

## ***Updating the Halfmoon Bay Official Community Plan***

### **ISSUE BRIEF: Community Development Forum priorities for updating the vision for Halfmoon Bay**

Some facts to keep in mind....

- [Halfmoon Bay is a rural area](#) with a [population of around 3000](#), including permanent and seasonal residents. The population of the [lower Sunshine Coast is around 32,000](#), with over half living in rural areas.
- The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) has launched a process to [update its seven Official Community Plans \(OCPs\)](#), including for Halfmoon Bay and six other rural areas. The target completion date is December 2027. At the same time, the Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt are updating their OCPs. *An OCP is a bylaw that describes the long-term – usually 10 year - vision of communities to guide future land use. It is supported by and must be consistent with zoning and other bylaws.* The current [Halfmoon Bay OCP was adopted by the SCRCD Board in 2014](#).
- Our local governments are struggling with challenges such as: water supply shortages; lack of affordable housing; aging infrastructure that is costly to replace; wildfires, floods and landslides; and damage to sensitive ecosystems. Updating the OCPs and associated bylaws with proactive policies that increase community preparedness and resilience is generally a cheaper approach than responding to water emergencies and the impacts of climate events as they strike (saving taxpayers money in the longer-term).

**The current effort to update all the OCPs along the lower Sunshine Coast is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for local authorities to put in place proactive policies that guide development, make our communities more resilient, and prevent biodiversity loss, in collaboration with local First Nations.**

As OCPs are being updated, the [Community Development Forum in Halfmoon Bay](#) is advocating to:

**1. Keep Halfmoon Bay rural by nature**

Protect our natural environment while encouraging appropriate development in the right areas.

**2. Recognize Halfmoon Bay as part of the broader Sunshine Coast with some common characteristics, priorities and threats, under the umbrella of a single OCP**

Within a harmonized OCP, which reflects the common features of and objectives for [rural areas on the lower Sunshine Coast](#), each rural area would have its own local area plan with its own vision statement and establishing its unique character and circumstances. Harmonization would allow for a more efficient, holistic, and systematic approach to development and conservation on the Sunshine Coast.

**3. Clearly define where our community hubs and supporting services should be located and how they should grow**

Ensure zoning and other incentives are in place to encourage the provision of affordable housing and commercial space in clearly defined, well-serviced community hubs (emergency services, transit, shops, parks).

4. **Better identify sensitive ecosystems (including watersheds) that the community values and wants to conserve, and encourage development away from these areas**

Use updated sensitive ecosystem maps and other data for the lower Sunshine Coast to inform ecosystem protection policies and development decisions, and require consideration of ecosystem connectivity and cumulative impacts.

5. **Support local government to become more efficient, with more streamlined, predictable, and transparent processes for residents and developers**

Support consistent zoning bylaws, development approval processes and effective enforcement to guide developers to build where it makes sense to increase density, and away from ecologically sensitive and high risk areas. Clear and transparent processes will improve community trust.