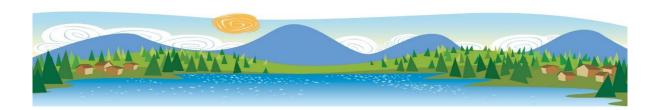
ELECTORAL AREA "G"

Let's Talk Land Use!

August – October 2019

Community engagement process undertaken to determine the community's view on future land use and planning



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Executive Summary and Recommendations

This engagement process was initiated to assist the Electoral Area "G" Director in determining if there is community interest in developing an Official Community Plan (OCP). The engagement process was undertaken between August and October 2019 and consisted of three main approaches: a focus group style lunch, two public open houses and a survey. It was both educational in terms of explaining land use jurisdictions but was also to understand what land use matters are of importance for residents.

Approximately 145 people responded in the survey and approximately 50 people participated with the lunch and open houses. Electoral Area "G" residents expressed a diversity of opinions and topics of concern throughout this process; however, there were also some topics that resonated strongly for the majority of people.

Overall from the survey resuts, it appears that a large majority of residents are in favour of local input on future land use changes of large scale developments, with 88% of survey respondents answering 'yes' to this question. Also 79% of the survey respondents were in favour of developing a community vision that will help guide Electoral Area "G" for the next 20 or so years.

The two open house comments also reflected these sentiments, although there was also concern that by developing a community plan it will result in greater government interference. People also felt that because most of the properties are within the ALR, the role of local government appears limited, although it was also stated that the ALC were not actively upholding their regulations. Most people; however, had expressed a desire to be involved in future land use planning and a vision for their community through some means.

Survey Summary

In terms of who answered the survey, most of the respondents were from rural Keremeos (49%), and followed by Hedley (20%) and Olalla at 13%, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 60 to 79 years of age and were full time permanent residents.

The survey asked people to rate seven topics in order of importance for them. While most of the topics were generally rated as being important or very important, the one issue that had the smallest deviation (meaning there is a closer consensus of all responses), with a 91 % agreement, was the need to protect community watersheds for water quality and quantity.

The next two topics most agreed upon as being important were protecting sensitive ecosystems such as grasslands, riparian areas, forests, wetlands and shallow soiled outcrops (75% noted as important or very important), and maintaining the ALR land primarily for farming and food production only (75% rated as important or very important).

Recommendations

A number of recommendations are being made in response to the project's initial goals and the resulting information gleaned from the engagement process. These recommendations are presented as follows:

a) There appears to be enough evidence to proceed with developing an Official Community Plan (OCP);

- b) Developing the OCP needs to be conducted with consideration that land use bylaws are an unknown entity in this area and its creation will be the first of its kind. The OCP process needs to both educational and allow for a great deal of community dialogue;
- c) There is a strong sense of place within each area by residents and given the different historical patterns of settlement and constraints, it will be important to assess and provide policies locally;
- d) Given the strong connection between 'rural' Keremeos and the Village of Keremeos, there is an opportunity to collaborate on 'fringe' planning around the Keremeos area;
- e) Given the amount of Indian Reserve land along the Similkameen River valley, and the traditional territory of the local Indian Bands, it is vital to be able to collaborate on a planning project such as an OCP;
- f) It is noted that many of the communities concerns are in response to land use jurisdictions outside those of the RDOS, such as forestry, mining and the ALC. The OCP will be an opportunity to work with those governments and agencies in order to collaborate on shared goals.

Background

Electoral Area "G" encompasses a substantially large area of approximately 2200 square kilometres within the RDOS, stretching from the west of Summerland and south to the border and includes three main settlement areas: Hedley, Olalla, and rural Keremeos. The area's population, based on the 2016 census, is just over 2200 people, making it the fourth highest populated electoral area within the RDOS.

Although encompassing a large land mass, the settlement areas and majority of private land (Hedley and Keremeos) are concentrated in the Similkameen River valley, running basically east-west, and within the Keremeos Creek valley running north south (Olalla). The remaining land consists of Crown, Indian Reserve or Parks.

Hedley is a historic mining town located approximately midway between Princeton (38 km) and Keremeos (29 km). The legal subdivision survey grid on which the parcels have been created dates back to a 1936 resurvey and based on a traditional townsite plan. The majority of the legal parcels are quite small 25 ft x 100 ft (232 m^2) with the majority of parcels developed. Hedley is serviced with water through the Hedley Improvement District (HID) and does not have a community sewer service.

The original Olalla townsite was surveyed in 1900 with the majority of subdivided parcels being 122.5 ft x 35 ft (398 m²), slightly larger than Hedley's. Currently Olalla is home to several RV resorts and mobile home parks and some rural acreages. The RDOS owns and operates the Olalla community water system, and there is no community sewer service.

Rural Keremeos consists of a number of properties, almost exclusively within the ALR, located to the west, east and north of the Village of Keremeos boundaries. Interestingly, many people assume that these properties are actually within Keremeos, and although within the RDOS, people appear to be more connected to Keremeos, in terms of access to information and events.

To date, there are no regional district land use bylaws (OCP, zoning, or building) in place within Area "G", with the exception of the subdivision along Pincushion Trail and Liddicoat R, near Keremeos, that has a zoning bylaw but no OCP nor building inspection services.

Project Overview

The Electoral Area "G" Director, Tim Roberts, has expressed an interest in the communities' opinion on future land use and development. In particular the possibility of developing an Official Community Plan (OCP) to reflect the aspirations and goals for the next 20-25 years. Additionally, the Director feels that without a community plan or vision, it is difficult for an elected official to respond effectively to queries form other levels of government and agencies.

To this end, a community engagement project was undertaken from August to October 2019. The purpose of the engagement was to firstly educate the public on land use matters, such as what levels of governments are involved, what an OCP is and is not, and the reasons that it is important to have one. Secondly, the purpose was to also ask the community what land use matters are important to them and seek direction on how to best proceed.

The community engagement process consisted of a three avenue approach. The first avenue was an invitation only working lunch with key business leaders, residents and the Lower and Upper Similkameen Indian Bands. The second was the hosting of two open houses, one in Hedley the other in Keremeos, with stations to post notes, maps, a Powerpoint presentation, along with open

question and answers; the third avenue was a survey to be completed either online or paper. The survey was open until October 18, 2019. A hard copy of the survey was also mailed out to residents in early October.

Summary from engagement events

Key community member's lunch Overview

A working style lunch was held on September 6, 2019, at the Grist Mill where a number of key area residents came together to discuss land use and future concerns. The participants included: Roger Meyer (past Director), Tim Cottrill (alternate Director), Manfred Bauer (Mayor of Keremeos), Robin Irwin (USIB), Ron Harris (Harris Transport), Stan Bobowski (Olalla), Richard Chadwick (CopperRidge), Dale Chadsy (SunKatchers), along with Evelyn Riechert (RDOS) and Director Tim Roberts.

The PowerPoint was presented with an open discussion period afterwards. The main issues discussed included:

- Support from USIB for a regional planning approach, including floodplain mapping
- Concern for soil stability and large buildings constructed without inspection
- An apparent major disconnect between the ALC and the RDOS, not supporting each other
- Some discussion on how referrals for Area "G" work, such as from MOTI, ALC, Ministry of Forests
- Congestion and traffic, particularly around and in Keremeos was seen as a problem
- Concern over environmental health given lack of oversight, what are the cumulative environmental impacts within the watershed?
- How and where to grow in Olalla given the septic limitations?
- Flooding history and ongoing concerns, especially Keremeos Creek area
- Some street lighting for safety reason in Olalla was discussed
- Forestry and fire interface areas not happening any longer, where is the money to continue?
- Loss of ALR lands, big buildings going up, no engineering or safety inspections
- Where is Keremeos going to grow?
- Lots of work has been done in 'pieces' (eg signage, tourism) but no overall plan
- Access and accidents on the highway a major concern
- A fear of more bureaucracy was expressed

Open Houses Overview

There were two open house style community gatherings, at which there were three poster board stations for people to post their comments, maps to review and post dots, a powerpoint presentation with an open question and answer session, along with copies of the community survey available

Hedley

On September 11, 2019 an evening Open House, from 5 to 8 pm, was held at the Community Club in Hedley at which approximately 19 people were in attendance.

The main areas of discussion during the Q & A session following the PowerPoint focused on the following:

- Quality of drinking water, and water contaminates such as arsenic
- Different areas e.g. Hedley may have different issues that those of rural Keremeos
- Area has a history of mining activity, bankruptcy, and land contaminates including Lot 2900, and the Province won't act
- Need for more health services to support aging demographics
- How will an OCP relate with the local Indian Bands?
- The desire for some type of zoning or building permits ran from "I do not want government interference of any kind" to "I do want zoning and building standards"
- People felt that Hedley is seen as a quaint little town and want to see that feeling preserved
- There are limited development opportunities in Hedley
- No reliable transit and the need to connect with Princeton
- Not easy to walk around Hedley with no sidewalks and rough roads, especially for seniors or those needing mobility aids (cane/ walkers)
- The need for some new industry to attract younger people, we need it so the town won't

For a complete list of comments received from the poster board stations at the open house, please refer to Appendix 'B'.

Keremeos

On September 14, 2019, an afternoon Open House was held at the Victory Hall in Keremeos from 1 to 4 pm, at which approximately 16 people were in attendance.

The main areas of discussion during the Q & A session following the PowerPoint focused on the following:

- The land around Keremeos is constrained by the ALR already, so doubtful if an OCP would allow more uses
- Some fear that an OCP will overcomplicate development
- Several traffic related concerns, such as that vehicles are going too fast; traffic keeps increasing, especially in summer causing parking pressures and safety concerns; and that another access is needed for emergencies
- Corporate farming maybe bad for the community but how can this be addressed?
- We should accentuate our agricultural values, show how good it is here
- Bad and unsightly appearance coming in and out of Keremeos, does not give a good impression. Should have rules.

- An OCP should focus on 5 year goals not 20 25 years
- The free for all here has lots of problems such as land use, bad neighbours, parking, building safety
- Concerns of flooding and buildings, need some rules
- Moved here because the area is free of rules, do not want to have building permits
- Value the night sky, do not want street lights
- Most people from rural Keremeos have signed up for the Keremeos Residential Notification System and seem more connected to the Village than the regional district.
- Some economic incentives are needed

For a complete list of comments received from the poster board stations at the open house, please refer to Appendix 'B'.

Survey Overview

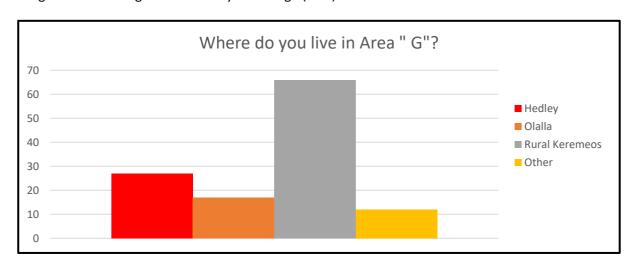
An online and hard copy survey was distributed from September 11 to Oct 18, 2019. The survey consisted of three demographic question and three 'rating' or yes/no questions with room for comments in each question. In total there were 145 respondents. Although 24 'hits' of the on line survey were not filled out at all, presumable people signed on then exited without filling out any of the fields. These were deleted from the analysis. A complete version of the results and comments is available in Appendix 'C'. Of note, and an indication that the community's interest, the comment sections were filled out by a majority of respondents, averaging around 60% rate.

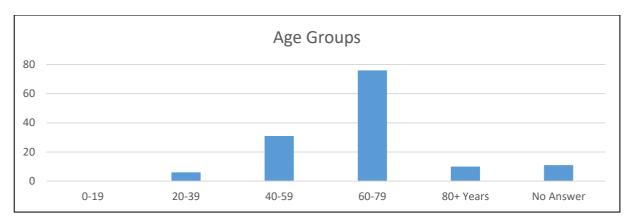
Demographic summary:

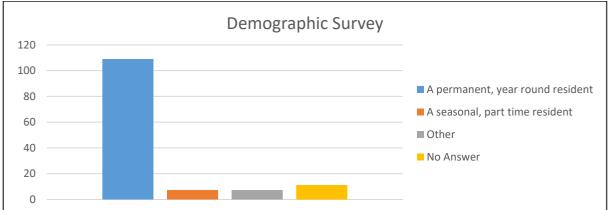
Of those who responded, 49 % were from 'rural Keremeos', 20% from Hedley, and 13% from Olalla. Of those that responded as 'other' included 'rural Hedley' and 'SunKatchers RV Park'

81% were permanent, year round residents, with 5% seasonal, part time, and another 5% as 'other'. Under the 'other' category, some responses included 'head south for the winter' or noted as being landlord but living elsewhere.

The majority of respondents, 57%, were between 60 -79 years of age with the next largest category being between the ages of 40 to 59 years of age (23%).



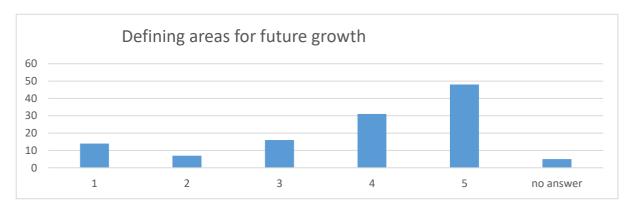




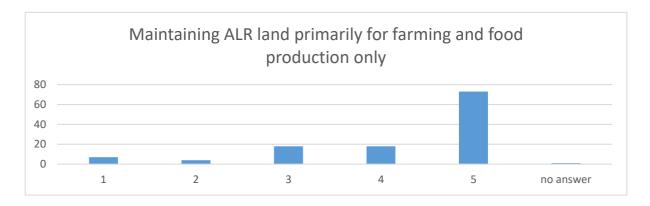
The first question asked people to rate a number of issues in order of importance, with an opportunity to explain why they chose to rate the issue as they did. There were seven topics listed each with a range of five ratings: 1 being 'not at all important' and 5 being 'very important'.

The results for the seven topics that were asked to be rated in order of importance are as follows:

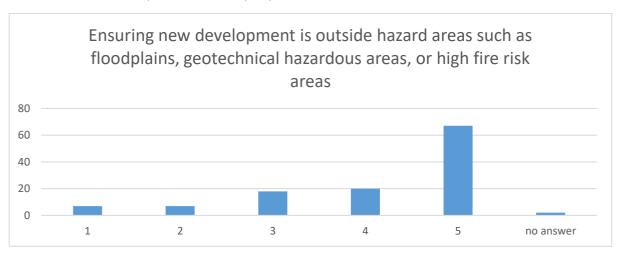
(a) 1= not at all important – 5= very important



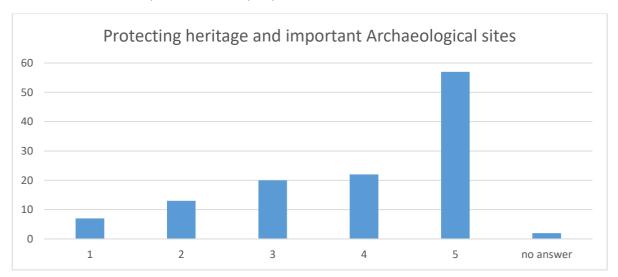
(b) 1= not at all important – 5= very important



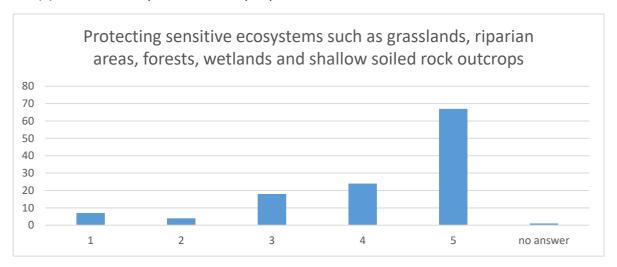
(c) 1= not at all important – 5= very important



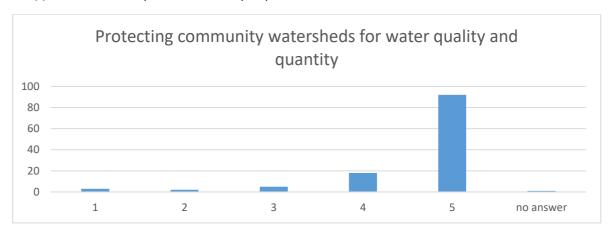
(d) 1= not at all important – 5= very important



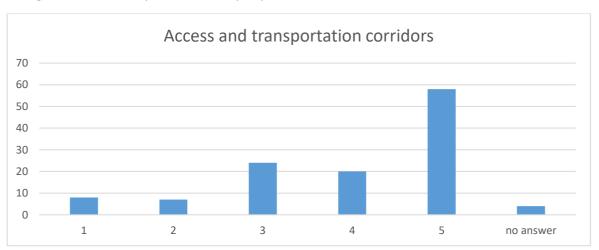
(e) 1=not at all important – 5= very important



(f) 1=not at all important – 5= very important



(g) 1= not at all important -5 =very important



Comments and Observations

There was fairly strong consistency with rating most of the topics as important, with a few topics such as access and transportation corridors showing a greater spread in responses. The one topic that had the least amount of deviation, therefore the lowest standard deviation, was (f) protecting watersheds and water quality and quantity, where 91% of respondents rated this issue as important or very important.

Of interest were the many comments, approximately 56% of respondents, that were included when asked why they made the ratings they did. A sampling of comments include:

All of the above are important priorities. Protecting and conserving our ecosystems in the valley and conserving our heritage are priority to sustain for future generations. Access and affordable transportation is important for seniors and lower income to access services not available locally i.e. medical services.

Given the geographic location of Keremeos, creating a harmonious agricultural, rural, transportation and work environments within the mountains is a necessity to continued growth while protecting the very reason people moved here.

All of these areas are tremendously important and it was difficult to not mark them all as #5! (a) That is what thinking and planning is all about so we don't look back and say that we could have easily dome so much better; (c) It is much easier to prevent stupid developments than try to fix the problems after they occur.

Item B maintaining ALR-- As far as I know this is already well established as a provincial mandate and the RDOS has little power to add extra rules, especially considering right to farm provincial legislation.

All of these are important The three I chose as highest importance are because: (b) more and more ALR, excellent farmland, is being paved over as buildings (packing houses, wineries, restaurants) and parking lots/ driveways for the buildings. While these are agriculture Related uses, they permanently remove the land from growing food. I am afraid that marijuana production facilities will also be added to this list. (c) Very important to plan and avoid new developments (especially homes) from being damaged by predictable natural disasters. (f) Water is our most precious resource. It is a priceless commodity for our future generations in this area.

Each of these questions basically reflect quality of life. We live in rural areas because we don't want like or want citification. If someone wants city facilities then go live in a city. The land needs to be preserved and protected not raped for profit.

The second question asked if people were in favour of local input on future land use changes and larger scale development. With a 'Yes' or 'No' option along with room for explaining why they made the choice they did.

88% responded 'Yes' to this question and 67% of the respondents provided comments and explanations as to why they answered. The reasons varied but included comments such as:

People need some kind of control of the area they live in!

People may be more conducive to change if they are part of the discussion and decision making.

We live here, we pay taxes to support the area we should be involved in the decisions.

Without local input we are reliant on a very small number of people's knowledge and opinions. We would also end up with dictator ship. Nobody can know everything and decision making is always best done after facts are acquired.

Well I say this with a cautionary nod to local input value. There are times when local input is SHORTSIGHTED and will not be able to make reasonable choices that are healthy for the current population as well as the future and the ecosystem. (sorry if that sounds high handed)

Feedback from people who live in the area is a valuable tool. They have knowledge about the area.

The third question asked: Are you in favour of developing a community vision that will help guide Electoral Area "G" for the next 20 or so years? 79% of responses were 'yes' and as above there were a variety of comments and explanations as to why people chose they answer they did with 64% of respondents providing comments. The comments for this question elicited the greatest diversity of opinions regarding land use planning.

I believe it's important to have a plan, having no plan abdicates involvement in the future

I am not in favour of developing a community vision that will direct Area G for the next 20 years. I am in favour of doing informal visioning for the communities in Area G. But not in favour of the money that will be spent to create a formal official community plan for Area G. I do not see the value in it at this time and as said previously I do not want to see increased regulations on how people can develop on land they own.

Our priorities need to be taken into consideration in the development of the area.

A community vision gives guidance to the people who get elected (and they usually change often) and that we employ so that they have an idea of what further research is needed to be done before a decision is made. Updating is also important.

To reiterate, I believe it is important to have a plan for the community in an effort to maintain what we love most about our Valley. If we're not careful, pretty soon all that was will never be.

Pre-planning makes sense as long as its not shortsighted and flexible enough to change if the need arises .. re not set in stone.

We need some planning and land use bylaws to avoid problems down the road, especially with climate change happening. The plan can have built in flexibility and subject to revision on a regular basis but it needs to be started.

Waste of time! Twenty year planning horizons are unrealistic.

Absolutely. "Failure to plan is a plan to fail". We need to guide development of the region according to community priorities (but what are those?- Let's find out)

The last question was an open ended one in order to capture any other topics people were concerned about: 'Do you have any other comments regarding the future of Electoral Area "G"?'

Approximately 63% of respondents provided feedback to this question. Topics varied from street lighting and sidewalks to the need for better internet and transportation options. Throughout all of the comments about the beauty of the area and the rural way of life were exceptional strong. People show a strong sense of place in connection with the land they live on and the valley that surrounds them. For example:

Would like to see; 1. more affordable housing for seniors and young families

- 2. safe drinking water
- 3. communal sewage system to accommodate higher density housing
- 4. zoning to protect quality of neighbourhoods
- 5. heritage conservation district

I would like to protect our water ways from development on their banks

Area G is a large area and a small population base and the issues that might impact rural Keremeos residents and Olalla residents might not be the same as those impacting the residents of Hedley.

I moved here because I enjoy the quirkiness of our community. We have glass domes made of windshields, old mining cabins, trailers, heritage and modern homes all being used as residences here. People can pop up an out building or help a friend out by putting trailer on their property without having to ask for government approval.

I know there is huge resistance to the enforcement of bylaws. However there are dangerous structures, structures that infringe on the comfort and rights of others, structures that can impact our water supply and these need to be regulated. Additionally I would like to see a bylaw that limits the height of buildings so as to not impact our view of the glorious scenery in this area and at the same time help retain the rural feel of the area.

I do not believe an OCP is necessary. All bylaws etc cost tax payers more money.

This area is both delicate and precious. Times are changing - weather patterns changing - human lifestyles changing and on and on...please, please take good care of the only ecosystem that we have and maintain it to the greatest extent that you can muster.

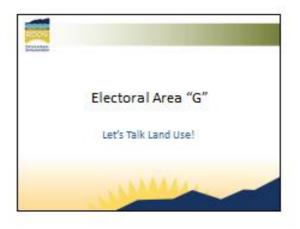
A plan is what is needed to help maintain the things we love about this part of the valley.

Make clean up of unsightly and unsafe yards and properties a priority, especially ones seen from main highways and thoroughfares and those that pose fire and pest problems. Make it against the law to store junk below highwater marks on creek properties.

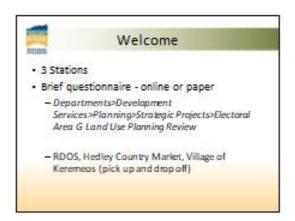
In conclusion, the three avenue approach to this community engagement process produced a wide variety of discussion topics over the future of Electoral Area "G". Throughout the process people showed a great deal of pride in where they live and the lifestyles being led.

Residents showed a strong desire to keep it mostly the way it is now but also want to see enough development to keep and attract families. The vast majority of people had a desire to participate in some form of future land use planning. An OCP is one of the best ways for a community to participate and create a vision and policies to reflect the future of their valley.

Appendix A – PowerPoint from Presentations - September 6, 11, and 14, 2019







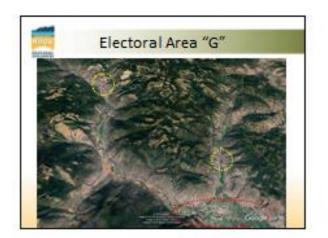






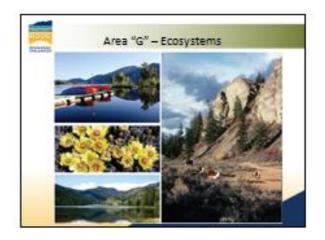


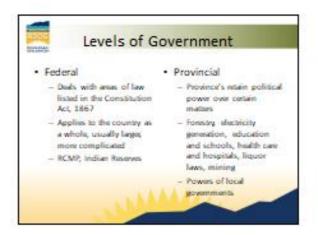










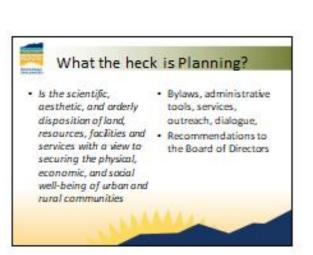




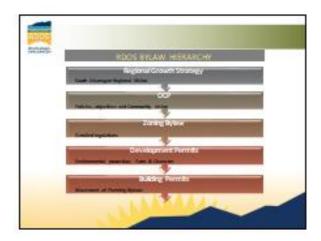






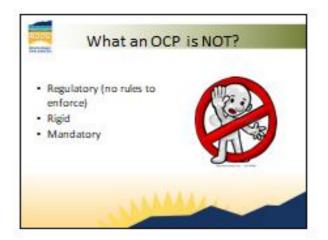




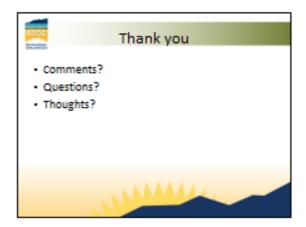












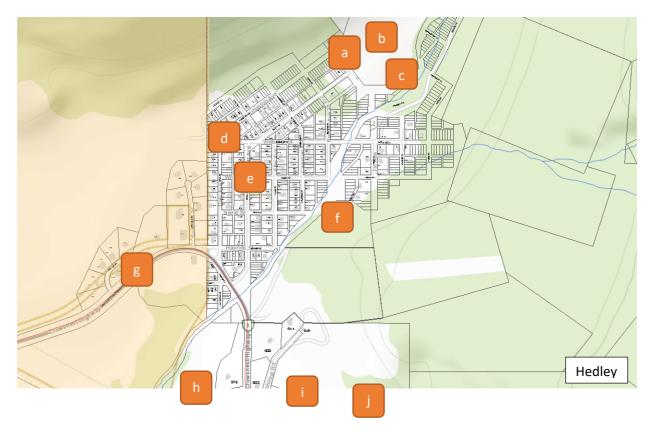
Appendix B – notes from participants at Open Houses

Hedley Open House, September 11, 2019

Station #1 – What changes do you want to see for your community the next 20 to 25 years? What values do you want to keep and preserve?

- Stronger urban core; safe drinking water; maintain independence; fire protection; walking trails; coffee shop; closer ties with USIB; conserve mascot mine; conserve heritage (built and natural)
- Initiate the National Park, preserve natural environment
- Abundance of clean drinking water
- Improve public transit to Penticton and Kelowna
- Full sidewalks on Scott
- Water looked after by RDOS; join RDOS for governance
- Green space, all we can get
- Keep simplicity with economic development that is necessary
- End of clear cutting in critical watershed areas. In other words, preserve our water sources
- Create zones and enforce them; OCP may encourage young families to move th Area G
- Protection of water supply and ensure water supply is safe and adequate
- Enhanced health care, more easily obtainable in the Similkameen, maintain the rural agricultural values
- More local healthcare ie, physiotherapy etc
- More commercial development so we can shop and stay in community as we age
- Drinking water besides our city water
- Upgrades to Hedley's water system
- Keep historical buildings; crate and enforce building codes for new construction, and renos, as in other parts of BC; create a comprehensive community Plan of which land use is a part; encourage homeowners to tidy up / demolish derelict buildings. Create pride in Hedley

Station #2 – Please mark two dots the same and place one on the area of concern [map]. Place the other one on a sticky note with your written concerns.



- a) Stability rock slides; drinking water; trails
- b) Ground water tested at different spots below downstream of tailings to record leaching
- c) Creek road is washed out, It is hazardous to tourists or visitors who have not been warned of its condition. There should be warning signs posted- or- the road should be closed to vehicle traffic. Ministry of Lands, Forests and Natural Resource Operations is doing nothing
- d) Town roads suitable for walking & driving; sidewalk; flat roads; better snow removal
- e) Strong commercial core
- f) Walking trails friendly for the elderly
- g) Transportation/ attractive roadway
- h) Site cleanup of all areas disrupted by previous mining activities in the Hedley area
- i) & j) and others- drinking water quality concerns re: arsenic level in groundwater; drug dealers, lack of enforcement; crap and old vehicle graveyards in laneways and parks; water quality lack of timely information / no future plans/ what is going to be done?; surrounded by tailings ball diamond area down at mouth of Hedley Creek; Candorada-contimated site; Candorado contaminated site & ground water. Cyanide cans (waste) and old tailing washing into River; under new bridge a walkway to walk to Rivy and dam.

Stop smart meters!! Smart meter radiation is microwave radiation. It causes brain cancer, blood cancer, heart attack, headache, dizzy, insomnia, and all kinds of health problems. Please research it online. Many people get sick and they don't it is the smart meter on their wall that cause their health problems.



a) Attractive roadway (3A)



a) Increase density three stories buildings

Station #3 – Opportunities and / or thoughts? We appreciate your thoughts on future development and land use management.

- Bylaw enforcement
- Attract necessary commercial to allow elders to shop locally; healthcare services; care home; care aides; jobs to attract younger families to work in new business'. Workers willing to work so business can stay open; the whole time keeping the simplicity of Hedley

Keremeos Open House, September 14, 2019

Station #1 – What changes do you want to see for your community the next 20 to 25 years? What values do you want to keep and preserve?

- Keep the farmland, farmland
- The lower Similkameen valley is <u>special</u>, treasure the farmland and the farmers to work it; Let's make more use & access of 10 mi's River frontage (Red Bridge to Chopaka); Hwy 3 may have to bypass Keremeos across the River
- It would be helpful to have animal control and include animals other than dogs eg cats! We are over run with stray/ feral? cats; Within the village we need even more rental accommodation to meet needs of seniors who can't cope with yards, etc but aren't ready for institutional care and don't prefer strata (cooperative!) living. Also younger folks need rentals; Please try to ensure that some areas remain for healthy seniors who no longer can handle huge acreage but who still benefit from the exercise & joys of rural activities like gardening, having pets that don't disturb the neighbours, walking the area, outdoor crafts etc.; Please retain as much area as possible for ranching, farming, orcharding, etc
- Promote our area as a tourist destination but respect our environment as well as natural developments; freedom currently being enjoyed by area G to continue; develop acreage subdivisions to encourage more people moving in to area.

Station #2 – Please mark two dots the same and place one on the area of concern [map]. Place the other one on a sticky note with your written concerns.

Note- no dots on maps were posted

- The outskirts of the Village to be cleaned of derelict buildings and properties
- Safety and emergency bypass on Hwy 3 / 3A

Station #3 – Opportunities and / or thoughts? We appreciate your thoughts on future development and land use management.

No comments received.

Appendix C - Survey Questions and full compilation of results

(see attached)