To: Committee of the Whole  
Date: March 21, 2019  
From: Andrea Hudson, Acting Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development  
Subject: Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan – Update

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council receive the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (March 2019) (Attachment A), for consideration.

2. That Council consider consultation for proposed Official Community Plan (OCP) amendments associated with Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan alignment:
   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 as identified in the following recommendations.
   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.

3. That Council direct staff to prepare Official Community Plan amendment bylaws following consultation, and in accordance with feedback received, to amend Section 6: Land Management and Development and related maps and policies as follows:
   a. to delete policy 6.19 and 6.20 (and renumber policies accordingly) and make related changes to clarify the OCP intent regarding development within and near urban villages
   b. for Core Residential areas, to reduce the density range for some blocks on the south side of Meares Street (from 2:1 - 3.5:1 floor space ratio, down to 1.5:1 - 3:1 floor space ratio, and 1.2:1 - 2.5:1 floor space ratio) consistent with the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
   c. for Urban Residential Areas, to consider increased densities up to 2.5:1 floor space ratios in blocks north of Fairfield Road between Quadra Street and Vancouver Street, to consider commercial uses at grade in locations indicated in neighbourhood plans, and to clarify that neighbourhood plans should be consulted in determining which Urban Residential areas may be considered suitable for bonus density
   d. for Large Urban Villages, to refer to the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan for consideration of building form and height, thereby reducing anticipated height in Cook Street Village to 4 storeys
   e. for Small Urban Villages, to add three parcels to Moss Street Small Urban Village consistent with the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
f. to change the name of “Ross Bay Village” to “Fairfield Plaza”, designate it as a Small Urban Village, consider 3 to 4 storey buildings and place character features consistent with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, and consider additional density up to approximately 2:1 floor space ratio for advancement of plan objectives

g. for Traditional Residential areas, to consider development up to 2.5 storeys for certain infill housing types, and up to 3 storeys in limited locations near Cook Street Village and along Fairfield Road as consistent with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.

4. That Council direct staff to prepare Official Community Plan amendment bylaws following consultation, and in accordance with feedback received, for Appendix A: Development Permit Areas as follows:

   a. amend Development Permit Area 5: Large Urban Villages to update guidelines with the new Guidelines for Cook Street Village (2019)

   b. amend Development Permit Area 6A: Small Urban Villages to add the areas of Five Points Village, Moss at May Village, and Fairfield Plaza, and to apply the Guidelines for Corridors, Villages and Town Centres (2017) with added guidelines for Fairfield Plaza

   c. amend Development Permit Area 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct, to include new policies regarding building separation, landscape setback, and impact on Pioneer Square and the Provincial Law Court Green

   d. amend Development Permit Area 15F: Intensive Residential – Attached Residential Development to include the Traditional Residential areas of Fairfield, and to apply the revised Design Guidelines for Attached Residential Development: Fairfield Neighbourhood (2019).

5. That Council direct staff to undertake a final round of engagement on the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and associated OCP amendments to include a meeting with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan working group; an on-line plan summary and survey; two open house events; meetings with interested stakeholder groups; referral to the Advisory Design Panel for comment; and notification to the Planning and Zoning Committee of the Fairfield-Gonzales Community Association.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an updated draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and associated proposed Official Community Plan (OCP) amendments, including Development Permit Area guidelines, and to seek Council direction on the final phase of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process.

The draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (March 2019) has been revised in accordance with Council direction provided on September 20, 2018 to reflect new directions for Cook Street Village and traditional residential areas resulting from consultation with community residents and stakeholders that took place in the summer of 2018. The draft plan also includes proposed policies to achieve a compromise solution that addresses neighbourhood concerns regarding the future of Fairfield Plaza. Other minor changes have been made to anticipated densities and urban form in the northwest area, small urban villages, and urban residential areas.

As staff worked closely with two steering committees to bring forward the revised policies, a final round of consultation is recommended in order to ensure the broader Fairfield community has an opportunity to comment on the proposed policies. This would also fulfill consultation requirements in the Local Government Act for proposed OCP amendments. Recommended engagement would include an on-line plan summary and brief survey, public open house events, presentations to interested community groups, notification to the Planning and Zoning Committee of the Fairfield Community Association, and referral of the proposed OCP amendments to the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the Greater Victoria School District. Following this last round of public
engagement, staff will bring forward the proposed plan and OCP amendments to Council for consideration at a Public Hearing.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an updated draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, associated proposed OCP amendments including Development Permit Area guidelines, and to seek Council direction on the final phase of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process.

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2016, a process was launched to develop a new neighbourhood plan for Fairfield. Engagement included four phases:

1. **Pre-planning** (April - June 2016): Community launch meeting (90 participants) and collaboration with a working group to identify key values, issues, and engagement approach.

2. **Imagine** (June - October 2016): Numerous engagement events to identify planning issues for Gonzales and Fairfield and develop neighbourhood-specific goals and vision. This phase included an on-line survey (354 responses), community workshop (100 participants), pop-ups at community events, sounding boards (1190 ideas) and citizen-led meetings (3).

3. **Co-create** (October 2016 - September 2017): A series of 10 topical workshops to explore key issues and identify early directions, two surveys (770 responses) on key directions and preference among 3 land use scenarios, a public information session, and a 2-day design workshop focused on five different areas within Fairfield. On September 21, 2017, Council approved Emerging Directions resulting from this phase, as the basis for preparing a draft plan.

4. **Draft Plan** (November 2017 - January 2018): The community was invited to provide feedback on the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan over a ten-week period in order to determine whether the plan reflected the community’s vision for the future. This was promoted through a mailing to all residents, owners and businesses, social media, posters and existing network, as well as a series of 14 diverse events.

At the Special Council meeting of March 15, 2018 (see Attachment B), 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 with a focus on Cook Street Village and gentle density housing forms. Council further directed on June 14, 2018 that staff meet with area residents to seek compromise policies regarding specific concerns at Fairfield Plaza including transitions to the surrounding neighbourhood, scale of commercial spaces, and soil conditions.

In response, staff organized a Fairfield Community Summit facilitated by external facilitators, for the purpose of discussing the next steps in the process with interested stakeholders and in order 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.

Public engagement included on-line content as well as presence at a storefront in Cook Street Village for several days over a two-week period (with over 400 people visiting), presenting information on both Cook Street Village and gentle density options, and a gentle density survey (completed by 303 respondents). The engagement summary (Attachment C) details the results of
this last engagement. The Cook Street Village steering committee also held a Health, Accessibility and Wellness walk and a design charrette.

Staff also held several preliminary meetings with organizers of the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group, and considered the "Collaborative Community Plan (April 2018)" (Attachment D) submitted by the group, which reports being in contact with 26% of residents between Kipling Street and Richmond Road. Broader consultation on a direction for the plaza would be undertaken in a next round of plan engagement, in context of the revised draft plan.

At the meeting of September 20, 2018, Council directed staff to return with a revised draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and prepare Official Community Plan amendments (summarized in Attachment E) for Council to consider both the plan and appropriate public engagement. On October 4, 2018, Council also moved that staff consider options for OCP changes that would preserve the possibility for densities of 2.5:1 floor space ratio in Cook Street Village subject to meeting the Cook Street Village design guidelines.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

1. Key Revisions to the Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
   
   a) Northwest Area

   Based on Council direction to review potential refinements for locations of building heights, commercial uses and public space impact (March 15, 2018), the plan was revised to:
   
   • allow somewhat greater heights (from 10 to 12 storeys) on larger lots in the two northwestern-most blocks (without an increase in maximum density), in order to support liveability through greater separation between buildings
   • reduce anticipated density on three blocks on the south side of Meares Street to better reflect achievable densities in a six-storey building form
   • add design guidance to address landscaping, commercial spaces, building separation and maintenance of sunlight access to Pioneer Square and the Provincial Law Court Green.

   b) Cook Street Village

   Changes were made to ensure that any new development supports pedestrian and patio spaces as well as current and future mature street trees, to provide further guidance for public realm enhancement, and to clarify that the priority investments for All Ages and Abilities bicycle infrastructure would be on Vancouver Street through Beacon Hill Park to Dallas Road.

   This is accomplished by:
   
   • ground floor building setbacks (average 2m), an upper-floor building step-back of 5m (measured from the property line) above the second floor and below-ground setbacks along Cook Street. It is recognized that achieving the maximum density may not be feasible on all sites, and that in these cases the potential for development to provide affordable housing or public amenity contribution is reduced
   • opportunities for a mix of landscape and public "outdoor rooms" along boulevards; enhanced village gateways; temporary and possibly permanent side street closures for events and gathering; and principles for accessibility
   • introducing interim design improvements in Cook Street which enhances pedestrian crossings and encourages slowed automobile traffic which shares the road with cyclists.
c) Five Points Village

In response to public comments, staff recommend reducing the height and density supported on lots along Fairfield Road within this village from 4 storeys and 2:1 floor space ratio down to 3 storeys and 1.5:1 floor space ratio, consistent with the OCP urban place designations that are currently in place for these properties (small urban village on collector streets). Staff note that many of these lots are already zoned for development at heights of 11-12m at a 1.4:1 floor space ratio, so amenity or housing contribution would be unlikely.

d) Fairfield Plaza

Changes were made to Fairfield Plaza policies to address neighbourhood concerns, particularly with regard to transitions to the adjacent neighbourhood and Ross Bay Cemetery. Policies also encourage maintaining or expanding the current number of small-scale, pedestrian-friendly commercial spaces alongside a space which can accommodate a full-service grocery store use, should redevelopment be proposed in the future.

At the same time, the proposal seeks to meet OCP objectives and stakeholder concerns by:

- providing opportunities for gathering spaces and pedestrian-friendly site design with any future development;
- locating future housing near a designated Frequent Transit route (Fairfield Road), shops, services and amenities;
- providing housing diversity in each neighbourhood; and
- providing opportunities for new households and those who choose to downsize within the community as Victoria's senior population is expected to double by 2042.

The neighbourhood plan changes for Fairfield Plaza recommended include:

- changing the designation from Large Urban Village to Small Urban Village, and changing its name to Fairfield Plaza (from "Ross Bay Village") to reflect how residents refer to it
- adding guidance requiring that transitions to the surrounding neighbourhood occur on-site, that a sensitive transition to Fairfield Road and Ross Bay Cemetery be achieved (through a double-colonnade of trees and building step-backs), and providing added guidance for public realm and on-site tree planting, which is to be reflected in updated Revitalization Guidelines for Corridors, Villages and Town Centres (Attachment F)
- reducing anticipated density from 2.5:1 floor space ratio to a base of 1.5:1 floor space ratio while continuing to support three and four-storey buildings. Density up to approximately 2:1 floor space ratio may be considered where it supports the design objectives (e.g. underground parking and public spaces) and where a public amenity or affordable housing contribution is provided. Lower-scale buildings would be less likely to provide the desired on-site public spaces, site layout and building design features. Lower densities would also be unlikely to support contribution towards amenities or affordable housing. The proposed scale is comparable to what may be considered in the Oak Bay Avenue small urban village.

e) Urban Residential Areas

Policies for urban residential areas have been revised to clarify that sites at the edge of Urban Residential areas, adjacent to Traditional Residential areas, should incorporate a transition in massing, scale and design; and that small sites within the Traditional Residential areas might not necessarily support the maximum densities envisioned in the OCP.
f) Traditional Residential Areas

The draft plan incorporates the concept of gentle density by considering a range of housing types including house conversions and houseplexes (ground-oriented, multi-unit buildings that appear as a larger house), with townhouses considered in specific locations. The plan considers higher densities within Traditional Residential areas along Fairfield Road and near Cook Street Village, while considering lower-scale housing forms elsewhere. Policies reinforce the adaptive reuse of existing character buildings, and encourage rental housing in both existing and new development through conversions and suites. Changes are intended to strike a balance between the demand and desire for ground-oriented housing and concerns regarding character, density and open spaces, to allow for the gradual creation of “missing middle” housing over time. Densities and recommended setbacks are intended to reinforce the existing pattern of landscaped front and back yards and laneways where they exist. Policies also recommend sensitive transitions in built form and design between Urban Residential and Traditional Residential areas.

Near Cook Street Village:

Continue to support a variety of housing forms up to 1:1 floor space ratio, with changes including:

- reduced height for all areas east of Cook Street Village, to 2.5 storeys (from 3 storeys in some areas)
- additional design guidance for creative laneway housing
- the removal of townhouses in more than one row as a housing type, while considering on a case-by-case basis townhouses with limited development to the rear (e.g. coach houses) or courtyard townhouses with underground parking on larger corner lots or lots with laneway access near Cook Street Village. This represents a balance between those who are concerned about change and those who desire more options for townhouse living, with a majority of survey respondents supporting this housing type near Cook Street Village.

Along Fairfield Road:

Additional consideration of a variety of housing forms up to 3 storeys and 1:1 floor space ratio.

Remaining Traditional Residential Areas:

Policies have been revised to consider a variety of housing forms and densities depending on lot size and orientation. Key provisions include considering smaller houseplexes at comparable densities to what is already permitted in single-detached zoning on typical lots, while considering somewhat larger houseplexes on large or corner lots and townhouses on corner lots.

Enhanced Design Guidelines for Attached Residential Development are proposed for adoption concurrent with the neighbourhood plan (Attachment G). As part of implementation, staff propose to create “model” or template zones which can guide future rezoning applications. Council direction to consider lower parking ratios for houseplexes near Cook Street Village and along Fairfield Road can be considered at that time.

Addressing Key Concerns Regarding Traditional Residential Areas

The following section describes how the proposed policies address key community concerns:

Concern about affordable, rental and family housing: Because Traditional Residential areas support lower-scale development, the potential for non-market housing is limited. However, these areas can meet needs for attached 2-3 bedroom homes (housing demand projections show that 1 in 6 new houses demanded through 2042 will be for ground-oriented units). Policies encourage house conversions, which analysis shows can support purpose-built rental, added suites in existing
houses, and suites within a variety of housing forms. Family housing, rental housing incentives, and affordable housing provisions can be considered through upcoming City-wide policy development.

Concern about parking and transportation impacts: Traffic volumes within Victoria have not been increasing at the same pace as housing growth, and Victoria remains the most sustainable municipality in Canada (tied with Montréal) in regard to the proportion of people commuting by transit, cycling or walking. Victoria continues to plan for new mobility options and services to support personal and commercial mobility. The City is investing in traffic calming and multi-modal transportation infrastructure in Fairfield and BC Transit has designated Fairfield Road for Frequent Transit. At the same time, design guidelines, densities and zoning recognize that most households continue to own cars.

Concern about character, open spaces, and trees: The policies, proposed densities and housing forms, and revised Design Guidelines for Attached Residential Development emphasize context-sensitive design which accommodates landscaped front and back yards, planting of a variety of tree species, and stormwater management. Stipulations regarding site coverage and open space will be included in model zones.

Encouraging retention of existing houses: The plan seeks to incentivize retention of existing houses by proposing house conversions with additions as a by-right option (through future update of the House Conversion regulations as part of plan implementation); consideration of 2 suites or a secondary suite and a garden suite for existing houses only; and limiting density of new development in most areas, particularly on “standard” sized lots. Policies emphasize that for houses of heritage merit, house conversion or adaptive reuse is preferable to entirely new construction in order to add housing.

Economic analysis prepared for the gentle density consultation found that the types of infill housing envisioned in the Fairfield Plan are unlikely to encourage rapid change or raise land prices, due to the already high cost of land in Fairfield. Builders of infill housing would likely be seeking lots marketed at the lower end of the price range, often with homes in need of repair and which are often redeveloped for new, single detached houses under existing zoning. Economic analysis concludes that a builder of infill housing can’t compete with a homebuyer seeking a character house in good condition.

Impacts on services: The Traditional Residential areas are expected to accommodate gradual growth over time which can be supported by services and infrastructure. New development of 3 units or more currently contribute Development Cost Charges (DCCs) for infrastructure, parks acquisition and improvement. Greater Victoria School District staff indicate that schools in Fairfield and Gonzales are expected to continue to see declining in-catchment student population without housing growth.

2. Associated Official Community Plan Amendments

The following sections describe the proposed OCP amendments required to align with the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (summarized in Attachment E).

Urban Place Designation Amendments

The following amendments to Chapter 6: Land Management and Development and associated Urban Place Designation maps are recommended:

- no change is recommended to the Urban Place designation for Cook Street Village. The recommended density (up to 2.5:1 floor space ratio) may be achieved by some projects
within the recommended built form of four storeys and proposed design guidelines, and maintains the potential for amenity or affordable housing contribution. Thus, staff propose amending the OCP for Cook Street Village to consider up to approximately four storeys and reference the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan for built form and place character features for Cook Street Village, which will be implemented by adopting development permit guidelines (below):

- renaming Ross Bay Village to "Fairfield Plaza" and changing its designation from Large Urban Village to Small Urban Village, as well as considering buildings of 3 to 4 storeys and additional density up to 2:1 floor space ratio for the advancement of plan objectives
- revising Traditional Residential areas to consider development up to 2.5 storeys, and up to 3 storeys in limited locations identified in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, for some infill housing types
- making changes to the anticipated density on several blocks of the northwest, reducing the density ranges in Core Residential blocks on the south side of Meares Street, and increasing the densities anticipated on several blocks north of Fairfield Road (see Chapter 7 and Attachment E for details)
- for Urban Residential Areas, to consider increased densities up to 2.5:1 floor space ratios in blocks north of Fairfield Road between Quadra Street and Vancouver Street, to consider commercial uses at grade in locations indicated in neighbourhood plans, and to clarify that neighbourhood plans should be consulted in determining which urban residential areas may be considered for densities towards the upper end of the Urban Residential density range
- expanding Moss Street Village by three parcels to reflect the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Development Permit Areas to Implement New and Revised Design Guidelines

The following new or revised guidelines are proposed to be applied through Development Permit Areas. Development Permit Areas provide for exterior design review of new development.

- Replace existing Cook Street Village Design Guidelines (2003) with new Guidelines (2019) (Attachment H) that implement the design guidance in the draft neighbourhood plan (Development Permit Area 5)
- Apply proposed Design Guidelines for Attached Residential Development: Fairfield Neighbourhood (2019) to new duplexes, houseplexes and townhouses in Fairfield
- Apply Guidelines for Corridors, Villages and Town Centres (with content specific to Fairfield Plaza), to be used along with the existing Guidelines for: Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial (add to Development Permit Area 6)
- Apply Guidelines for Corridors, Villages and Town Centres (2017) to Five Points Village and Moss Street Village, to be used along with the existing Guidelines for: Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial (add to Development Permit Area 6)
- Revise the Cathedral Hill Design Guidelines (Development Permit Area 14) (Attachment I) to address concerns for building separation and livability, landscape/interface with the public sidewalk, and sunlight access for Pioneer Square and the Provincial Law Courts green.

OCP Amendments Proposed to Clarify Large Urban Village Planning Areas

Staff propose a number of changes in addition to removing policy 6.20, which clarify the policy implications of both Small and Large Urban Villages and further recognize local conditions such as the context and geographic extent of an urban village.

These changes should remove confusion between planning study areas and areas where urban residential growth is supported. At the same time, these changes do not remove the city-wide OCP objectives of accommodating a share of housing growth in and near large urban villages and along transit corridors.
3. Recommended Next Steps and Consultation

While the work of the citizen-led steering committees included and was informed by significant engagement through a survey and storefront pop-up events, staff recommend a final round of broader engagement with the neighbourhood and community to gauge if the revised plan strikes the right balance. Likewise, preliminary meetings with organizers of the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group, and their submission, represented one input into the policy recommendations, in anticipation of broader community consultation. Therefore, staff recommend the following public engagement:

1. Meeting with Working Group to refine format for engagement events;
2. Update the project webpage to present a mid-level summary of the draft plan, proposed OCP amendments and design guidelines, and a simple online survey;
3. Two public open house events, one in Cook Street Village and one at Fairfield Neighbourhood Place, with childcare/activities provided;
4. Promotion through email, social media, and local media;
5. Offer to meet with key stakeholder groups involved in the process;
6. Referral to the Advisory Design Panel; and,

Staff will aim to bring the results of this consultation and the proposed bylaws to Council in May/June to set a Public Hearing.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact Statement

Principles for accessibility have been added to the plan for Cook Street Village. In addition, accessibility considerations have been expanded in the updated Design Guidelines for Attached Residential Development, including for suites in developments of two or more primary units (considering exterior and landscape features, which can be governed by development permit area guidelines).

The City’s 2015 report, Housing and Supports for an Aging Population, indicates that there will be increasing demand for adaptable/accessible housing in multi-unit buildings with elevator access as the population of seniors is expected to double by 2042. The draft neighbourhood plan provides opportunities to meet this demand.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

This milestone in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process supports Strategic Plan Objective 8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Action 1: Complete the Fairfield Local Area Plan.

The draft plan and associated Development Permit guidelines also support a number of Strategic Plan Objectives including:

- Objective 7: Sustainable Transportation
- Objective 6: Climate Leadership (Action 12. Begin to plan for mitigating the inflow and infiltration issues on private property); and,
- Objective 3: Affordable Housing
Impacts to Financial Plan

Approval of the plan does not have any impacts to the current financial plan. Engagement expenses are estimated at $3,000 and would be covered by existing budgets. Several implementation items of the proposed plan would, if undertaken, require additional resources to be considered in future budget processes.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The proposed plan largely maintains the direction of the current Official Community Plan, while entertaining somewhat increased density in the Northwest of the neighbourhood, somewhat reduced building form in the Cook Street Village area, and reduced built form and density at Ross Bay Village (Fairfield Plaza). Amendments to the Official Community Plan are proposed to align the proposed Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and OCP.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the past two years, 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. Staff believe that the revised plan represents a compromise informed by a variety of feedback and achieves key goals of the Official Community Plan and upcoming strategic plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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Community Planning Division

Andrea Hudson, Acting Director
Sustainable Planning and Community Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
- Attachment B: Council Motions related to Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
- Attachment C: Engagement Summary and Public Correspondence (from Sept. 20, 2018)
- Attachment D: Fairfield Plaza Collaborative Community Plan (submission of “Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group”)
- Attachment E: Summary of Proposed OCP Amendments
- Attachment H: Updated Cook Street Village Design Guidelines (Feb 2019 draft)
- Attachment I: Updated Development Permit Area 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct.