

RE:	South Highlands Local Area Plan – Task Force Members Email
Email from:	Mel Sangha
To:	Laura Beckett, Scott Richardson, Marcie McLean, Bob McMinn, Evan Peterson, Jennifer Kay, Kim Vincent, Leslie Anderson, Lexie LeGrande-Biegun, Liz Condon, Regine Klein, Rick Lester, Terri Wood, Lorraine Hilton, Sonia Santarossa
Date Received:	September 9, 2021

Thank you all for your comments. And thank you Laura for allowing Task Force members to continue to comment.

If it was not clear before, it certainly is now that the SHLAP process risks descending into a focused attempt to stop the OKI quarry and penalize this land owner for following the existing rules and regulations in obtaining a Mines permit. I assume this is happening because legal actions taken so far to stop the quarry have not been successful. The other casualty in this exercise could be the CRD who will also be penalized and experience a substantial negative financial impact from the ideas presented in Mr. Richardson’s email. And so far no one has expressed any opposition to the MIP quarry which will continue to operate for about 15 more years and already has a pit floor elevation that is several feet below the final elevation for the OKI quarry.

As a Task Force we need to demonstrate more balance than this and be willing to embrace a continuum of options that can be presented to the public even if some of the options are not what we as individuals want to see happen.

The idea that OKI, or any other land owner in Highlands, should be prevented from realizing on a commercial/industrial land use as designated in the existing OCP is troubling. All citizens and land owners of Highlands deserve to have the opportunity for municipal services and infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs to be funded in part by property taxes from nonresidential land uses.

By way of example, the property taxes levied by the District of Highlands on land owned by OKI went from \$9,600 in 2020 to \$269,200 in 2021, a 2700% increase. This is a direct result of the Mines permit and has occurred without any rezoning. I expect property taxes paid by the Millstream Industrial Park were likely about \$450,000 in 2021 as well. Just these two industrial land sites contributed in excess of \$700,000 to Highlands tax base; monies that can be used as the District sees fit to benefit its citizens.

These are significant contributions which if discarded risk challenging the future financial stability of District.

Below is a quote from the District of Highlands 2013 OCP. On page 22 it reads in part:

## **2.6 Commercial Industrial Land Use**

At the present time, there is no traditional retail commercial or office commercial in the Highlands. The topography of much of the District is not suitable for traditional commercial and office uses.

The major area of industrial activity is located east of Millstream Road, immediately north of Highlands’ boundary with the City of Langford. This area falls inside the Urban Containment Boundary of the Regional Growth Strategy and the Highlands Servicing Boundary as

shown on Map 2.1. The land base has been heavily disturbed and there are relatively few environmental preservation issues. The ground water in this area has been contaminated by its former use as a sewage lagoon and landfill.

The amount of industrial land in Greater Victoria is in short supply and this large contained area has reasonable access to the Trans-Canada Highway. A light industrial/business park in this location would require utilities such as piped water, storm and sanitary sewers, and street lighting. Landscaping, screening (e.g. perimeter trees) and access to regular transit service are important considerations.

Lands in the Commercial Industrial Land Use have also been designated Development Permit Area 4 – Highlands Commercial/Industrial Gateway Area. There should not be any additional access routes into this area from Millstream Road other than the existing Industrial Way. Preference is for an internal service road parallel to Millstream Road.

This area contains gravel deposits that may be suitable for future extraction.

### **Commercial Industrial Land Use – Objectives**

- To allow a range of light industrial and service commercial land uses that would increase the Highlands' tax base with minimum infringement on the rural, less disturbed land in the rest of the Highlands.
- To encourage redevelopment of the properties located in the proposed "Highlands Industrial Park" area in a coordinated manner.

### **Commercial Industrial Land Use – Policies**

1. Over time, the area designated as Commercial-Industrial land use on Map 2.1 should be redeveloped as a range of light industrial and service commercial uses in conformance with Development Permit Area 4 - Highlands Commercial/Industrial Gateway Area

and any agreements that are in place. These uses may include green economy-based industries such as: recycling; manufacturing and assembly; warehousing and storage; service industries; sales and service operations; and office uses that are ancillary to these uses. . Industrial uses and practices that have appreciable negative impacts on surrounding areas, groundwater resources and air quality are discouraged. Industrial uses and practices that have appreciable positive impacts on surrounding areas, groundwater resources and air quality are encouraged.

The remaining sections 2 through 8 inclusive have not been requoted here.

I find it difficult to vote in favor of the survey when it fails to include language like this as an option. If the existing OCP designation were included as an additional option then the Task Force would be providing a continuum of future land use opportunities as well as a balanced approach to conducting the survey.

We have discussed the concept of an commercial/industrial containment area comprised of the properties owned by MIP, OKI, CRD and GFL. I propose that that a new Option 3 be added to the survey which maintains the existing language of the OCP but applies the commercial/industrial containment zone to these lands so that such uses cannot expand into other areas of the Highlands. I would like this proposed Option 3 to be a discussion point in the Other section of the Agenda before voting takes place.

Regards, Mel

**Mel Sangha**, BSc, MBA, MIM  
O.K. Industries Ltd.