



Regional Board Report

Request for Decision

To: Regional Board
From: Director of Development and Engineering Services
Date: November 28, 2024
Subject: Official Community Plan Updates for the Electoral Areas

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors - Unweighted Corporate Vote - Simple Majority (LGA s.208)*

Purpose: To consider the recommended approach of one (1) Official Community Plan (OCP) per Electoral Area for updating the Electoral Area OCPs as endorsed by the Electoral Area Services Committee on October 21, 2024.

Executive Summary:

The RDCO's four Official Community Plans (OCPs) and Joe Rich Rural Land Use Bylaw (RLUB) are primary policy documents that guide planning and land use management in the Electoral Areas. They are critical for informing decisions on the amount, location, and type of development permitted to ensure growth occurs in a fashion that is resilient, sustainable, and aligned with the community's vision. While an OCP is typically updated every five to ten years, all four of the Electoral Area's OCPs and the Joe Rich RLUB were adopted between 12 and 18 years ago. In response, the Regional Board's Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026 identified pursuing funding opportunities to update OCPs as an action under the Electoral Area priority for Growth and Development.

Given the comprehensive nature of an OCP and that all four Electoral Area OCPs and the Joe Rich RLUB require review and update, a considerable amount of time and budget would be needed to complete each update individually. On June 13, 2024, staff provided an overview of five options for updating the RDCO's four Electoral Area OCPs and Joe Rich RLUB to the Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC). On October 21, 2024 staff provided an update and the EASC voted to advance the recommended option of one (1) Official Community Plan per Electoral Area to the Regional Board for consideration. This option delivered the highest value with the lowest cost during staff's evaluation process and is recommended because it is cost-effective, respects community uniqueness, and will facilitate efficient development application review in the Electoral Areas.

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board direct staff to develop one (1) updated Official Community Plan (OCP) per Electoral Area as outlined in the report from the Director of Development and Engineering Services, dated November 28, 2024.

Respectfully submitted by: Mariah VanZerr, Regional Planning Manager

Report Approved by: Danielle Noble-Brandt, Director of Development and Engineering Services

Approved for Agenda: Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer

Strategic Plan Alignment:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency preparedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Truth and reconciliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and wellness | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and climate – Regional priority only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Growth and development – Electoral Area priority only |

Background:

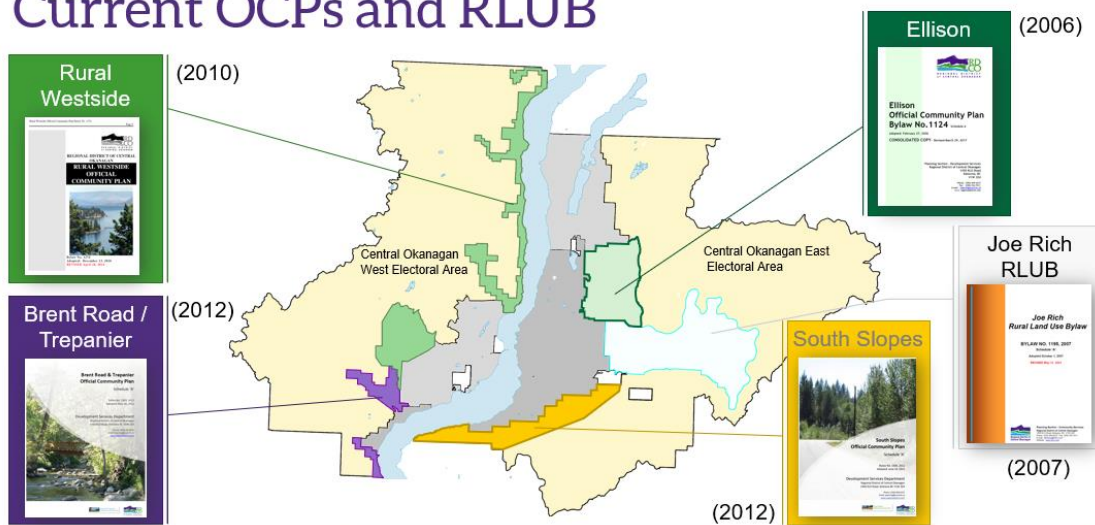
Electoral Area OCPs are Primary Policy Documents

The RDCO’s four Electoral Area OCPs and Joe Rich RLUB are primary policy documents that guide planning and land use management in the Electoral Areas. They are critical for informing decisions on the amount, location, and type of development allowed to ensure growth occurs in a fashion that is resilient, sustainable, and aligned with the community’s vision. An OCP considers demographic projections, housing needs, community values, environmental considerations, and infrastructure capacity to establish future land use designations, development permit areas, and a broad growth management policy framework. Once an OCP is adopted, all bylaws enacted or works undertaken must be consistent with the OCP.

Updates to the Electoral Area OCPs are a Board Strategic Priority

While an OCP is typically updated every five to ten years, all four of the Electoral Area’s OCPs and the Joe Rich RLUB were adopted between 12 and 18 years ago. Since then, the Central Okanagan has experienced rapid population growth and an increased frequency of wildfires, extreme heat, and floods. Additionally, recent provincial housing legislation (Bill 44 – the Housing Statutes Amendment Act) required secondary suites to be allowed in all single-family residential zones within the Electoral Areas. The amount of time that has passed since the Electoral Area OCPs and Joe Rich RLUB were adopted, combined with the scale and impact of recent events, mean updates to these foundational policy documents are necessary. In response, the Regional Board’s Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026 identified pursuing funding opportunities to update OCPs as an action under the Electoral Area priority for Growth and Development.

Current OCPs and RLUB



Individual OCP Updates would Require Considerable Time and Resources

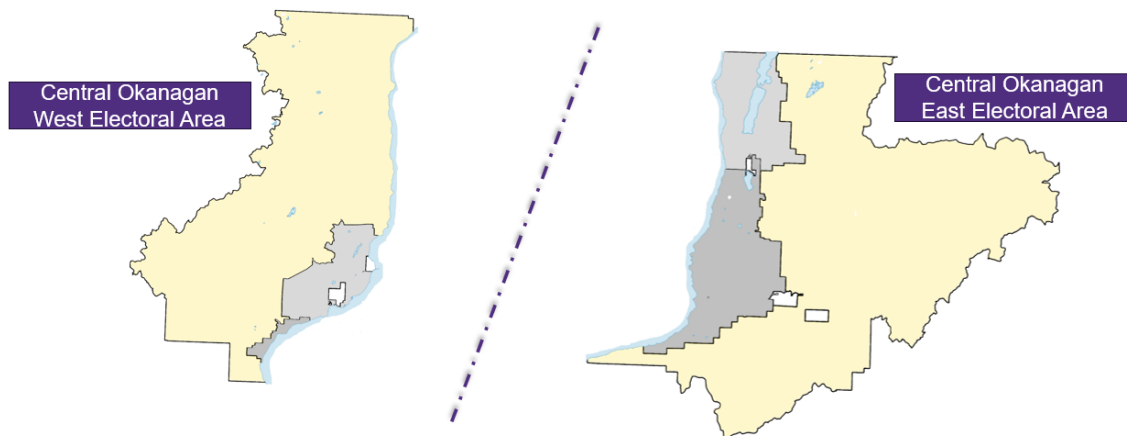
A comprehensive OCP update can take a considerable amount of time and resources from initiation to final adoption. For example, an OCP must include policies and map designations for residential, commercial, institutional, and agricultural land uses, along with restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive. An OCP update must also be completed with a corresponding public engagement plan, as there are mandated external agencies that must be consulted as part of OCP preparation. These requirements are stipulated in Part 14 of the *Local Government Act (LGA)*. Given the comprehensive nature of an OCP and that all four Electoral Area OCPs and the Joe Rich RLUB require review and update, a substantial amount of time and budget would be needed to complete each update individually.

OCP Update Options and EASC Direction

To address this challenge, staff identified a range of possible options, from maintaining the current approach, to harmonizing all OCPs into a single plan. Specifically, five options were evaluated across six criteria that included staff and budgetary resources, timeframe considerations, administrative complexity, value for the community, regional cohesion, and ease of document understanding. On June 13, 2024, staff provided an overview of the option development and evaluation process to the Electoral Areas Services Committee. The recommended option was to proceed with one (1) OCP per Electoral Area, with the repeal of the Joe Rich RLUB. However, the Electoral Area Services Committee was not ready to move forward with this option on June 13th due to questions about whether consolidating the four OCPs and Joe Rich RLUB into two OCPs would result in a loss of community uniqueness within the documents.

Staff considered the EASC’s comments and presented an update to the Committee on October 21, 2024 (see Attachment 1). The staff report identified how the rich historical context and unique community character of each area could be maintained, while still benefiting from the time and cost efficiency gains of developing one (1) OCP per Electoral Area. For example, while the Rural Westside, Brent Road / Trepanier, Ellison, South Slopes, and Joe Rich areas are all geographically distinct with their own unique contexts and challenges, they also all share common values (e.g. protecting environmentally sensitive features, enhancing recreational amenities, and preserving rural character). It was explained that the approach of one (1) OCP per Electoral Area would provide the same level of detail for each area that exists today, while enhancing efficiencies by removing repetition, redundancy and minor discrepancies between the OCPs that can slow development application reviews. With this added clarity, on October 21st the EASC directed staff to advance the recommendation of one (1) Official Community Plan per Electoral Area to the Regional Board for consideration.

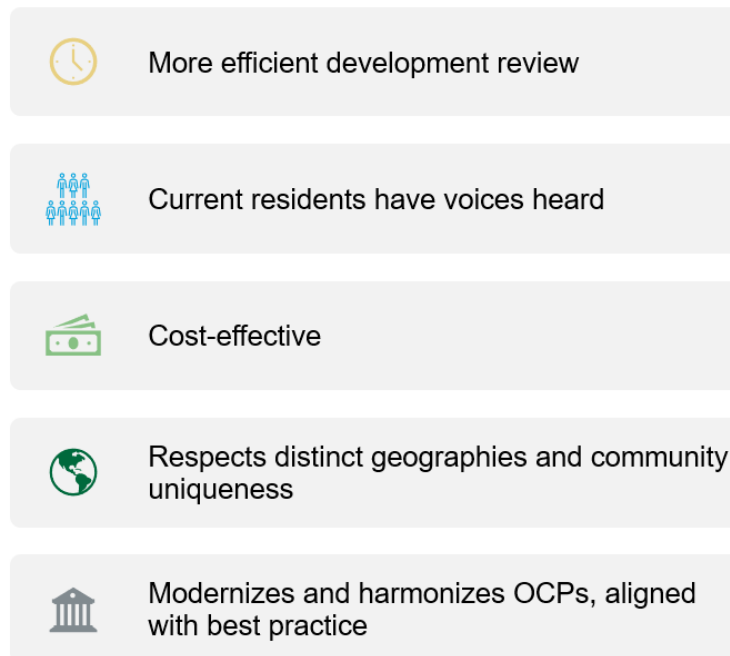
Recommended Option: 1 OCP per EA



Benefits of the Recommendation

In addition to respecting community uniqueness, the recommended option of one (1) OCP per Electoral Area will bring additional benefits to Electoral Area residents. For example, more efficient development review will be enabled by streamlining development permit area definitions and exemptions. Electoral Area residents will also benefit by having a fresh opportunity to have their voices heard during public engagement. Finally, the recommended option will help reduce the cost of updating the Electoral Area OCPs, as the associated administrative processes would be reduced by more than half.

Staff have also scanned practices at other regional districts throughout BC and have found that the approach of 1 OCP per Electoral Area is quite common. There are also examples of 1 OCP for 2 Electoral Areas, as well as 1 OCP for all the electoral areas in a regional district. This trend towards OCP consolidation is helping to modernize and bring efficiency to planning and land use management services in electoral areas throughout the province.



Conclusion

On October 21, 2024 the EASC voted to advance the recommended option of one (1) Official Community Plan per Electoral Area to the Regional Board for consideration. This option delivered the highest value during staff's evaluation process and is recommended because it is cost-effective, respects community uniqueness, and will facilitate more efficient development review in the Electoral Areas. Electoral area residents will also benefit from a more streamlined approach that provides enhanced consistency and the opportunity to incorporate current community values into a more modern OCP framework.

Next Steps:

The recommended approach will provide staff with the direction they need to inform multi-year work planning, OCP scoping (including identifying efficiencies with the co-development of the Regional Growth Strategy) and costing for the purposes of preparing grant applications. As supported by the Board on October 24, 2024, the Electoral Area OCP updates would commence following initiation of the Regional Growth Strategy update, to ensure the OCP updates can be informed by the updated RGS and eliminate the need for re-work. Once approved, staff will have the needed information to move forward with advancing the Board's Strategic Priority of pursuing funding opportunities to update the Electoral Area's

