



Fraser Valley Regional District

45950 Cheam Avenue, Chilliwack, B.C. V2P 1N6

Tel: 604 702-5000 Toll Free: 1 800 528 0061

Fax: 604 792 9684

Electoral Area 'E'

Open House and Directed Discussion

May 11th, 2010

Columbia Valley/Cultus Lake/ Lindell Beach
Columbia Valley Community Hall

MEETING NOTES

Present:

Staff: Lisa Grant, Planner, Dawn Smith, Planner

David Lamson, Director Electoral Area 'E'

Members of the Public: 40-50 (approximately)

As an introduction to the Electoral Area 'E' Official Settlement Plan update, the Regional District hosted an open house and directed discussion on the evening of May 11th, 2010. The purpose of the evening was to (1) introduce the project, (2) inform people how they could be involved and (3) to gather input on community values and issues. The evening provided an opportunity for residents to share information about their community, values, concerns and areas we can work together to improve their lives. Each of these three topics provided an avenue for community members to express their opinions.

Several common themes emerged throughout the evening. Each is summarized below (not presented in order of importance):

1. Maintaining local character

Recognizing that distinct communities exist in this area (Columbia Valley, Lindell Beach and Cultus Lake), the plan needs to address each of these areas. Residents characterized their community as close-knit and caring. They place value on rural character, peace and quiet, natural setting, and privacy and are generally long term residents who care.

One issue identified was new residents lack understanding about how to live with wildlife, something rich in this area. Furthermore, residents identified the need to work together to help educate new residents about the area. A second issue is the price of land in Columbia Valley; many younger generations are unable to remain in the community. This has a direct impact on economic viability of farms and the local economy.

2. Agriculture

Columbia Valley is an area dominated by agriculture. The majority of the lands are located in the ALR. Residents expressed a need to maintain agriculture viability while providing a greater level of flexibility and allowing alternative uses in the ALR. One suggestion was exploring agri-businesses in the community. Like many other areas, residents are facing economic challenges.

3. Economy

In addition to the challenges that face agricultural areas in Electoral Area 'E', there is a need to provide employment opportunities for the youth to keep them in the community. Many residents are aging and the younger generations are not remaining in the area. This is reflected in the age of the volunteer fire department and concern that there may not be people to support the volunteer fire department if this issue is not addressed.

Greater economic opportunities extend to other areas, where an interest was expressed in provide flexibility in the zoning bylaw and OCP to permit bed and breakfast and artisan uses in more zones, specifically, the limited use zone.

4. Environment and Sustainability

As stated above, residents expressed values such as nature and preservation of wildlife. Also ecological balance, community gardens and protecting tree stocks were noted as values. Encouraging sustainable farming and building practices should also be addressed in the plan.

Water quality and quantity were noted. Generally, there was little concern of the quantity of water. However, quality was questioned in partnership with the implications of agricultural activities on ground water sources and impact of impervious surfaces and increased demand as development takes place around the lake. Residents appreciate the diversity and presence of local wildlife and learn to live together. Maintaining this relationship is important to residents.

5. Transportation

As one of the main issues identified by some Columbia Valley residents, while others believe the road provides a filter to maintain their rural ambience, concerns were raised about the amount of traffic on Columbia Valley Rd- especially during the summer months, the need for a second access route, current capacity of the road and implications if more development takes place around the lake. Also a lack of parking on Columbia Valley rd was a concern for some community members. Finally, a need for transit system to urban areas, specifically Vancouver was expressed.

6. Bike lanes

Although a topic that fits under either transportation or recreation, bike lanes were a resounding issue that came up throughout the evening during both the open house and directed discussion. Added to the value poster, many people supported the idea by adding check marks and commented on the need for a bike lane around the lake and possibly into Columbia Valley. Columbia Valley is a popular location for recreational cyclists to enjoy the rolling countryside and outdoor enthusiasts in general.

7. Resort Area

It was noted that during the summer months the activity and population around Cultus Lake significantly increases. However, there is a lack of amenities for tourists, such as hotel accommodations. Increasing amenities, tourist recreation and bed and breakfast operations should be encouraged near the lake.

8. Housing and Development

One of the values expressed by residents was the desire for children to be able to live in the community. Community members expressed a desire for planned and controlled growth in these areas, although farming must be protected. Some change may be okay provided that it is well planned. Residents recognized the need for some change in light of the struggles to retain the youth in the area. This change in Columbia Valley should be reflected in housing policies that would allow greater flexibility for types of secondary housing, permit subdivisions for family members or in cases where a property is split by a roadway. For some this includes opportunities for subdivision, but it was acknowledged that further subdivision could erode the agricultural character of the area. Carriage homes or a second home therefore should be explored too.

9. Recreation

Creation of and better access to recreational opportunities were noted during the open house. Access to provincial parks, green space, access to Cultus Lake and recreation trails (walking/biking and horse trails) were a need expressed by community members. Some residents wanted local greenspace to allow interaction with nearby nature.

10. Bylaw enforcement

Issues with noise from discharging guns on Vedder Mountain, training in the airspace above Columbia Valley and other sources were raised as a concern. A need for greater enforcement of bylaws and laws addressing this issue and also backyard burning, unsightly properties and other disturbances should be enforced.

Appendix A

Columbia Valley/Cultus Lake/ Lindell Beach

Open House & Directed Discussion

The open house was a drop in format with posters allowing people to write down their opinions. Listed below are notes from the three poster community members were invited to share their ideas.

Values:

- Rural lifestyle
- Nature
- Peace and quiet
- Wildlife
- Maintain agricultural viability, but with flexibility
- Privacy
- Agriculture
- Close-knit community
- Ecological balance
- Noise and disturbance bylaw

Issues

- Water quality
- What are the effects from agriculture on our water quality, our water is not good
- Water availability from Adam's spring and watt creek
- Busy summer season
- Roads and traffic near lake
- Need amenities and activities for tourist and residents (i.e. no hotels/ accommodations near the lake)
- Bike lanes along the lake
- Alternative route
- Newcomers don't know how to live with wildlife
- Transport to Vancouver/city a problem, no service
- Bike lanes for kids camps, events, tourists, residents (economic generators)
- My children to be able to live in my community
- Alternative uses within the ALR
- To be able to have my children live in their own house on my property, but not in a mobile home. Need ability/flexibility for alternative housing options (maybe garden house)
- To be able to subdivide lots for my children
- Sewer system at Lindell Beach

- Road safety and access from Columbia Valley to Chilliwack, especially the bridge
- City developments affect traffic from Columbia Valley/Cultus Lake
- 2nd Vedder bridge or a wider bridge
- Columbia Valley is distinct from Cultus Lake- needs to be recognized, mainly through a change to addresses (Canada Post)
- No large company logging, only selective

Opportunities

We can work together to...

- Take advantage of new technologies in community planning
- Educate newcomers and visitors that the area is natural and how to live with wildlife
- Long term residents who care
- Allow for planned and controlled growth
- Park/green space from military lands- don't log military lands
- Opportunities to divide properties separated by roads
- The best water in the world
- Shared use trails- walking, bicycle and horseback riding

Ortho Map Comments

- Bike lanes along Columbia Valley Rd
- Leave Provincial Parks open year round (Cultus Lake)
- Protect Valley residents from excessive noise
- Protect aquifer from untimely manure spreading
- This valley has a history and it should be learned and understood
- Protect night sky
- Provide walking/biking/horse riding trails
- Encourage agri-tourism and eco-tourism
- Allow B&B and artisan uses in Limited Use zones
- Provide recycling opportunities
- Encourage sustainable farming and building practices, Regional District should be more helpful and less stringent
- Camp Stillwood and United Church Camp are assets to the area. They should be encouraged with a 99 year lease so they will remain and are willing to invest time and effort.

Appendix B

Directed Discussion

The directed discussion comprised the second part of the evening. Staff and the Area 'E' Director introduced the project, explained what an Official Community Plan is, how community members can be involved in the planning process. The group was split into two groups. A series of questions were asked to help identify what is important to their community, issues affecting the community and what does your community look like in the future. Below have the answers provided by each group.

Like

- Seclusion (?), privacy
- Country setting
- Rural lifestyle
- Natural setting
- Flora and fauna
- Quiet
- Agriculture
- Trees, keeping losing trees
- Night sky, protect at development stage
- Wildlife
- No hunting in the valley
- Air quality, wind flows
- Quality/quantity, spring/aquifer and water licenses
- Protecting ground water quality

Same

- All of the above (mentioned in like category)
- No industry (resource extraction- logging and mining)
- Managed truck traffic, road stays the same, managed it with current rules

Change

- Increased tourist recreation, cottage style and B & B near lake
- Family housing options (i.e. smaller lots/ carriage homes)
- 2nd access point into the valley
- No 2nd access point into the valley, road construction would be harmful to environment and bring in more people

- Enforcement needed of today's rules
- Lack of parking on Columbia Valley road, especially during the summer months
- Relax ALR rules to allow more flexible uses in keeping with agriculture (i.e. R.V. storage. Not auto wrecking)
- Limited use zones needs rec/education uses (i.e. B&B, artisan uses)
- Trails and uses
- Need info on Columbia Valley Highway traffic- threshold/tipping point before more development
- Infrastructure in Columbia Valley needs improvement (electrical/ cell phone/ highspeed/ roads/ phones/ gas)
- Homesite severance policy gone, transfer farm through generations
- Impervious surfaces affect aquifer concern about increases
- Bike lanes/ routes along the lake, they stop at Cultus Lake Parks Board
- Separate titles for properties separated by road
- Airspace used for training and air traffic from Abbotsford Airport
- Shooting on Vedder Mountain
- Provincial park is locked, residents want access all year- park pass for residents
- Vedder Mountain has many users for recreation but discharging firearms is safety concern, also burning/camping
- More local input/control for life at Lindell Beach (i.e. manage roads/ decision making- implementation)
- Lindell Beach is unique
- Greenspace for walking- local use; walking and dog walking *give more options than roads
- Backyard burning a concern (i.e. on smaller lots close to neighbours) – greater controls
- Identify important views to mountains (i.e. logging)
- Identify community values (i.e. sediment to ck) from resource extraction
- Roads- multiple jurisdiction; need contact info to raise concerns
- Community needs local employment and to keep people here- contribute/volunteer services (i.e. fire department- facing an aging force)
- Unslightly properties- enforcement needed
- Roads need to support volunteer fire department to attract new members (may need more money/pay)
- Agri-business opportunities; local grown, invite visitors
- Community gardens
- Careful change, doesn't impact ability to farm
- Need to check in with the community before draft plan is complete- community meeting
- Septic impacts along the lake is unknown
- Lack of access to lake, especially in Lindell Beach.
- No parking available in Lindell Beach, public access has been blocked
- Sustainable building options and positive attitude toward these practices
- Streamline process, not many requirements