

## **OTTER POINT & SHIRLEY RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INFORMATION UPDATE FOR SEPTEMBER 2003**

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### **CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY**

The CRD Board of Directors passed Bylaw No. 2952 on August 20th, 2003; this bylaw is commonly referred to as the Regional Growth Strategy and provides a vision for how growth should occur in the Capital Regional District - including the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. Key elements of the bylaw are that:

1. The majority of future population is housed in existing urban areas.
2. Rural areas experience limited population increases and maintain a strong agricultural and resource base.
3. A belt of protected green space run sea to sea from Saanich Inlet south to Juan de Fuca Strait, defining the Western edge of Metropolitan Victoria.
4. Integrated parks, green space, greenways and trail system protects important natural areas and link communities.
5. Downtown Victoria remains the regional employment, business and cultural centre but is complimented by a major employment and population centre in Langford and Colwood.
6. The proportion of trips taken in single occupant automobiles is reduced, trips by public transit are increased, and there is a region-wide foot path and cycle path network
7. Established employment centres are enhanced.
8. A wide range of housing types and tenures meet the needs of regional residents.
9. Communities are socially and physically complete with new developments that enhance the identity and walkable human scale of neighbourhoods.

OPSRRA has supported the development and adoption of this regional growth strategy through letters to the CRD and presentations at RGS public hearings. Details of OPSRRA's submissions can be viewed on our web site ([www.opsrra.com](http://www.opsrra.com)) under Regional Growth Strategy.

## **URBAN CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY**

One of the changes made to the CRD Regional Growth Strategy, prior to the final public hearing in February 2002, was to grant the District of Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (Port Renfrew, Jordan River, Shirley, Otter Point, East Sooke, Willis Point and The Malahat) an additional 2 years after the adoption of the Bylaw to determine their Urban Containment Boundaries. This extension was made at the request of the District of Sooke and our previous regional director.

The request for a two-year extension is important to Shirley and Otter Point for two reasons:

1. Under the agreement to keep urban settlement compact, the municipalities and the JDF Electoral Area have now agreed that, "... rural/residential areas remain rural in character with subdivision and development remaining within designated capacities in official community plans, as determined at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw." As of August 20th, 2003 every other municipality in the CRD except the District of Sooke and the JDF Electoral Area is bound to keep rural/residential areas rural, and maintain new development within the areas designated in official community plans. Our communities are not covered by this provision of the RGS until August 2005.
2. The CRD and the member municipalities have agreed "... not to further expand urban sewer and water services, or increase servicing capacity to encourage growth beyond designated official community plan limits at the date of adoption of the RGS by-law (August 20th, 2003), beyond the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area". The District of Sooke chose to declare that their entire municipality would be retained within the Urban Containment Boundary - thus allowing future extension of sewer and water services anywhere within their municipal limits. What this means is that the District of Sooke can undertake future high-density development anywhere within its municipal boundary. Where will the Urban Containment Boundary be in our two rural communities come August 2005?

OPSRRA has contacted the CRD to enquire about whether the JDF Electoral Area could decide on its Urban Containment Boundary sooner rather than later. Apparently if the regional director and Land Use Committee "A" agree, this can be done at the regional director's request to the CRD Board. OPSRRA has informally requested Director Lund to revisit the decision to give the JDF Electoral Area a two-year extension.

## **SOOKE'S PROPOSED SEWER OUTFALL**

OPSRRA continues to express concern about the District of Sooke's proposed sewage outfall and has recently sent the following letter to Mayor and Council.

Dear Mayor Evans and Councillors:

May I draw your attention to our previous letter that I have enclosed. Our opposition to the outfall method of effluent disposal remains unchanged.

Although we do agree with the need for sewers, we think it important that a referendum be held and that the people have the option of paying for a superior method of disposal.

This is an issue that will affect this community's image beyond this council's lifetime. We implore you to be visionaries and look to the future.

Sincerely,

Ken Pungente, President OPSRRA

The following letter was originally sent to the District of Sooke in December 2000 and was recently resubmitted to Mayor and Council.

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

I am writing mayor and council on behalf of the Otter Point & Shirley Residents & Ratepayers Association to register our objection to Sooke's continued consideration of an outfall to dispose of its effluent. As your neighbouring communities and the ones most likely to be affected by the outcomes of your choice of sewage discharge, we request the following:

1. That a public hearing (instead of open houses) be called on this proposal.
2. That the residents of Shirley and Otter Point be specifically included in any future surveys, focus groups or other public participation and data collecting activities conducted by the District of Sooke and its agents.
3. That local special interest groups such as the T'Souke First Nations, Bed & Breakfast Association, Sooke Region Museum/Tourist Information Centre, fish boat charter operators, OPSRRA and others who may have concerns about the effect of a sewage outfall on their property values, livelihood and environment be asked to participate in any final decision about how to dispose of effluent.
4. That the District of Sooke offers assurance that a final decision on this matter of critical importance to the residents of Otter Point and Shirley will not be taken until the above requests have been addressed by mayor and council.

The reasons for our objections to the outfall method of effluent disposal are:

1. It does not present a positive image for this section of the West Coast.
2. It will likely have an impact on the local tourism economy including the bed & breakfast operators, fish charter companies, nature tour businesses and other local ventures dependent on marketing an image of clean air and water.
3. It will compromise commercial fish, crab, clam and other seashore harvesters.
4. It will allow a precedent for other communities and individuals to apply for and receive permission to dispose of their sewage into the ocean.

Our association realizes that the District of Sooke needs to provide an alternative to individual septic tanks if it is to become the designated growth centre for our area. However, as the first incorporated town on this section of the West Coast and the one whose name is most often associated with our area, you should also show vision and leadership. What does it say about your commitment to your community's future beauty, health and economic development if you choose to discharge effluent into the waters off of Sooke and Otter Point merely because it will be a quick and cheaper solution? Have you studied the probability that the choice of an outfall could

leave a long term and more expensive mess for others to try and put right? Stop and consider the negative impact of your outfall on this part of the West Coast and in particular on Sooke's image. Stop and reconsider what you are supporting, before Sooke's name becomes forever associated with the rear end of effluent technology instead of the wave of the future.

Sincerely,

Ken Pungente, President OPSRRA

## **OPSRRA'S REQUEST TO BC TRANSIT FOR LOCAL SERVICE**

OPSRRA sent the following letter, on August 3rd 2003, to BC Transit in support of our membership's continuing request for the restoration of local bus service to Otter Point.

Mayor Don Amos  
Chair, Regional Transit Commission  
P.O. Box 610  
Victoria, BC V8W 2P3

Dear Mayor Amos:

I am writing on behalf of the membership of OPSRRA (the Otter Point & Shirley Residents & Ratepayers Association). There have been many enquiries as to when the bus service may be returning to our area. We feel that a smaller commuter bus could be effective, with a route starting at the Sooke core and going out West Coast Rd. to Otter Point Rd., returning to the village core via Otter Point Rd., then leaving the core and making a loop out to East Sooke and back to the core to repeat the cycle. We feel this will greatly assist people in the outer areas to support businesses, get medical attention and have access to our swimming pool and arena as well as visit with friends.

We would appreciate your comments on this and wish to be kept informed about any further developments relating to this issue.

Sincerely,

Ken Pungente, President

cc June Klassen  
Accessible Service Planner  
B.C. Transit

## **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN**

The recent proposal by Guiding Owl Investment Company to develop 160 acres of Rural and Agricultural Land Reserve land adjacent to Sheringham Light House has revealed a shortcoming in the Otter Point and Shirley Local Area Plan. By making use of provincial legislation that allows bare land strata development, they are permitted to use lot averaging to increase the density and

reduce the lot sizes of their development properties. The Otter Point and Shirley LAP (Bylaw 2366) states in Appendix IV under Section 3.2.10. Housing that: Lot averaging must not be permitted, even in the case of large parcels of land.

Apparently provincial legislation takes precedence over our LAP in this and any other matter where there is a difference between the two.

## **CRD NATURAL ATLAS**

The CRD has produced an aerial map of all of the South Island. This can be viewed on their web site at [www.crd.bc.ca](http://www.crd.bc.ca). Look for the Natural Atlas on their web page and follow the instructions. With a bit of practice you will be able to view aerial photographs of your neighbourhood: details such as roads, property lines and other features have been added to help you find your way around. It is good fun and very informative!

## **OPSRRA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

OPSRRA needs new members. We would like to increase our membership to ensure that it is remaining a representative association and to hear the concerns and opinions of newcomers to our community. Several initiatives will help with this: the Welcome Wagon has agreed to distribute an information sheet on OPSRRA to new households in Otter Point and Shirley and the Sooke News Mirror has offered to do a feature on the association. However, our best way of increasing membership is through the efforts of our present members. If you know of a neighbour, relative or friend who isn't already a member consider recruiting them. Lifetime membership remains at \$5.00 per person and can be obtained from any of the OPSRRA directors listed at the end of this newsletter.

## **SOOKE BOUNDARY RESTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

The next meeting of the committee will be held at 5 p.m. on Thursday, September 18th at the Sooke municipal hall. These meetings are open to the public.

The agenda will likely include a final report from the consulting firm, that has been preparing background information on the impact of amalgamation on both the District of Sooke and the rural communities of East Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River. A representative from the provincial ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services is expected to report back on:

1. Outstanding information concerning the impact of amalgamation on the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.
2. Whether the province will allow the rural areas to vote first.

A timetable for this fall's public information sessions, to be held in each rural community, is expected to be decided at this meeting. Following these public meetings, the province will decide:

1. If there will be a referendum on amalgamation.
2. What the referendum question will be.

If there is going to be a referendum, there will be then be a second round of public information meetings in each rural community prior to a vote. The province still has to decide if they would

allow a separate count of referendum votes for each community or if all the votes will be counted as one. OPSRRA supports a separate vote count for East Sooke and West Sooke (Shirley and Otter Point).

Both the province and the CRD have stated that no amalgamation will happen without a referendum. OPSRRA has lobbied for and supports this position.

## **OPSRRA**

OPSRRA is a representative community organization with an elected Board of Directors and strives to present the points-of-view of the residents of the rural communities of Shirley and Otter Point to local government. It was founded in 1992 and has a membership of about 350. Lifetime memberships are \$5.00 and available from OPSRRA directors—see our web site ([www.opsrra.com](http://www.opsrra.com)) for further information.

The purpose of our society is to:

1. Ensure that the development of the two communities of Shirley and Otter Point takes place in an orderly way and in the best interests of its residents.
2. Co-operate with local government and other public bodies in the furtherance of the objectives of the society and benefits to the community.
3. Concern itself with the performance of government agencies.
4. Encourage citizens to stand for public office.
5. Promote community spirit and sense of identity by organizing or supporting appropriate activities.

### **OPSRRA's EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTORS**

Ken Pungente	President	Arnie Campbell	Vice President
Wendy Miller	Secretary/Treasurer		
Byron Tweedy	Director	Mitch Moneo	Director
Virginia Boyd	Director	Wendy Morton	Director
Frances Stocks	Director		

This newsletter is published monthly on the [www.opsrra.com](http://www.opsrra.com) web page by OPSRRA—the Otter Point and Shirley Residents and Ratepayers Association. Comments or requests to have information included in the newsletter can be directed to Arnie Campbell, Vice President. Phone: (250) 642-3113 or e-mail [d.acampbell@shaw.ca](mailto:d.acampbell@shaw.ca)