

# ***Green Bylaws and Official Community Plan Updates on the Sunshine Coast***

## **Workshop Synopsis**

Held on 1st November 2024, 12-4pm

Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society, Sechelt

A half-day workshop on ***Green Bylaws and Official Community Plan Updates on the Sunshine Coast*** was held in Sechelt on 1st November 2024. Elected officials and Planners from the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD), District of Sechelt (DoS), Town of Gibsons (ToG), shíshálh and squamish Nations were invited to attend. The aim of the workshop was to support local government efforts to address climate change and biodiversity loss through better managed growth on the lower Sunshine Coast.

### **A. How We Arrived at the Workshop**

In 2023, the [Community Development Forum](#) in Halfmoon Bay (the Halfmoon Bay Forum), with support from the [Sunshine Coast Conservation Association](#) (SCCA), submitted a project proposal to the University of Victoria [Environmental Law Centre](#) (ELC). The ELC accepted the project in October 2023 with the aim of reviewing SCR D bylaws to identify opportunities to strengthen ecosystem protections through decisions related to land developments and OCP amendments, drawing on best practices identified in the [Green Bylaws Toolkit](#). This assessment would then inform future engagement with the SCR D.

The final report, [Green Bylaws for the Sunshine Coast: Bylaw and Regulatory Opportunities for the Sunshine Coast Regional District to Strengthen its Sensitive Ecosystem Protections](#) was presented to the Halfmoon Bay Forum and SCCA in July 2024<sup>1</sup>. The report sets out the Green Bylaws approach that is the basis for five areas of recommendations (see summary [here](#)). Each recommendation is “considered in the entirety of the SCR D’s context including its legislative powers as a regional district, its own self-identified gaps as well as those related specifically to protecting sensitive ecosystems, and rising development pressure amid increasing need for sustainable and affordable housing in the region”.

### **B. Purpose and Outcomes of the Workshop**

With the aim of introducing the ELC recommendations into OCP update processes on the lower Sunshine Coast, the Halfmoon Bay Forum and the SCCA organized a workshop on 1st November 2024, with the following objectives (see Annex 1 Agenda):

- Increase understanding of green bylaws and why they are important for the Sunshine Coast for the next 20 years;
- Understand how green bylaw recommendations can fit into OCP renewal; and
- Identify next steps.

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<sup>1</sup> The draft ELC project submission and draft final report were shared with the SCR D, shíshálh and squamish Nations for review and comments.

Given that all communities on the lower Sunshine Coast face common issues (ex. irregular water supply) and have similar community visions (ex. respect for the environment), and that many ELC recommendations apply across jurisdictions (ecosystem mapping, connectivity and protection), elected and planning representatives from all local governments and nations were invited (see Annex 2 Participants).

Following presentations on the [ELC recommendations](#) and [sensitive ecosystem mapping](#), and a discussion on opportunities to align OCP land use policies and tools across jurisdictions, the participants separated into two groups of elected officials and planners to talk about the following questions:

1. Which recommendations from the report resonate for you and why?
2. Do you see opportunities for this report to support work to align OCPs across the region?
3. Takeaways: questions, learnings, and opportunities for support needed going forward?

Below are the main takeaways from each group:

### **Group 1: Elected Officials**

1. Key Point - All recommendations are useful. #1 and #4 recommendations<sup>2</sup> resonate. Cumulative impacts is a good starting point.
2. This is the right time - we are in it.
3. Mapping is endless – need a bylaw to put pressure on developers to change.
4. On Gambier Island they have a blanket eDPA, it is not always enforced, but the emphasis is on the owner to check in and do more.
5. Concern that a lot of money is spent on planning which may not be taking into consideration First Nations' perspective (therefore, money could be wasted).
6. If you bring forward a project, we should consider how it is of benefit to the Nations. Grants from the province are linked to First Nations engagement.
7. Need to talk as a region - where do we need housing and where are the high priority natural features - rather than working in jurisdictional silos.
8. Staff and elected officials need to consider the pieces of the planning process that are not currently in the budget and need to be delivered at a regional level e.g. connectivity. This will prevent unnecessary duplication of effort.
9. Mapping is useful but expensive. There is an understanding of the need for multiple layers. We should work together on the development of mapping information rather than repeating it in multiple areas.
10. Water is a main issue for the area. Housing is not as significant compared to many other areas on the south west coast of BC.
11. Need to identify the environmental considerations that extend across jurisdictions. We need consistent guidelines relating to water and ecosystem management. Need to be clear on the areas that will and will not be protected on the Sunshine Coast as a whole.
12. When to present the results of the ELC report to the SCR D Board? Consider Dec / Jan (in Nov they are focused on the budget). If the report is presented to the Board, there should be a clear ask.

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<sup>2</sup> #1 - Plan for ecosystem connectivity. #4 - Enhance the power and efficiency of environmental impact assessment procedures.

### ***Report back to full group on key points***

1. Possible delegation to 14th November 2024 SCRDC CoW - move to Dec/Jan 2025.
2. Recommendation #1 and #4 resonate.
3. All jurisdictions - connectivity of ecosystems. Who will lead?
4. Better communications from provincial govt and shishálh nation to local govt's for clarity.

### **Group 2: Planners**

1. Which recommendations from the ELC report resonate with you and why?
  - a. Considering cumulative impacts
  - b. Importance of nesting overarching plan/policy
  - c. Update development procedures bylaw with Development Approval Information Area (DAIA) designations
  - d. Consistency across the coast
2. Do you see opportunities from the report to support work to align OCPs across the region?
  - a. Need a common community vision
  - b. Impacts/monitoring impacts on a watershed scale
  - c. What is your fear? Question to community on growth
3. Takeaways: questions, learnings and opportunities for support needed going forward?
  - a. Funding for community engagement
  - b. Education
  - c. "Translators" and facilitators needed
  - d. Sharing our information i

### ***Report back to full group on key points***

1. Recommendations that resonate include cumulative impact, nesting, DAIA, consistency across coast
2. Public engagement - people have similar questions, what are common fears/sticky points? Use facilitators? And get to some common communication messages and vision?
3. Use watersheds (as an example) to draw out common goals across communities
4. Need funding to do community engagement well
5. Education of the public

### **C. Next Steps After the Workshop**

1. SCCA to reach out to Councillor Donna Bell regarding presenting to the monthly meeting of Sechelt community groups.
2. Workshop organizers to outreach to APCs and community groups to share ELC report. Report back to this group.
3. Workshop organizers to consider strategic timing and 'ask' of presentation of ELC recommendations to the SCRDC Committee of the Whole.

# Annex 1 - Workshop Agenda

## *Green Bylaws & OCP Update on the Sunshine Coast*

### **Workshop Agenda**

**1st November 2024, 12-4pm**

**Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society, Sechelt**

#### **Workshop goal:**

Support local government efforts to address climate change and biodiversity loss through better managed growth on the lower Sunshine Coast.

#### **Workshop objectives and outputs:**

1. Inform: Increase understanding of green bylaws and why they are important for the Sunshine Coast for next 20 years:
  - a. How green bylaws can help direct growth;
  - b. What tools are available for environmental protection under current provincial legislation; and
  - c. How the ELC recommendations can help protect sensitive ecosystems and natural assets.
2. Inform: How green bylaw recommendations can fit into OCP renewal:
  - a. How the green bylaw recommendations can align with and support the OCP renewal work; and
  - b. How the green bylaws recommendations and sensitive ecosystem mapping updates can fill gaps for local government processes.
3. Identify next steps
  - a. Identify how the ELC recommendations can best inform OCP renewal.
  - b. Identify opportunities and tools to help align OCPs across the region.

#### Key reference documents:

1. [Green Bylaws for the Sunshine Coast: Bylaw and Regulatory Opportunities for the SCRCD to Strengthen its Sensitive Ecosystem Protections](#), Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria, July 2024 (45 pp)
2. [Summary of Green Bylaws for the Sunshine Coast Report](#), July 2024 (2 pp)
3. [OCP Background Report](#) SCRCD, October 2024 (51 pp)

<b>AGENDA</b>	
12:00-12:30	<b>Light Lunch</b>
12:30-12:40	<b>Introduction &amp; Background</b> Suzanne Senger, Executive Director, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association Darlene Tymo, Chair, Community Development Forum, Halfmoon Bay
12:40-13:40	<b><u>Green Bylaws for the Sunshine Coast</u></b> Deborah Curran, Executive Director, Environmental Law Center Presentation and Q&A
13:40-14:00	<b><u>Action for Adaptation : Mapping Update</u></b> Lyndsey Smith, Program Manager, Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership Dionne Bunsha, Climate and Conservation Engagement Coordinator, UBC Botanical Garden Presentation and Q&A
14:00-14:15	<b>Coffee Break</b>
14:15-14:50	<b>Overview of SCRD OCP Update Process</b> TBC  <b>Experiences from other regions</b> Deborah Curran, ELC Executive Director Presentation and Q&A
14:50-15:15	<b>Group discussion:</b> Opportunities and challenges of aligning OCP land use policies and tools between jurisdictions on the lower Sunshine Coast.
15:15-15:40	<b>Break out Groups on Key Questions</b> Group 1 Electeds, Group 2 Planners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Which recommendations from the report resonate for you and why?</li> <li>● Do you see opportunities for this report to support work to align OCPs across the region?</li> <li>● Takeaways: questions, learnings, and opportunities for support needed going forward?</li> </ul>
15:40-16:00	<b>Report Back and Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Report Back</li> <li>● Next Steps</li> </ul>
16:00	<b>End</b>

## Annex 2 - Participants

<b>ATTENDEES LIST</b>		
<i>Organizers</i>		
SCCA	Suzanne Senger	Executive Director
CDF Halfmoon Bay	Darlene Tymo	Chair
CDF Halfmoon Bay	Alistair Higson (TBC)	Deputy Chair
CDF Halfmoon Bay	Kim Dougherty	Volunteer
CDF Halfmoon Bay	Bill Henwood	Committee Member
<i>Presenters</i>		
ELC, University of Victoria	Deborah Curran	Executive Director
ELC, University of Victoria	Chad Wilkinson	ELC Student
Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership	Lyndsey Smith	Program Manager
UBC Botanical Garden	Dionne Bunsha	Climate and Conservation Engagement Coordinator
<i>Participants</i>		
SCRD	Justine Gabias	Director, Area B
SCRD	Donna McMahon	Director, Area E
SCRD	Kate-Louise Stamford	Director, Area F
SCRD	Christine Alexander	Alternate Director, Area A
SCRD	Mary-Lou Hardy	Alternate Director, Area D
SCRD	Julie Clark	Senior Planner (OCP)
SCRD	Jonathan Jackson	Manager, Planning & Development
SCRD	Chris Humphries	Planner
Town of Gibsons	Silas White	Mayor
Town of Gibsons	David Croal	Councillor
Town of Gibsons	Annemarie De Andrade	Councillor
Town of Gibsons	Lesley-Anne Staats	Director of Planning
Town of Gibsons	Kirsten Rawkins	Planner I
Town of Gibsons	Katie Thomas	Planner II
District of Sechelt	Donna Bell	Councilor
District of Sechelt	Dianne McLauchlan (alt.)	Councillor
District of Sechelt	Andrew Allen	Director of Planning
District of Sechelt	Kevin Pearson	Senior Policy Planner (OCP)
District of Sechelt	Marina Stjepovic	Community Planner
shíshálh Nation	Russell Paris	Implementation Coordinator