
- 2025

PROJECT SUMMARY:

In October 2024, Council directed staff to initiate a limited review of the Official Community Plan (OCP). The Township is amending its OCP to update policies and guidelines, as outlined in Table 1, while keeping the intent of the 2018 OCP. The OCP is being amended by December 31, 2025, because the Province (under Bill 44) requires that Esquimalt provide land use capacity for an adequate amount of housing based on 20-year housing targets identified in the Housing Needs Report (HNR). This OCP Recalibration allows the Township to meet its statutory obligations under the *Local Government Act*, while incorporating the amendments in Table 1.

PROJECT MANAGER:

Jakub Lisowski, Planner II Policy, Development Services

PROJECT TEAM:

Bill Brown, Director of Development Services

Jakub Lisowski, Planner II Policy, Development Services

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Conduct a review of the OCP that is limited in scope to avoid a situation where the project extends into 2026.
- Create amendments to the OCP.
- Conduct engagement with internal, external, and public stakeholders.

PROJECT SCOPE:

The project will examine how each of the variables in Table 1 will be considered in the OCP Recalibration.

Table 1 - Variables to be examined

Variable	Notes
Housing Needs	Meet the new requirements of the <i>Local Government Act</i> to provide the 5-year and 20-year total number of anticipated housing units, as outlined in a 2024 Housing Needs Report, by providing sufficient land use capacity
Housing Policies	Include policies for each class of housing need required to be addressed in the 2024 Housing Needs Report
First Nations	Honour First Nations' stewardship of Esquimalt for millennia
Census Data	Update figures and tables with the latest Statistics Canada 2021 census data
Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing	Update policies and Development Permit Area (DPA) Guidelines for Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH)

Variable	Notes
DPA Guideline Exemptions	Add exemptions to DPA guidelines as identified in the Zoning Bylaw
Environmental DPA Guidelines	Reduce repetition in DPA Guidelines, especially related to the Natural Environment, Energy and Water Conservation, and Greenhouse Gas Reduction
Clean Energy	Add “zero carbon” to policies dealing with energy
Multi-Unit Housing	New policies and DPA Guidelines to better serve the community’s need for Multi-Unit, Mixed-Use, and Townhouse Residential development
Height Limits	New policy to incorporate 12-storey height guidance into the Commercial / Commercial Mixed-Use Land Use section
Bonus Density	Review the list of bonus density amenities and add a new section that allows bonus densities for Townhouse Residential
Esquimalt Road at Head Street	New policies to create a vibrant gateway and commercial mixed-use node centred around the intersection of Esquimalt Road and Head Street

Variable	Notes
Esquimalt Town Centre	Updated images of the completed Esquimalt Town Centre
Bird Friendly Design	Improve DPA Guidelines to design buildings that incorporate architectural features to limit collisions between birds and windows
Floor Area Ratio	New infographic explaining Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
Maps	Update DPA map to better respond to both the “Present Land Use Designation” map and a “Proposed Land Use Designation” map
Emergency Operations Centre	Update policies related to the location of the Emergency Operations Centre
Electric Vehicles	Delete policy regarding electric vehicle charging – this is covered in the Parking Bylaw
Housekeeping	Update the list of amendments made to the OCP since 2018. Remove policies referencing completed projects. Improve clarity and readability

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Corporate Services
- Financial Services
- Engineering and Public Works
- Fire
- Parks and Recreation Services
- Human Resources and Community Relations
- Development Services

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- First Nations (Kosapsum First Nation, Songhees First Nation)
- Neighbouring municipalities (City of Victoria, District of Saanich, Town of View Royal, Capital Regional District)
- School Districts (Greater Victoria School District No. 61, Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Columbia Britanique School District No. 93)
- Provincial agencies (Agricultural Land Commission)
- Federal agencies (Department of National Defence – Base Commander, CFB Esquimalt)
- Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce
- BC Transit
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Public Port of Victoria (Transport Canada)
- Greater Victoria Harbour Authority
- BC Hydro
- Greater Victoria Housing Authority
- Urban Development Institute

PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS:

- Residents
- West Bay Residents Association
- Business owners

MILESTONES:

Description	Timeline
Committee of the Whole recommends that Council endorse the draft Project Sign-off	June 16, 2025
Presentation of draft Project Sign-off to Advisory Planning Commission	June 17, 2025
Council ratifies Committee of the Whole recommendation and authorizes circulation to stakeholders	July 7, 2025
Presentation of draft Project Sign-off to Design Review Committee	July 9, 2025
Council authorization to proceed with the Official Community Plan Recalibration	July 2025
Stakeholder engagement completed	September 2025
Draft Bylaw prepared	September 2025
Council 1 st and 2 nd readings	October 2025
Council public hearing	November 2025
Council adoption of Bylaw (amended Official Community Plan)	December 2025

RESOURCES:

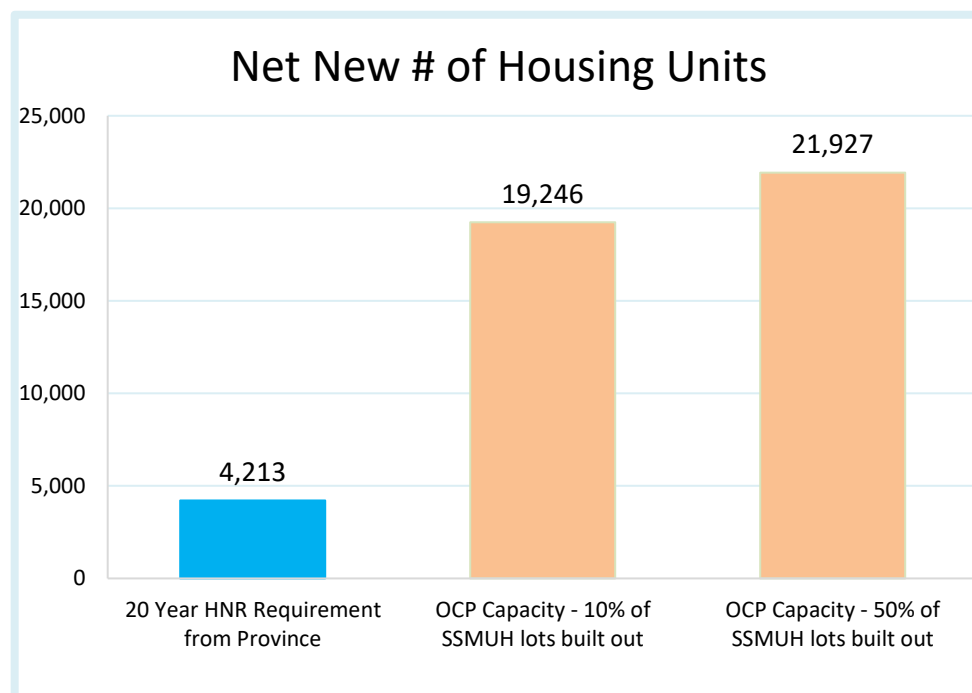
- Official Community Plan
- Zoning Bylaw
- Housing Needs Report

CONSTRAINTS, RISKS, ASSUMPTIONS, ISSUES & DEPENDENCIES:

Council will be able to review and compare the proposed OCP against a track changes document of the existing OCP, showing content that has been added and removed. The organization and layout of the OCP is not changing and most chapters remain the same with only a few edits for clarity and readability.

The Province through Bill 44 requires that the OCP must provide for at least a 20-year number of housing units required to meet anticipated needs. The 2024 HNR prepared by Esquimalt identified a housing need of 4,213 housing units over 20 years.

The Township's OCP has adequate land use capacity to meet a 20-year housing need. An analysis of land based on the Proposed Land Use Designations map (Schedule B of the OCP) shows there is capacity for between 19,246 and 21,927 net new housing units, depending on how much Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing is built out, ranging from 10% to 50% of all possible lots (see Table below).



A more comprehensive and substantial revision of the OCP is planned to begin in 2026 or 2027 with a mandatory completion date by December 2030.

DELIVERABLES:

- Official Community Plan amendment (Bylaw)
- PowerPoint presentations for Committee of the Whole, Advisory Planning Commission, and Design Review Committee (discuss preliminary results) and Council (final report)