

New Kent OCP will look to 2040



By Agassiz-Harrison Observer
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The Official Community Plan is an important guiding document for city planning, and one that needs regular review by staff, council and the community at large.

And the time for review in the District of Kent is here. The community's OCP was first adopted in 1981, and then updated in 1994 and 2001.

A public discussion to begin updating the OCP kicked off officially on Tuesday, with an informal meeting at Heritage Coffee House in the afternoon and a more formal presentation in the evening at the Friendship House. There were maps, interactive idea boards, questionnaires, and representatives from Urban Systems, the company helping guide the changes to the Kent's OCP.

Tina Atva, Urban Systems, said that most OCPs are looked at every five to 10 years, to properly reflect the changing needs of communities. In Kent, the review and update will aim to look about 27 years into the future, planning into the year 2040.

Over the last 10 years, Atva said the District of Kent has grown at an average rate of .76% — well below the expected rate of growth of 1.4%. It is one of the slowest growing municipalities in the fast growing FVRD. Only Hope places lower, with a decrease in growth over the past ten years.

At the current rate of expected growth (.75%), there could be 1,200 more people in the District of Kent by 2040. While that projected growth may not seem like a lot of bodies, that's an increase of 24% of the current population.

And with that growth, the District will have to find ways to accommodate associated growths in commercial space, housing, farming, and industrial business growth. Some of the maps presented on Tuesday highlight potential areas for growth and development within the District. Some of the area targeted for growth include the former maintenance yard, Mt. Woodside, the downtown area, Harrison Lake areas and West Cameron Road.

But most importantly, the District said it is looking for feedback from the community.

"Getting the public involved is really important," Mayor John Van Laerhoven said. To help drive discussion, Urban Systems has employed the use of an internet platform called PlaceSpeak. At the website (www.placespeak.com), users can leave comments, access current information on the OCP, create discussions and highlight areas they believe are important to consider in the future development of the District of Kent.

For more information, or to fill out the questionnaire, by May 16, email dkohuch@district.kent.bc.ca or stop by the District office at 7170 Cheam Ave. While it will take anywhere from eight months to a year to complete the review, they are hoping to gather comments by May 16.

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