

Final Report

OCP Implementation Monitoring Committee

Presenters Script

Presenter: Jenn Ohlhauser

Introduction

Good evening everybody. We are members of the OCP Implementation Monitoring Committee; Betty, Maureen, Adrian and Vincent. A year ago you selected 14 members of the community to do this work; there are 12 of us that remain. There was some limited participation due to work, life and school commitments. We studied the OCP and engaged with the greater DNV community. We range in age from 17 - 84.

During a one-year mandate, specifically, the OCP Implementation Monitoring Committee will provide commentary and observations regarding the targets and policies of the OCP.

We had 18 meetings over one year. They were often 3 hours long and required “homework”; pre-reading and preparation.

In the beginning, we selected and prioritized the topics we would cover. We successfully covered them all. Though we did not report to Council after each topic was reviewed, we will report tonight on the remaining topics and we invite you to read our full report at the dnv.org website and to consider the many recommendations and motions we have made.

Over the past year, we studied the OCP. It is the game plan, the vision, the plan for all that happens in our district. The game plan is good.

We drilled down on all areas of the OCP. It is a data driven document; and its policies have been written out of that data. We are pleased that staff supported us with current data and information. They didn't tell us what to do. We told staff what we wanted and they did a tonne of work for us and made it possible for us to do our work. We appreciate them.

In just a few seconds, you will hear from the others here who will speak about Housing, Transportation, our engagement with the community with our Housing Survey, five other areas we monitored and then we will conclude and be open to your questions. But the big ideas are these: *We affirm the OCP as a living document that reflects the vision and plans of the*

District of North Vancouver. We encourage our fellow citizens to recognize that we are in a growing pains stage of growth due to aging residences and a desire for many to continue to live and work on the North Shore.

Presenter: Adrian Chaster

Housing and Transportation

As with our comments this evening on all other sections of the OCP, the essential detail is in the report we have prepared. I commend to you the wisdom of going through the report, because I cannot in a few minutes even begin to cover our observations and recommendations.

The essence of our findings is that the OCP targets respecting transportation and housing are sound. We have recommended various tweaks, which you will find in our report, but the Plan is as relevant and worthy today as it was when it was written.

The issues arise with implementation. The Plan must be implemented in a coherent and balanced fashion.

Housing and transportation go hand in hand. Transportation improvements must be integrated with new residential and also new commercial developments. The OCP should not say, for example, that developers are to be "encouraged" to provide for transit infrastructure, bike lanes, and the like in their projects. The correct verb is "required".

Transportation improvements must be made independently of housing developments as well.

The District is doing a credible job on the maintenance of and improvements to the physical infrastructure, given the North Shore's geographical limitations and financial realities. The Mountain Highway interchange should help separate local and bridge traffic, making it easier to move around the District. The Keith Road bridge should help, as will other projects currently planned or under way.

We have recommended that the OCP targets for improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure be implemented. This should be effective and relatively inexpensive. Developers might fund some of it through CAC's.

The District should also keep Translink's feet to the fire. The new B-Line between Dundarave and Phibbs Exchange could be a godsend, but that is not the end of the story. We should keep pressing for better connections between the Town and Village Centres as their populations increase.

We should also do what it is within our power to do without the involvement of other bureaucracies and governments. Dedicated bus lanes are an example. Increased bus service is not as effective as it should be if the buses get stuck in traffic with the cars. Where permanently separated HOV lanes are not feasible, bus lanes should be implemented for peak hours.

Mobility pricing might also be considered, controversial though it is. But alternatives to travelling by automobile at peak hours must be available for this to have any hope of working.

As to housing, one of the principle goals should be to bring back the "Missing Middle"; the 20 to 40 year-olds who cannot afford to live here in the District, where so many of them grew up. Success in implementing the relevant OCP policies would have a palpable impact on our traffic woes, in that fewer people would have to commute from their affordable housing on the other side of the water to their jobs here.

Of first importance, then, is that, regardless of whether it is rented or owned or co-ops, housing must become more affordable. Higher density residential is obviously essential in Town and Village Centres and, to a lesser extent, along the main transportation corridors, be it achieved by density bonusing, designated non-market, permanent rental, different zoning bylaws, or otherwise. As well, modestly increased density should be permitted in existing residential neighbourhoods by way of townhouses, triplexes, coach houses, and basement suites.

We on the Committee have learned the counterintuitive lesson that as the population increases in line with the OCP targets, transportation problems may actually be alleviated, not exacerbated. As more affordable housing becomes available, more workers who at this point must commute to and from the North Shore will be able to live here, reducing traffic on the bridges and on this side of the water. As more and more people live in the Town and Village Centres, more businesses to service their needs and desires will become economically viable, employing more workers. As the population grows, transit improvements will follow.

Educating the public is critical. That increased residential density will improve the traffic situation is anything but intuitive. You will never convince everyone, but you might at the least get people thinking that there is a method to your madness.

Presenter Betty Forbes:

[Introduction for Housing Survey Report](#)

- The Community Communications Subcommittee was tasked with preparing a survey to gauge the views of District residents concerning housing.
- The survey ran from mid August until just after the Labour Day Weekend.
- Summer's end was not the optimal time to conduct a survey, but delays which were beyond the Subcommittee's control made it impossible to publish it sooner.
- Despite the timing, over 500 people completed the survey, which is a testament to the importance District residents give to housing and related issues.
- In addition to the tick-the-box answers, the survey had six questions asking for written comments. With 543 people completing the survey, resulting in over 3,000 written comments, we feel comfortable in saying that we have a clear idea of residents' priorities.
- Adrian Chaster has prepared a report on the survey results and will give Council a brief synopsis.

Presenter: Adrian Chaster

[Housing Survey Report](#)

I commend to you a written report I have prepared, which gives the statistical measures of people's views as well as a synopsis of their comments, all in a tidy three pages.

A strongly held and almost universally expressed sentiment is that residential development is progressing too quickly and transportation infrastructure not quickly enough. These issues were frequently lumped together in the comments. They are hot-button issues and are loaded with emotion.

As to transportation, survey respondents complained about difficulties getting around the North Shore itself and not just travelling to and over the Lions Gate and Second Narrows bridges. Vehicle traffic is said to be slow and frustrating. Even more common was the complaint that public transit is seriously inadequate. More buses and more bus lanes are seen to be essential. A desire for more bike lanes was commonly expressed.

On the residential side, concern was frequently expressed about high-density developments and the effects they have on traffic circulation, to say nothing about their aesthetic impact. There was general agreement that high-density residential should be confined to Village and Town Centres and, though to a lesser extent, transportation corridors.

Despite the fact that 80% of respondents were themselves homeowners, the four highest-priority categories for new housing were, in order, housing for average income families, purpose-built rental housing, the generic category of rental housing, and co-op and other forms of affordable home ownership. District residents seem well aware of the fact that, to the extent that they can live here at all, many people cannot afford to own their homes.

Cheaper housing was also a common refrain in the section asking for ideas for getting back the missing middle, this and jobs which pay enough to live here. Many respondents wanted to see more businesses enticed to set up in the District. To make the District more attractive to younger people, the Village and Town Centre concept was popular. With more residents in the Centres, more services for residents will become economically viable. The District should also capitalise on its proximity to the natural environment by maintaining accessibility. Better bike routes and improved public transit are seen to be essential.

The majority of the 50% of respondents who had actually heard of the Official Community Plan generally approved of it. There is a pervasive perception that it is not being followed well, though, predominantly because the District is seen by many to be allowing unfettered residential development in priority to transportation and the various other objectives stated in the OCP.

It becomes clear on reading the comments that too many people are unaware of what the District does on their behalf. Repeated expressions of concern that people don't know what is happening make it clear the District needs to do a better job of communicating with the public. Yes, local government needs to attend to the concerns of its constituents,

but it should also blow its own horn, so they are better aware of the many worthy activities it pursues for their benefit.

The more dealings I have with the District's excellent staff, the more content I am with the way my tax dollars are being utilized. The more people who know what the District does, the more they will feel the same.

Presenter: Vincent Santacroce

[Chapters 3. 4. 5. 6 and 7](#)

I have been tasked to report on the following 5 sections of the existing OCP:

- Environmental Management
- Climate Action
- Social Well Being
- Infrastructure; and
- Economic Development

Time constraints do not permit me to talk about each section in the same depth as some of the sections already presented.

I can assure you that we examined each section thoroughly and assessed and discussed each policy statement line by line and sometimes word by word.

As has already been reported, we found that for the large part, the OCP regarding those 5 areas were still relevant and required little and many cases no changes. Our report details the changes we recommended in an easy and accessible fashion and I would recommend it to all the members of our District community.

Though unique to their own areas, I found a commonality to the 5 sections. For the most part, they addressed the areas in which the District most directly serves its constituents – such as enhancing social well being through promoting diversity, or delivering youth, child and seniors services or playing a role in the improving the environment and energy efficiency in public spaces.

I also observed that there were some common themes in the changes we recommended to these 5 areas:

1. Improve direct citizen engagement and communication in the creation and delivery of the policies and programs in these areas;
2. Enhance the District's community and social planning department; and
3. Not surprisingly, consider the role and impact of the OCP's housing and transportation plan in each area – for example the impact on economic development of not having an adequate workforce because of housing affordability and transportation challenges.

I will take the final moments of my presentation to thank and commend the District staff for their superb work in supporting us in what was a meaningful and rewarding year of work.

Presenter: Maureen Bragg

Conclusion

The OCP is a well written document, thorough and visionary. Housing and Transportation, continue to be the most serious issues. However a good deal of the work that has been done by the District of North Vancouver, which has benefited, the community as a whole, has largely gone unnoticed by the public, as they struggle with their daily commute, suffering gridlock at times and long delays. The District should be communicating better with the public, telling them about the good work you do, in taking advantage of new technologies, as these necessary changes occur. Tell them about the work, that went into the Keith intersection bridge, to protect the creek underneath. Publish regular positive articles, using artist's renderings to illustrate that there is good to come, the "B" line, 200 more rental apartments, better roads and highways.

Give the public hope. The community is starting to lose hope, as they struggle with the total inconvenience, of maneuvering around heavy equipment wherever they go, not being able to get into affordable housing on the North Shore etc.

Communicate in the many ways available. Encourage our fellow citizens to recognize that they are in a growing pains stage of growth, that the changes needed, cannot happen overnight. Residences are aging, affordable accommodation needs to be built to enable citizens to live and work on the North Shore, at the same time, traffic patterns need to be changed, our transportation systems updated and on and on. The citizens will be more understanding if they are kept informed.

Finally, for the sake of continuity and not to waste the vast amount of information collected by the committee, we are willing to continue to be available if Council sees the need.