

Sayward Engagement Summary

Date of Engagement: July 21, 2021
Location: The Gazebo, Sayward BC

Event Overview

The Sayward Official Community Plan open house was held on July 21, 2021 in the Gazebo in the Village centre. The event was open to the entire Village and ran from 12pm to 8pm. The project team got the opportunity to speak to approximately 30 residents about the priorities for the OCP and how the OCP will shape the future of Sayward. Discussions centered around infrastructure improvements, future growth and the value of Sayward's natural environment. The project team will use the information gathered during this event to inform the development of the OCP in the coming weeks. This document summarizes the key takeaways from the afternoon in Sayward.



Project Timeline

The project has been split up into 5 phases of work. The community engagement and resulting summary document mark the end of phase 2 of the project. The project team will utilize the feedback from phase 2 to develop the draft official community plan during phase 3. We are aiming to have the draft completed by the end of August and move into phase 4 which will involve bringing the draft document back to the public for consultation.



Community Priorities

Through previous engagement efforts including the community survey and the project team developed 9 community priorities to guide the creation of the next phase of the plan and draft the OCP. These priorities were presented to the community and confirmed during the open house. The priorities are as follows:

1. We want to preserve the small-town lifestyle.
2. We want to ensure that our community is built to last.
3. We want to attract and retain new residents including families, youth, and seniors.
4. We want a healthy local economy that provides opportunities for our citizens.
5. We want resource industries to invest in and work with our community.
6. We want to protect and showcase our natural environment.
7. We want to welcome visitors to our community.
8. We want to do our part to address climate change.
9. We want open and inclusive communication and decision-making.

Some themes that were brought up by several participants include infrastructure improvements, future growth and housing affordability and Sayward's natural assets. Discussions surrounding themes are summarized in the section below.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure was a common concern for residents, with many voicing their uncertainty as to whether there was enough infrastructure to serve the current population and any future growth including the proposed residential development in the Kelsey Bay area. Specifically, residents cited water supply as a major infrastructure concern as well as the old shopping mall and potential for redevelopment.

Some comments from residents on infrastructure are listed below:

- More water capacity, new water treatment plant
- Upgrades to sewers
- Support for Council to address this topic and support for a reserve policy
- Participants enjoy the gardens and walkway around the pond to the government wharf - support for the Village to spend money to maintain this community infrastructure
- Repurposed the old shopping mall to a better use, valuable land

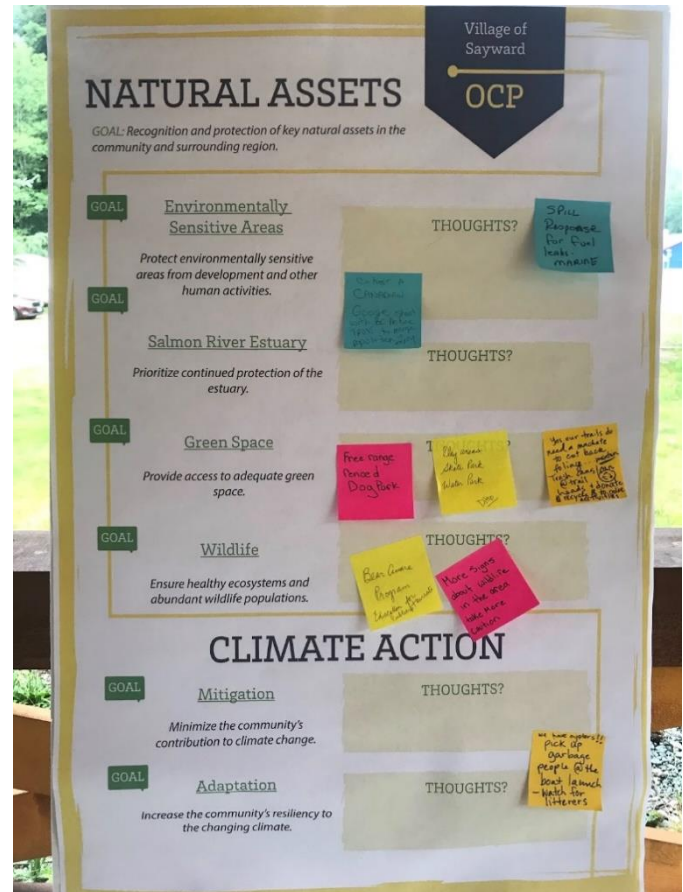


Natural Assets

There was a strong directive from participating residents to protect Sayward's natural environment including local wildlife, the Salmon River Estuary and precious green space. Many residents voiced the need for increased wildlife education and signage, for residents and visitors to the area. Several residents brought up the opportunity to clean up the pond in the Village centre to re-create a Village public amenity that has been overgrown and undermaintained. Discussions around pond clean up included cost, the pond's importance in the Village's drainage system and environmental concerns.

Some comments from residents on the natural environment are listed below:

- Preserve the natural environment
- The community's natural assets are one of the main reasons residents enjoy living in Sayward
- Clean up the pond (4)
- Co-host a Canada goose shoot with BC Nature trust to manage population in estuary
- Spill response for fuel leaks
- Maintain trails: cut back foliage and provide trash cans
- Off-leash dog park (fenced)
- Bear aware program- education for the public and tourists
- More signs about wildlife in the area - take more caution

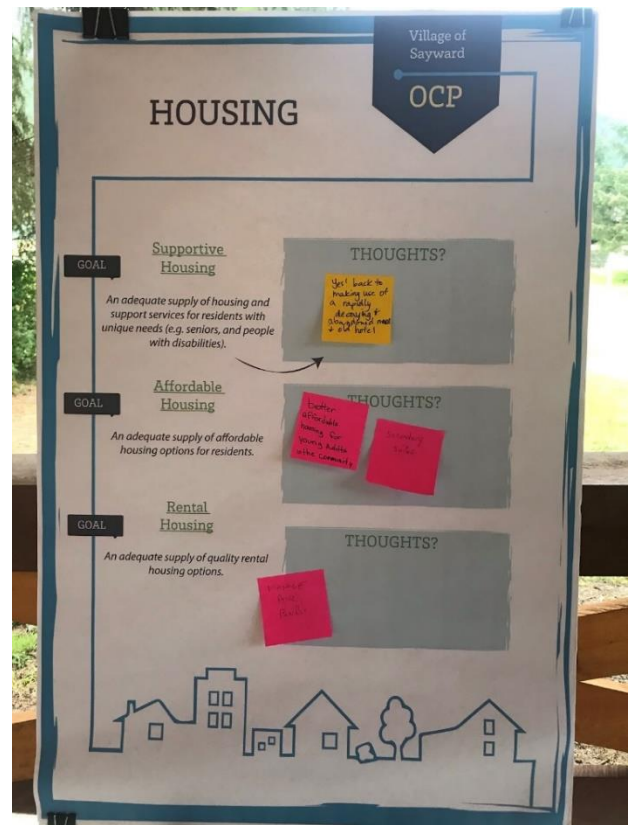


Housing and Affordability

Many residents voiced concerns about escalating housing prices across Vancouver Island in anticipation of growth in the Sayward Valley. Residents urged Village staff and Council to carefully consider residential growth and any impact it will have on affordability into the future. A phased approach to future growth was discussed among participants as a favourable policy initiative.

Some comments from residents on housing and affordability are listed below:

- Managing growth to ensure the community remains affordable
- Seniors housing with supports
- Better affordable housing for young adults in the community
- Secondary suits are allowed - people need to be made aware and suites should be incentivized
- Phased growth to manage any affordability issues
- Manage Airbnb and other vacation rental organizations with policy

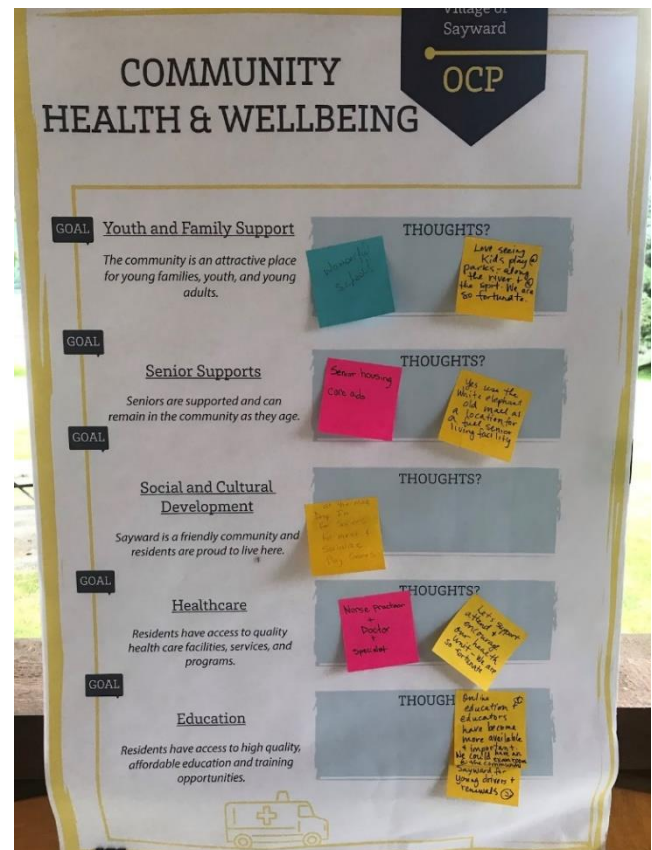


Community Health and Wellbeing

Participants were interested in enhancing the community's health and wellbeing through policy as a result of the Official Community Plan. Residents expressed frustration with slow emergency response times and voiced interest in expanding the health care clinic to serve a wider population. Participants were generally pleased with the school and cited it as a major draw for young families to the community.

Additional comments from residents regarding community health and wellbeing are listed below:

- Continue to maintain the school
- Maintain existing play areas for children
- Provide opportunities for the community to socialize and connect
- Seek opportunities to bring in a nurse, doctor and specialists to the healthcare facility - even just on certain days
- Continue to support and maintain health unit and recognize it as an important community resource
- Explore continuing education for adults in the community
- Consider opportunities to support those struggling with addiction, mental health issues etc.
- Ensure adequate staffing of first responders (Paramedics, fire)
- Provide mental health support services and treatment



Economic Development

Participants had some great ideas to stimulate the local economy. Most feedback from participants focused on the provision of services, such as a grocery store and restaurant. Tourism was also acknowledged as a way of stimulating economic development, while also supporting many of these services.

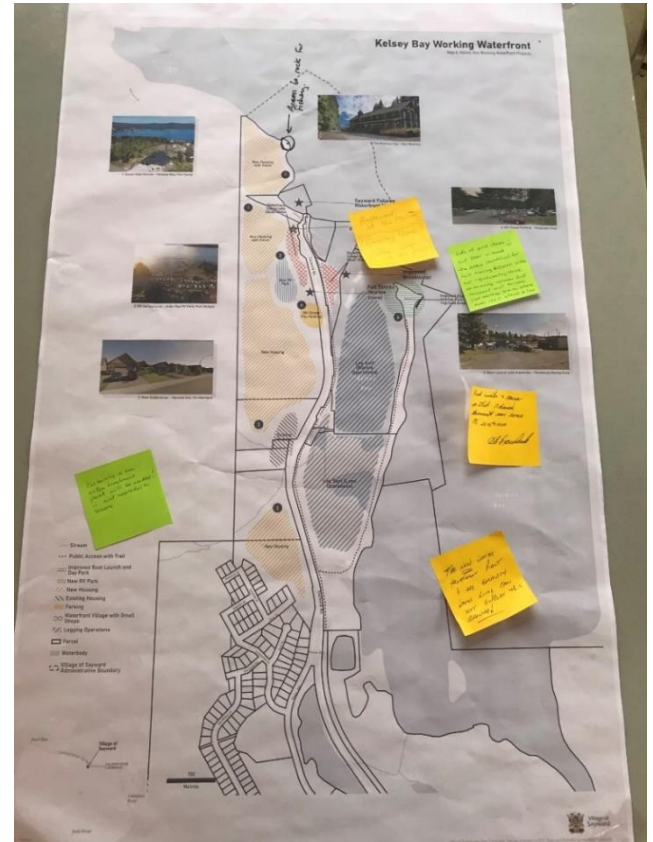
Additional comments from residents regarding the Village's economic development are listed below:

- Ensure resource industries are working collaboratively with the Village
- Provide opportunities and encourage resource employees to participate in the Village economy (i.e. shopping, renting or buying etc.)
- Continue to place residents first while expanding the tourism industry
- Demand for a restaurant
- Demand for a grocery store
- Use the old mall building/land as a services centre
- Use the marina for services and businesses
- Establish a community forest in partnership with the K'ómoks First Nation
- Better cell service to support tourism



Kelsey Bay Area

Residents discussed new residential and commercial development in the Kelsey Bay area. While there was general support for the proposed development and enhancement of the Kelsey Bay area, residents expressed concerns for existing municipal infrastructure being stretched as a result of increased residential connections. As well, residents discussed implications to the Valley's affordability. Participants were excited about the prospect of a restaurant or pub at the marina and increased economic opportunities.





Future Engagement

This engagement event and previous consultations will be used to develop the draft Official Community Plan. Residents will have another chance to communicate their vision for the Official Community Plan during the next phase of engagement. The project team will be presenting the draft OCP to the community during the second week of September. We encourage residents to come out to provide feedback on the draft policies before it goes to Council for review in the fall.