

Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of September 20, 2018

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** September 11, 2018
From: Jonathan Tinney, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan - Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council direct staff to amend the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan based on the recommendations provided by the Gentle Density and Cook Street Village Steering Committees with the following adjustments:
 - a. That analysis and consideration of pre-zoning for gentle density be considered in conjunction with the Inclusionary Housing policy work and following approval of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan as part of implementation.
 - b. That the Traditional Residential designation permit gentle density up to three storeys around Cook Street Village west of Linden Avenue and along Fairfield Road; and up to two-and-a-half storeys east of Linden Avenue.
 - c. That gentle density not exceed 1:1 Floor Space Ratio (FSR), that conventional side and rear yard setbacks be respected, and that considerations be made for reduced front setbacks compatible with block context.
 - d. That gentle density destination zones, consistent with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, be created to assist rezoning applicants.
 - e. That the plan include policies encouraging gentle density housing forms in the Urban Residential designation for properties adjacent to Traditional Residential and smaller lots.
 - f. That the maximum density of 2.5:1 FSR for Large Urban Villages be maintained in the Official Community Plan, but the plan be amended to reference the built form and place character policies for villages in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.
 - g. That future buildings in Cook Street Village be setback an average of two metres (with a one metre minimum);
 - h. That development permit guidelines for Cook Street Village include one, five metre step-back, measured from the front property line for portions of buildings above the second-storey to accommodate boulevard tree canopies.
 - i. That village gateway components be evaluated through design during plan implementation.
 - j. That a parking study be undertaken during plan implementation with the objective to maintain on-street parking capacity.
2. That Council:
 - a. Consider consultation under Section 475(1) and 475(2) of the *Local Government Act*; and direct staff to undertake consultation with those affected by the proposed amendments to the Official Community Plan through online consultation, and one or

- more public open houses, concurrent with public review of the proposed Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- b. Consider consultation under Section 475(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act* and direct staff:
 - i. to refer the proposed Official Community Plan amendments to the Songhees Nation, the Esquimalt Nation, and the School District Board;
 - ii. that no referrals are necessary to the Capital Regional District Board, or the provincial or federal governments.
 - c. Direct staff to prepare Official Community Plan amendment bylaws following consultation, and in accordance with feedback received, as follows:
 - i. amend Section 6: Land Management and Development to permit three storeys west of Linden Avenue, and two-and-a-half storeys east of Linden Avenue, in the Traditional Residential designation (for Fairfield only);
 - ii. amend Figure 8: Urban Place Guidelines to reference the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan in the Large Urban Village and Small Urban Village designations to provide built form and place character policies specific to Fairfield
 - iii. delete policy 6.20 and renumber accordingly
 - iv. amend Development Permit Area 5: Large Urban Villages to add new guidelines for Cook Street Village
 - v. amend Development Permit Area 6A: Small Urban Villages to add the areas of Five Points Village and Moss at May Village
 - vi. amend Development Permit Area 15F: Intensive Residential – Attached Residential Development to include the Traditional Residential areas of Fairfield and apply guidelines for gentle density
 - vii. rename “Ross Bay Village” to “Fairfield Plaza”.
 - d. Refer the proposed Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan to the meeting of Council at which the Public Hearing be held for the above Official Community Plan amendments, for consideration of final approval.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process, bring forward proposed plan directions specific to the future of Cook Street Village and gentle density for consideration of approval, and to receive direction on the final phase of the process. At the Special Council meeting of March 15, 2018, Council directed staff to undertake a variety of amendments to the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and extended the timeline to continue engagement with community stakeholders. In response to Council direction, staff organized a Fairfield Community Summit facilitated by external facilitators, for the purpose of discussing next steps in the process with the interested stakeholders, and to achieve a shared understanding for moving forward. The meeting resulted in the formation of two community steering committees tasked with working on gentle density and the future of Cook Street Village.

The work generated by the steering committees was presented at a pop-up storefront in Cook Street Village over the course of two weeks to solicit public feedback and encourage the public to participate in an on-line survey on preferred gentle density housing forms. The steering committees worked with City staff across departments, considered public feedback, and have provided policy recommendations for Council consideration. For the most part, staff concur with the steering committee's recommendations with the exception of some specific built-form recommendations for Cook Street Village, the suggestion to allow all gentle density forms as-of-right, and to limit apartments in the Urban Residential designation. Staff have made alternative recommendations to address the underlying objectives to ensure that the policies for Cook Street Village are balanced and feasible; and that other forms of housing in the more urban parts of Fairfield continue to be part of the range of housing choices in addition to gentle density.

Over the past four months, members of the Fairfield neighbourhood have worked very hard with their peers to resolve challenging issues and diverging viewpoints in the community, and to reach compromises. These community-led events, in collaboration with City staff, have resulted in policy recommendations that reaffirm some of the content already captured in the previous draft plan based on earlier consultation, but also fills in gaps and strengthens other parts of the plan. It is recommended that the plan be updated to reflect this work, and that staff undertake a final phase of engagement this fall to allow the broader community to review and provide their feedback prior to Council consideration of a final plan.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process, and bring forward proposed plan directions specific to gentle density and the future of Cook Street Village for consideration of approval; as well, to receive direction on the final phase of the process.

BACKGROUND

At the Special Council meeting held March 15, 2018, Council directed staff to undertake a variety of amendments to the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan. Council also directed staff to undertake further consultation through the following motions:

- support a gentle density approach west of Cook Street Village (to Heywood Street), and east of Cook Street Village (to Chester Street) for lands designated Traditional Residential by expanding the option for larger house-plexes (4+ units); with an emphasis on adaptation of heritage properties, permitting ground-oriented housing up to three storeys, encouraging creative housing on laneways, and considering reduced parking requirements for house-plexes with more than three units in these areas
- work collaboratively with the Neighbourhood Working Group, the Fairfield Gonzales Neighbourhood Association CALUC, the Cook Street Village Residents Network, and others in the community to further develop a program of gentle density to meet Fairfield's diverse population and housing needs
- work with the neighbourhood to clearly define what is meant by 'gentle density'
- assign an urban designer to work collaboratively with those interested to produce an integrated and completed set of conceptual drawings for urban design and public realm enhancements for the Cook Street Village; and that these conceptual drawings be used as a basis for more detailed public realm design during phase four of the bike network implementation, while not tying the conceptual design to a preferred bike lane treatment, which will ensure that all proposed concepts allow for bikes to move safely through the village for people of all ages and abilities
- for the remainder of the process, collaborate with neighbourhood stakeholders as per the project plan approved by Council in June 2016, and as per the definition provided by the International Association of Public Participation, which is "to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives, and the identification of the preferred solution."

At the June 14, 2018 meeting, Council passed a further motion related to the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process:

1. "That Council direct staff to work with the community to find a suitable compromise between the current proposed land use designation in the draft Fairfield Plan and the current proposal in the Fairfield Plaza Group Collaborative Community Plan, and to develop site specific guidelines and a regulatory framework to achieve a form of development for this site that would:

- a. Achieve the type of commercial development that is similar to the small scale shops and services that currently exist on the site.
 - b. Ensure transition from the site to the surrounding neighbourhood which is to retain largely the same look and feel as it currently does.
 - c. Take into consideration the site specific issues that exist relative to soil stability and seismic amplification potential.
2. That staff and the community participate in a session with a skilled, third-party facilitator to have the conversations laid out in No.1."

In response to Council direction, on May 28, 2018, staff organized an externally-facilitated Fairfield Community Summit at the Lawn Bowling Club for the purpose of discussing next steps in the process with the interested stakeholders, and to achieve a shared understanding for moving forward. Representatives from the following community groups were invited:

- Cook Street Village Residents' Association
- Cook Street Village Business Association
- Fairfield Gonzales Neighbourhood Association
- Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
- Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group
- Right Fit for Burdett
- Save Cook Street

The meeting resulted in the following:

- formation of two steering committees to focus on gentle density and Cook Street Village
- maintaining the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to ensure an integrated approach across groups/committees, provide advice on community engagement, and invite additional members from the above groups
- a desire to accelerate the process where possible while ensuring good planning and engagement practice, with the aim to bring recommended policy directions to Council in the early fall.

The work of both steering committees was displayed in a pop-up storefront at Unit 4-313 Cook Street from August 2-14, which provided the public an opportunity to submit comments at the storefront and participate in an on-line survey regarding gentle density. The storefront was promoted through emails to distribution lists, social media advertising, and posters were displayed throughout the neighbourhood. The storefront attracted close to 400 people over the course of two weeks

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

1. Gentle Density

The Gentle Density Steering Committee defined "gentle density" as a strategy for responding to changing conditions and growth by supporting a variety of housing forms that absorb growth and change while minimizing their impacts. Gentle density provides opportunities for intergenerational living, changing lifestyles, new families, and aging-in-place. It provides opportunities for housing diversity and more attainable housing options.

The Steering Committee created four videos describing the rationale for gentle density, and provides successful examples of gentle density forms in the community on Southgate Street, Linden Avenue and Howe Street. These videos were posted on the City's website and can be viewed at the following link: [Gentle Density | Victoria](#)

In addition to the videos, a menu of gentle density housing options were provided in the on-line survey. Please refer to the engagement summary in Attachment A which summarizes the results of the gentle density survey.

In consideration of the survey results, the Gentle Density Steering Committee provided eight policy recommendations for Council's consideration. Please refer to Attachment B – Gentle Density: Background, Rationale and Proposed Policy Recommendations, dated September 1, 2018.

For the Traditional Residential areas around Cook Street Village (west of Linden Avenue), the Gentle Density Steering Committee recommends housing forms that could include up to 12 dwelling units on lots 60 feet or wider (subject to meeting on-site parking requirements and provisions for landscaping). East of Linden Avenue, the Committee recommended smaller forms of gentle density that could include up to six dwelling units on lots fifty feet or wider (also subject to meeting on-site parking requirements and provisions for landscaping). For all forms of gentle density throughout the Traditional Residential areas, the Committee recommends that housing forms do not exceed three storeys, a floor space ratio of 1:1, and that conventional side-yard and rear-yard setbacks be respected. It was further recommended that front setbacks be available for negotiation to provide room for on-site rear-yard parking.

The Committee also recommended that gentle density be permitted as-of-right, subject to development permit applications, to make it less onerous to create housing under the gentle density program. Finally, the Committee recommended that the R-3 Zone (and similar zones) not be used for future rezoning proposals in the Urban Residential areas, and that better transitions between Urban Residential and Traditional Residential be established; suggesting that properties within 75 metres of Traditional Residential be developed as a form of gentle density.

Analysis of Gentle Density Recommendations

The Steering Committee's recommendations builds on the success of the City's house conversion regulations by proposing that the concept of multi-unit buildings that look like single-family dwellings be extended to new builds as well. This strategy is a way to integrate more housing supply in a manner that is in character with the neighbourhood. Please refer to Attachment C – Analysis of Gentle Density Steering Committee Recommendations, which summarizes the steering committee's recommendations, the public feedback received from the gentle density survey, and staff's recommendations.

Staff concur with most of the Steering Committee's recommendations, with the exception of those related to zoning initiatives and limitations on apartment housing forms in other parts of the neighbourhood. In those cases, staff have alternate solutions to address some of the Steering Committee's underlying concerns.

The areas of divergence are related to the recommendation to allow gentle density as-of-right, and to eliminate the R-3 Zone and similar zones. With respect to pre-zoning, staff recommend considering this more carefully, given community concern has been raised with pre-zoning and the associated loss of influence on proposals that don't require rezoning, and to consider the impact on potential community amenity contribution scenarios. There may be opportunities to consider updates to zoning following approval of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, and to encourage that existing homes be maintained as part of redevelopment (for example: updating the house conversion regulations to allow expanded opportunities, etc.); however, more analysis around pre-zoning where new development is contemplated is recommended. This can be considered as part of the ongoing Inclusionary Housing policy work.

With respect to the R-3 Zone and other zones that permit apartments in the Urban Residential designation, staff recommend maintaining the possibility for apartments to provide additional

housing choices beyond gentle density forms to continue to provide housing diversity in housing types, particularly in the higher density areas of the neighbourhood. Staff understand that the intent is for sensitive transitions among developments and recommend that the neighbourhood plan include policies that encourage gentle density forms of housing when adjacent to Traditional Residential properties or for small properties in the Urban Residential designation that may not be large enough to accommodate apartment buildings.

Staff agree with the Steering Committee's recommendations that more intensive forms of gentle density be accommodated around Cook Street Village (west of Linden Avenue) and along Fairfield Road. This will contribute to village vitality and concentrate future housing in walking distance of commercial services and transit corridors. This is also in alignment with Council's direction to permit a gentle density approach up to three storeys west and east of Cook Street Village (up to Chester Street), and along Fairfield Road. The Steering Committee and City staff recommend that this be extended beyond Chester Street to Linden Avenue to include street blocks that have back lanes, which may offer more opportunities for this level of gentle density. East of Linden Avenue, staff recommend less intensive forms of gentle density up to two-and-a-half storeys. Staff find that standard-sized lots throughout this area could accommodate gentle density housing forms with three units while still having enough site area for on-site parking and landscaping. On larger lots and corner laneway lots, housing forms may be able to accommodate four to six units, subject to parking and landscaping requirements.

Alignment with Official Community Plan

Currently, the Official Community Plan (OCP) permits two-storey housing forms in the Traditional Residential designation; therefore, these recommendations will result in the need to amend the OCP to permit housing forms in the Traditional Residential areas up to three storeys around Cook Street Village (west of Linden Avenue) and along Fairfield Road; and two-and-a-half storeys east of Linden Avenue. All other gentle density recommendations are consistent with the OCP.

2. Cook Street Village

In collaboration with City staff, the Cook Street Village Steering Committee undertook a design workshop (charrette) on July 26, 2018 to explore key land use and urban design issues, and develop draft concepts to guide growth and public realm improvements in Cook Street Village. Following the design workshop, the resulting concepts were shared with the public through a pin-up in the storefront (along with the gentle density work). Please refer to the Cook Street Village engagement summary in Attachment D, and the concepts created during the charrette in Attachment E, which served to inform policy recommendations.

The Cook Street Village Steering Committee considered the public feedback which was provided at the storefront, and prepared a suite of recommendations for Council's consideration for the built form and the public realm; as well as, 14 goals and strategies for improving Cook Street Village. Please refer to Attachment F to review the Steering Committee's full recommendations.

The Steering Committee recommends built-form policies to facilitate ongoing protection of the adjacent boulevard chestnut trees that define the character of the village, eclectic building designs, space for retail displays and restaurant patios in a manner that maintains clearances on the sidewalk areas, and more robust environmental standards for buildings and properties.

For the public realm, the Steering Committee recommends design features to slow traffic in the village, make the roadway a shared space that is safe for all users, and that a parking study be undertaken as part of plan implementation. Opportunities for gateways, public art and street furniture are recommended. Gathering spaces in the form of "outdoor rooms" along the boulevard; and piloting temporary street closures at the ends of Oliphant, Sutej, Pendergast and McKenzie

Streets (where they intersect with Cook Street) to allow car-free events and to assess effectiveness to order to inform future consideration of permanent closures are also recommended.

Analysis of Cook Street Village Recommendations

Staff considered the Steering Committee's recommendations and support the goals and objectives for Cook Street Village. Please refer to Attachment G – Analysis of Cook Street Village Steering Committee Recommendations, which summarizes the Steering Committee's recommendations, and provides the staff response and recommendations in comparison.

Staff concur with most of the Steering Committee's recommendations, with some exceptions related to densities for the village and some of the built form policies related to building setbacks. The areas of divergence are related to the recommendation to change the density indicated in the OCP for Large Urban Villages, which is currently a base of 1.5 FSR and a maximum of 2.5 FSR. The Committee recommends that the maximum density be reduced to 2.1:1 FSR, given that the building heights envisioned for Cook Street Village have been reduced from six storeys to four storeys. While the reduction in height will result in a reduction of achievable FSR, staff recommend keeping the maximum density at 2.5 FSR in the event that larger properties are able to achieve these densities even at four-storey heights, which may provide more opportunities for potential community amenity contributions.

During the charrette, the Steering Committee debated the matter of setbacks as some desired a three metre setback to permit enough space for patios and retail displays without infringing into the public sidewalk area. Other members of the Steering Committee desired buildings to be closer to the sidewalk to better support business vitality and to not place too many limitations on smaller-sized properties. The Steering Committee ultimately recommended that buildings be set back three metres from the front property line, and included recommendations to support exceptions, or variances, for smaller lots to be closer to the front property line. To strike a balance between these objectives, staff recommend an average setback of two metres where buildings would range from a minimum of one metre to three metres along village blocks. This averaging would facilitate a continuation of the eclectic character of the village, allow retail spaces to be closer to the sidewalk, and restaurant spaces to be further back to accommodate patios, and also allow small properties to achieve more buildable area.

The Steering Committee also recommend that upper-levels of buildings step back three metres after the second-storey, and all additional storeys. The City retained an architect to assist with the charrette and undertake architectural testing of the preferred concepts, some of which featured step-backs at the third-storey, and additional step-backs at the forth-storey. The architect advised that having step-backs at multiple storeys in this type of building form may create hardships related to building envelope and structural considerations, as well as, development feasibility. It is possible to accommodate space for tree canopies with one step-back after the second-storey. To that end, staff recommend that the design guidelines specify a five metre step-back from the front property line above the second storey. This is recommended as a solution that balances considerations for tree health with the need to facilitate development for a vibrant village.

Alignment with Official Community Plan

These recommendations will require amendments to the OCP to incorporate new development permit guidelines for Cook Street Village. Staff also recommend that the OCP be amended to reference the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan in Section 6: Land Management and Development, to ensure clarity that villages across the city are unique; and while all are captured in the village designations, the neighbourhood plans will determine the area-specific built form and place character policies.

While not an alignment issue, there has been some concern expressed in the community about the interpretation of policy 6.20 (planning within 400 metres of villages). It is recommended that this policy be removed if it alleviates concerns in the community. Local area planning of villages, and considerations for future housing needs, will be undertaken during neighbourhood planning; therefore, removal of this policy will not affect ongoing planning work and the need to achieve objectives in the OCP on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis.

3. Fairfield Plaza

On July 10, 2018, staff met with representatives of the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood group to better understand their concerns, advise them of Council's direction to achieve a compromise solution for the Fairfield Plaza site with a neutral facilitator, and discuss next steps. The Fairfield Plaza representatives indicated that a facilitated session was not desired, requested that staff consider the Fairfield Plaza Group Collaborative Community Plan that was submitted to the City, and bring back proposed solutions that the representatives could take back to their neighbours for consideration.

Staff prepared options for the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group's consideration, and will be arranging a meeting in mid-September to discuss and refine this further. This work is ongoing, so staff recommend that the outcomes of these meetings be incorporated into the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan over the coming months, and be included in the final round of broad neighbourhood engagement. The results of this consultation would be reported back to Council, together with feedback on the entire plan.

4. Next Steps in Process

A meeting was held with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan Working Group on August 28, 2018 to update the Working Group on progress made by the steering committees; and to receive advice regarding engagement during the final phase of the plan, which will allow the community to provide feedback on the policy changes that have emerged from these citizen-led initiatives. The recommendations for consultation include:

1. Release of the revised draft plan, a mid-level summary, and proposed OCP amendments
2. Provide a simple on-line survey
3. Promote engagement through email, social media and local media
4. Hold two open houses in different parts of the neighbourhood in November 2018
5. Consider a open house specifically focused on Fairfield Plaza

Staff will aim to bring the results of this consultation and the proposed bylaws to Council in December 2018.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact Statement

Members of the Fairfield community took the initiative to lead a Health, Wellness and Accessibility Walk event in Cook Street Village to help inform and bring accessibility considerations to the Cook Street Village charrette process. The walk took place on July 17, 2018 with 10 people in attendance, including representatives from Council's Accessibility Working Group as well as City staff. The results of this walking event was the creation of goals, strategies and considerations for health, wellness and accessibility in Cook Street Village. The goals and strategies were compiled into a Cook Street Village Design Brief (Attachment E) which was sent to all the charrette participants ahead of the charrette for their consideration.

This milestone in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process supports Strategic Plan Objective 3: Strive for Excellence in Planning and Land Use, which contains actions and outcomes to undertake local area planning focused on urban villages and transportation corridors.

Impacts to Financial Plan

This progress report does not have any impacts to the Financial Plan. Any financial impacts will be outlined for Council when the proposed Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, including the final Action Plan, are presented to Council for consideration.


Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Preparation of a new Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan is consistent with the OCP, which provides direction for ground-oriented housing, urban villages, a transportation network, heritage, and other policy areas. Some policies require amendments to the OCP outlined in this report to align the two plans.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the past four months, members of the Fairfield neighbourhood have worked very hard with their peers to resolve challenging issues and diverging viewpoints in the community and to reach compromises. These community-led events, in collaboration with City staff, have resulted in policy recommendations that reaffirm some of the content already captured in the previous draft plan based on earlier consultation, but also fills in gaps and strengthens other parts of the plan. It is recommended that the plan be updated to reflect this work, and that staff undertake a final phase of engagement this fall to allow the broader community to review and provide their feedback prior to consideration of a final plan.

Respectfully submitted,




Andrea Hudson
Assistant Director, Community Planning



Jonathan Tinney, Director
Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Sept. 14, 2018

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Gentle Density Engagement Summary
- Attachment B: Gentle Density Steering Committee Report
- Attachment C: Analysis of Gentle Density Recommendations
- Attachment D: Cook Street Village Engagement Summary
- Attachment E: Cook Street Village Charrette Concepts
- Attachment F: Cook Street Village Steering Committee Report
- Attachment G: Analysis of Cook Street Village Recommendations
- Attachment H: Design Brief: Fairfield Design Workshop, July 26, 2018
- Attachment I: Public Correspondence