

## Climate change adaptation and OCP integration: experiences from the District of Elkford Learning Network webinar, July 20, 2010

“Our OCP is an integrated strategic sustainability plan that includes adaptation and mitigation. It’s the lifeblood of the community.”  
- Corien Speaker, CAO, District of Elkford

### Summary report

The District of Elkford that participated in phase one of CBT's Communities Adapting to Climate Change Initiative recently adopted a new Official Community Plan (OCP) that incorporates both an integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy. Both strategies were developed concurrent with the OCP.

CAO for the District of Elkford, Corien Speaker, shared her experiences, lessons learned and OCP outcomes during this one hour online meeting for the CACCI Learning Network.

Corien's presentation outlines a step by step process of what the District did along with highlights from the OCP. Her 44 detailed slide presentation is online at:  
<http://cbtadaptation.squarespace.com/presentations-2010/>

The OCP is on the District of Elkford's website: [www.elkford.ca](http://www.elkford.ca)

Highlights and additional points from the webinar are below and provide a flavour of the content from Corien's presentation.

### What is so unique about Elkford's OCP?

- The OCP includes an integrated sustainability plan
- The OCP looks like a normal OCP. However, adaptation and mitigation are integrated into every section of the document. It is repeated throughout the processes and development permits.
- In the end, because they integrated everything, it is going to be a good usable document that cannot be forgotten.

### Guiding Principles for the OCP

- These took a long time to develop (6 months)
- They are the foundation of the OCP
- It was well worth the time to develop it
- Lesson learned: every community should take time to do this
- GP number 6 is: “*Consider Climate Change in all Decision-Making.*”

### OCP steering committee & community engagement

- Elkford had a strong steering committee (SC) with 14 participants and one chair
- The chair kept the committee and group on track
- The SC were the local champions
- The SC were more involved than Corien and reviewed documents and OCP draft
- The SC took a lead role in engaging the community

- Coffee table meetings were hosted by members of the SC. This would not have happened without the committee's involvement.
- Open houses had mixed attendance
- Hard to get people in the community out unless there is a controversy

## Working with consultants: lessons learned

- Smart Growth and Zumundo Consulting were hired to do the OCP and Climate Change work.
- Zumundo did the majority of the Adaptation work. There were many issues with Smart Growth
- Consultants did not have a good grasp on how the community uses the plan; therefore Corien had to do multiple revisions
- Lesson learned: it is very important to have someone on staff to help guide the process and work with the consultants. She believes that having someone actively onboard from the beginning is key
- Elkford did not do a lot of the hands on work. To do it again, Elkford would have done it more hands on– there was a lot of revision

## Council's involvement & community buy-in

- The District took council through the OCP document line by line to ensure that council knew exactly what they were approving and Corien wanted make sure that council was going to stand behind the document
- As a result, the OCP is a community document that has complete acceptance and community buy-in
- Climate change adaptation is now on the referral to council templates. Having it on this sparks thought before decisions are made. Council supports this. Council considers CC in all decision making.
- Council struggles with telling developers what they can and cannot do. This OCP stands behind council decisions.

## Integrating a sustainability plan into an OCP

- Before Elkford adopted the OCP, they stepped back and reflected on all aspects to ensure that the OCP included the language for a sustainability plan so that the Province did not come back and say 'where is your sustainability plan'
- Adapted final OCP to ensure met ICSP definition

## Lessons for finalizing the OCP

- Next time: take it to the lawyer before taking it to council
- Corien would have done the referral to other agencies before going to council. For example, it would have been helpful to have land use protection stipulations in the OCP

## How did CBT contribute?

- CBT provided adaptation expertise and guidance
- CBT guided the adaptation process and helped Elkford stay on track
- \$30,000 in funding

## Climate change impacts at the local level: using your local resources

- Closet climate change people in the community were documenting climate impacts and local observations for many years
- These local observations were very valuable and Corien would encourage everyone to tap this resource.

## What is next?

- Currently finalizing the actions list. She wants to map it out into a 10 year implementation plan (she can bring this to the community).
- Corien would like to provide the community with yearly updates about implementation plans for the year etc...

Please view the full presentation for more detail:

<http://cbtadaptation.squarespace.com/presentations-2010/>

## Other Questions from the 'chat-box':

Q: What is the community action on energy efficiency?

A: It's a B.C. grant monitored by the Fraser Basin Council. It's a Provincial grant.

<http://www.bcclimateexchange.ca/index.php?p=caee>

*Work on energy efficiency resulted in development permits for energy efficiency. As these are new and Corien hasn't seen them elsewhere, the District will monitor effectiveness.*

Q: Who did Corien hire to assist the project when they were abandoned by Smart Growth Consulting?

A: A planner, Michael Rosen, from West Vancouver helped with the policy advice. The junior planner from Smart Growth continued to do the data part of the process.

## 18 Participants in Total

### **Community participants form Learning Network**

Shannon Marshall - Castlegar

Kathy Moore - Rossland

Dee Conklin - Radium

Mike Maturo - Rossland

Lila Cresswell - Fruitvale

David Mills – Slocan

Iain Bell - Creston

### **AC/TST**

Cindy Pearce

Ingrid Liepa

Jim Barnes

Hans Schreier

Laurie Cordell

Cathy LeBlanc



# Communities Adapting to Climate Change

**Other attendees**

Jennifer Pouliotte – BC RAC

Lee Johnson – CRD (Vancouver Island)

**CBT**

Michelle Laurie

Rachael Roussin

Lynne Betts