

*Prepared for: Columbia Basin Trust
Prepared by: Erin Welk, Smart Growth BC, OCP Consultant for Elkford
Contact information: erin@smartgrowth.bc.ca*

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

Key Questions:

1. How has the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy influenced the OCP and the OCP process?
 2. Does this OCP look different than others because of the CCAS process?
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General comments

- Combining Climate Change Adaptation with OCP planning provided an excellent forum for inserting adaptation throughout all of the District's high level land use planning policy directions
- As a result of the CCAS focus, the OCP process focused much more on education about why CC Adaptation was necessary than it would have done otherwise
- The CCAS and its associated process made possible the education activities that were essential to even getting people to talk about climate change as a real life problem in Elkford
- That Councillors, residents and District Staff are talking about climate change (adaptation and mitigation) and willing to accept it as a reality
- Engaging in this problematic topic is/was important because, like Elkford, there are likely many other Kootenay communities that might not be receptive (at least right away) to this kind of thinking and direction.
- The OCP document and the OCP/CCAS processes dedicated more time to educating residents about, and justifying the need for climate change planning than many other OCP's in BC
- Climate change is integrated throughout the OCP document, from the process, to the guiding principles to specific policy statements and regulation

The District of Elkford's OCP and CCA Strategy demonstrates a significant shift in thinking and policy direction. It is interesting to compare the new 2009 Draft OCP to Elkford's 1999 OCP Bylaw. They are drastically different!

Key areas of difference include:

- Climate change is explicitly defined, and actions are identified to both mitigate and adapt to its effects. Climate change is integrated at all levels – from guiding principles to Development Permit Areas and the Land Use Plan. Different sections explicitly refer to the CCA, while Climate Change Adaptation goals are strategically combined with other goals to achieve multiple community objectives.
 - o Merely putting Climate Change Adaptation (i.e. establishing a floodplain or incorporating a DP area for Fire protection) into OCP policy is not necessarily new or unique (this has been happening in community plans at various levels of detail throughout Canada for years now). However, what is different is the explicit integration of Climate Change throughout all policy areas. For example, in the District of Elkford OCP, climate change is being identified in almost all policy areas (i.e. parks, transportation, building design etc.)
- Climate change mitigation is explicitly referred to and supported by policy statements in many sections

- The OCP proposes a District Growth Boundary that will prevent new greenfield development before there has been intensification and revitalization of existing neighbourhoods and the District Core. The implementation of the District Growth boundary will also achieve several CC Adaptation goals. For example, additional wildfire risks and the need for adaptation will be prevented by not building residential units further into the wilderness.
- The guiding principles explicitly refer to the need for Elkford to address climate change and develop in a sustainable way. The guiding principles have been approved by Council, and all additional policy and regulation in the OCP build on the guiding principles
- Regulation and incentives aim to develop the District Core as the economic, cultural and social heart of Elkford
- There are more options for a range of housing units and sizes.
- Development Permit Areas will guide new development for the reduction of GHG emissions, energy efficiency and water conservation.

OCP and CCAS Process

- The CCAS process has allowed residents in Elkford to learn about climate change when they may not have otherwise focused on the topic.
- Without an explicit focus on CCA, and money/resources provided for that part of the project, the OCP project would not have been able to sustain such an explicit focus on Climate Change. Building awareness and educating residents were time intensive and expensive activities, without which there would have been much less willingness for Council/CAC members etc. to integrate climate change throughout the document
- The CCA and OCP processes were essential to convince residents, staff and council that planning for climate change, and implementing adaptation and mitigation activities are important
- As a result, climate change is explicitly integrated much more thoroughly into the OCP, and (I think/hope) the associated policy and proposed actions have much greater support within the community
- That the CCA and OCP processes were run in conjunction was very important for identifying and educating residents about the connections between various community objectives, and the cross over between climate change and other goals

Planning for Climate Change Adaptation should be combined with planning for Climate Change Mitigation

- In the long run this will save resources and time on projects. Climate change education for both adaptation and mitigation is better and more efficiently completed together (otherwise it seems people get confused, and you end up talking about both regardless)
- In working through the policy with the OCP, there are interesting benefits that come from implementing mitigation and adaptation activities together. It is difficult to address both issues in isolation effectively.
- Moving forward, the message should be that both adaptation and mitigation activities can have positive and mutual benefits for a community etc.
- It makes sense to focus on both within the context of an OCP update because both adaptation and mitigation are so intrinsically tied to land use. Future planning processes should explicitly address both areas of climate change

If climate change adaptation is being undertaken in conjunction with an OCP – a separate Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is not necessary.

- The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (completed by Zumundo Consultants) was an essential resource that we used to develop the Climate Change Adaptation related OCP policy statements
- However, once the OCP is finalized and approved, the CCAS becomes less important for the District of Elkford, as Council, staff and residents will have accepted the OCP as the primary guiding document for community decisions related to land use.
- The key value to the CCAS was the process and identifying the policy directions/actions to be integrated into OCP document
- Although we tried to avoid duplicating work, I think there was still overlap in finishing the Adaptation Strategy and then adapting/integrating it into the OCP document.
- It may be more useful to clearly document the process and outcomes (through monthly updates, briefing notes etc) and integrate the policy directions into the OCP, and keep the funding/resources that were used in putting the strategy document together for a detailed action plan that helps guide the CCA implementation (i.e. one step past the OCP).