



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator
Date: March 27, 2025
Subject: Official Community Plan (OCP) Review for Electoral Area G

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Board approve the work plan and consultation and consideration checklist for the Area G OCP review.

INTRODUCTION

This report recommends that the Planning Department initiate a review of the Houston, Topley and Granisle Rural OCP, based on the OCP review schedule below. The current OCP was adopted in 2012. The historic OCP adoption review schedule is shown below for the Board's information.

Electoral Area G	-	OCP adopted 2012
Electoral Area E	-	OCP considered 2013 but not adopted
Electoral Area A	-	OCP adopted 2014
Electoral Area B/E	-	OCP adopted 2017
Electoral Area D	-	OCP adopted 2019
Electoral Area F	-	OCP adopted 2021
Electoral Area C	-	OCP adopted 2024

AREA G OCP REVIEW

An OCP contains the broad objectives and policies respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements for an area. It must consider anticipated housing needs, schools, service requirements, public facilities, location and requirements for commercial, industrial, agricultural and other land uses, and restrictions on lands that are environmentally sensitive or hazardous.

An OCP provides goals and objectives for the area, and policies to guide future land use, development, and other decisions of the Regional District Board to achieve those goals and

objectives. An OCP allows business and landowners to make informed investment decisions. Also, an OCP is available for use by other levels of government to help direct their priorities and focus in the area.

An OCP provides a level of assurance and predictability for residents and businesses regarding the way the RDBN will view and approach issues, and how the Board may approach decisions in critical areas like land use, housing, habitat protection, and economic development. It also provides staff direction regarding how to respond to the public regarding development inquiries.

It is important to periodically review OCPs as the legislation, the attitudes and priorities of residents, the regional economy, and the development patterns and issues change over time. Equally important is that the process of reviewing the OCP also serves to raise awareness of, and support for, the community vision and objectives contained in the plan.

Work Plan

The proposed process and work plan for the Area G OCP is attached as Appendix "B" to this report. The entire process is estimated to take 12-18 months given existing staffing and anticipated workload.

It is proposed that the OCP process include the creation of a working group made up of Regional District staff, community members, First Nations, affected organizations and authorities and that the participants be solicited from the following:

- District of Houston
- Village of Granisle
- First Nations
- Houston & District Chamber of Commerce
- Community Futures - Nadina
- Pleasant Valley Cattlemen's Association
- Topley Community Club
- Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- Northern Health
- Community at large

Community at large membership will be solicited at open houses and/or alternate events. This working group would meet as identified in Appendix B and play a role in reviewing and amending the draft plan. The working group will make recommendations to the Electoral Area G Advisory Planning Commission (APC), along with staff's recommendations, on the

content of the plan. The plan prepared by the working group will then be taken to the public for input at open houses, through the website, and social media.

It is proposed that the Electoral Area G APC play the higher-level role of reviewing and commenting on the draft document prepared by the working group. The APC would also oversee the OCP review process and make recommendations to staff and the Board regarding the content of the plan. It is noted that the APC would not be directly involved in the detailed work of drafting the plan. This work is undertaken by staff and the working group.

First Nations Consultation

The Province has identified the following First Nations as having consultation areas with the plan area:

- Binche Whut'en
- Cheslatta Carrier Nation
- Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs
- Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office
- Haisla Nation
- Kitselas First Nation
- Kwadacha Nation
- Lake Babine Nation
- Nee-Tahi-Buhn Band
- Office of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs
- Skin Tyee Nation
- Stelat'en First Nation
- Takla Nation
- Wet'suwet'en First Nation
- Witset First Nation
- Yekooche First Nation

In addition, the following two First Nations, have been identified as having reserve lands in the plan area:

- Kispiox Band
- Gitanmaax Band

All above noted First Nations are included in the consultation checklist. Planning Department staff will coordinate all First Nations consultation with the RDBN's First Nations Liaison.

Legislated Consultation

The checklist in Appendix A contains the proposed consultation for the OCP and meets the requirements of s. 475 of the *Local Government Act*. The consultation checklist works hand in hand with the work plan to ensure that the process is inclusive and thorough.

Section 475 of the *Local Government Act* states the following.

- (1) *During the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, the proposing local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultations with persons, organizations, and authorities it considers will be affected.*
- (2) *For the purposes of subsection (1), the local government must:*
 - (a) *consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing; and*
 - (b) *specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:*
 - (i) *the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;*
 - (ii) *the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;*
 - (iii) *the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;*
 - (iv) *first nations;*
 - (v) *boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;*
 - (iv) *the Provincial and Federal governments and their agencies.*
- (3) *Consultation under this section is in addition to the public hearing required under section 477 (3)(c).*
- (4) *If the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, might affect agricultural land, the proposing local government must consult with the Agricultural Land Commission.*

Section 476 (2) of the *Local Government Act*, requires the Regional District to consult with boards of education with regards to the following:

- a) *the actual and anticipated needs for school facilities and support services in the school districts;*

- b) *the size, number and location of the sites anticipated to be required for the school facilities referred to in paragraph (a);*
- c) *the type of school anticipated to be required on the sites referred to in paragraph (b);*
- d) *when the school facilities and support services referred to in paragraph (a) are anticipated to be required;*
- e) *how the existing and proposed school facilities relate to existing or proposed community facilities in the area.*

The Plan area is located within School Districts 54 and 91 and the referral to the two School Boards will be undertaken in a manner that satisfies s. 476 of the *Local Government Act*. It is noted that the work plan is intended to serve only as a guideline for the process, and the consultation checklist is intended to identify a minimum level of consultation. Issues may arise that require changes to the process and timelines, in consultation with the Electoral Area G Advisory Planning Commission. Also, issues may arise that result in increased consultation with the public, First Nations, agencies, or interest groups beyond that identified in Appendix B.

Staff recommend that the Board consider and approve the process as identified in the work plan, and the consultation checklist.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix A: Consultation and Consideration Checklist
- Appendix B: Work Plan

Appendix A

Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Consultation and Consideration Checklist

Associated OCP amendment application number:

Associated OCP Amendment Bylaw number:

1. **Special Considerations**

- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Floodplain
 - Floodplain Management Bylaw No. 1878, 2020 Schedule A, B, or C
 - Floodplain Management Bylaw No. 1878, 2020 Schedule D
 - Other (specify) _____
- Known hazards (specify) _____
- Environmentally sensitive area
- Potential contaminated site
- Within 800 metres of a controlled access highway intersection (*requires MoTT referral*)
- Housing-related proposal.
- Other (specify) _____

2. **Consultation consideration – housing needs reports** (*required when applicable*)

The most recent housing needs report received by the Board and the housing information on which the report is based has been considered as the proposed OCP Bylaw does one or more of the following.

- Develops an OCP.
- Amends an OCP in relation to statements and map designations respecting the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 20 years.
- Amends OCP policies relating to housing policies respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.
- Amends housing policies respecting each class of housing needs required to be addressed in the most recent housing needs report to the applicable area covered by the plan.
- None of the above (not applicable)

3. **Consideration and consultation after 1st reading**

The proposed OCP bylaw has been considered in conjunction with the following (*required*)

- The RDBN's financial plan.
- The RDBN's waste management plan.

If the proposed OCP bylaw applies to agricultural land refer to the following for comment (*required*)

- Agricultural Land Commission for comment.

4. Consideration of affected persons, organizations, and authorities prior to 3rd reading

Consideration has been given to consult with all the following. Consultation is recommended with those selected.

Local Governments

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cariboo Regional District | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District of Houston |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Coast Regional District | <input type="checkbox"/> District of Vanderhoof |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peace River Regional District | <input type="checkbox"/> Village of Burns Lake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional District of Fraser-Fort George | <input type="checkbox"/> Village of Fraser Lake |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Village of Granisle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Smithers | <input type="checkbox"/> Village of Telkwa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District of Fort St. James | |

Government Agencies

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation
- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Ministry of Forests
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs - Governance and Structure Branch (Stikine Region)
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport
- Ministry of Transportation and Transit
 - Bulkley-Stikine
 - Fraser-Fort George
- Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
- Northern Health
- Other (specify) _____

First Nations

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Binche Whut'en | <input type="checkbox"/> McLeod Lake Indian Band |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheslatta Carrier Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Nadleh Whut'en |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doig River First Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Nak'azdli Whut'en |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gitanmaax Band | <input type="checkbox"/> Nazko First Nation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs (Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nee Tahi Buhn Indian Band |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Haisla Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuxalk Nation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Halfway River First Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Saik'uz First Nation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heiltsuk Nation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skin Tyee Nation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kitselas First Nation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stelat'en First Nation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kispiox Band | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Takla Lake First Nation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kwadacha Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tl'azt'en Nation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lake Babine Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Ts'il Kaz Koh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lheidli T'enneh | <input type="checkbox"/> Tsay Keh Dene |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Ulkatcho First Nation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> West Moberly First Nations |

- Wet'suwet'en First Nation
- Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs (Office of the Wet'suwet'en)

- Witset First Nation
- Yekooche First Nation

School Districts (required)

- Bulkley Valley School District (School District No. 54)
- Nechako Lakes School District (School District No. 91)

Advisory Planning Commissions

- Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)
- Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural)
- Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)
- Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural)
- Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)
- Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)
- Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)

Miscellaneous

- Community Futures - Nadina
- Ducks Unlimited - Houston
- Fulton River Rod and Gun Club
- Granisle Boat Club
- Granisle Lions Club
- Houston Hikers Society
- Houston Mountain Biking Society
- Houston Search and Rescue
- Houston Snowmobile Club
- Morice Mountain Marksman Association
- Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club
- Morice Outdoor Recreation Society
- Nadina Offroad Society
- Pleasant Valley Cattlemen's Association
- Pleasant Valley Horse Club
- Topley Community Club
- Topley Volunteer Fire Department

Public

- Public Meeting
- Direct Engagement with Community
- Public Hearing
- Public Notice
- Other (specify): _____

Appendix B

Houston, Topley and Granisle Rural OCP Work Plan

1. Preliminary Consultation and Review		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Report to Regional District Board on work plan and consultation checklist	March 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce OCP webpage and survey	April 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request preliminary input through referrals to those identified in consultation checklist	April 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer meetings with interest holders and First Nations, extend invitations to working group participation	April 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with Area G Advisory Planning Commission (APC)	April 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold Open Houses in Houston, Granisle and Topley to introduce the process to the community and identify volunteers for working group	May 2025
2. Staff Research / Working Group Draft Preparation		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare preliminary OCP Draft for discussion purposes, research - statistics/ demographics	June 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	First working group meeting - discuss concerns /issues/community vision and plan goals	June 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amend OCP draft based on working group comments	June 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working group meetings – discussion of issues and goals, review OCP draft and maps, further research - concerns / issues	July – Aug 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revise OCP draft	Sep 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review OCP draft with Area G APC	Oct 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refer OCP draft to those identified in consultation checklist	Oct 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make further changes to OCP draft based on comments	Nov-Dec 2026
3. Public Review of Draft		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold Open Houses in Houston, Granisle and Topley to present OCP Draft to the public	Jan 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amend draft based on public input	Jan-Feb 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refer draft to those identified in consultation checklist, if required	Feb 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present final draft to APC, First Nations and interest holders, if required	Mar 2026
4. Formal Approval Process		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present OCP Draft to Board for consideration of first and second reading	Mar 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	Referral to the Agricultural Land Commission and other agencies, if required	Mar 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Hearing	April 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present plan to Regional District Board for third reading & adoption	April-May 2026