



# Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group Collaborative Community Plan April 2018





# Summary

## Fairfield Plaza

Since the mid 1900's the Fairfield Plaza has been an integral part of our neighbourhood. It provides us with a place to shop, meet, work and engage in community events.

In the Draft Fairfield Plan, the Plaza is designated as a Large Urban Village. Fairfield Plaza does not look, feel or function like a Large Urban Village. Nor does it equate to a Small Urban Village as defined in the Official Community Plan (OCP).

We suggest an OCP amendment to enact a separate and distinct designation, such as the "Fairfield Plaza Shopping District" Why? - to highlight the Plaza's uniqueness. It is an iconic plaza in a vintage neighbourhood across from a designated heritage site (Ross Bay Cemetery).

The Plaza and surrounding area are located in a zone with significant amplification potential. In the event of a large earthquake should, high densities at this site, compared to sites with more suitable geology, will increase the costs of the disaster. Further, soil conditions warrant careful geotechnical analysis as a prelude to any proposed redevelopment of the site.

The scale and mix of services in the existing Plaza serve the local community well. According to a recent Retail Demand Analysis by Colliers, there is little need for further retail intensification.

We recommend that, should redevelopment occur, it should achieve a form and scale sensitive to the traditional residential neighbourhood around it, as well as to the open space and ambience found in the historic cemetery across the street.

We recommend site specific guidelines to ensure the Plaza will remain a local community shopping area, not a destination site. This means limiting the height to two storeys and FSR to 1.25, and limiting the size of individual commercial spaces to ensure they are pedestrian oriented.





# Summary

## Traditional Residential Neighbourhood

Housing is the primary land use in Fairfield – Gonzales. With its essential characteristics and proximity to local commercial service needs, waterfront, downtown, family-friendly amenities and major parks, Fairfield – Gonzales is a desirable place to live. One purpose of this neighbourhood land use plan is to provide some certainty that areas for families to live and grow will be preserved in Fairfield – Gonzales.

The community wants to keep its essential characteristics: the experience of green, open space as you move throughout Fairfield – Gonzales with its landscaped front and rear yards, the historic and vintage character of its classic pitched roof housing, and the low-rise heights and street-orientation of its housing and commercial buildings. The community knows from its collective experience that back yards matter for quality of life. Infill and replacement of existing housing must be with types of housing that reflect these essential characteristics of Fairfield – Gonzales.

The community believes that the current zoning bylaws with minimum site and maximum density requirements are necessary and sufficient to manage gradual growth across the community. A new dwelling type that the community is interested in developing with the City of Victoria is a zoning bylaw for tri- and quad-houseplexes that carry capacity for 3 bedroom family units. A houseplex is preferable to townhouses on lots of sufficient size in all areas of Fairfield – Gonzales, including along Fairfield Road. Apartment buildings are not an acceptable land use for this family focused area, not even along Fairfield Road.





# Introduction

The first draft of the City of Victoria Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan envisioned double row town houses and 3 storey apartments for our Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood, and a large urban village for the Fairfield Plaza with up to 6 storey apartments. Few, if any who, live here want that. In the draft plan was “Sub Area 4”, which explicitly discouraged gradual density small lot development and explicitly encouraged land assembly for rapid densification with double row townhouses. “Sub Area 4” was the “red flag”, which lead to the formation of the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group (FPNG). The current draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan reimagines and labels the Fairfield Plaza as a large urban village, 3 to 6 (bonus density) storey apartments, with transition zones (extending the density) outwards from the plaza. If you think you’ve heard or seen of this rapid densification and destabilizing of neighbourhoods before, you have. This is what Vancouver has done.

In response to this reimagining of our neighbourhood by non residents, we, through listening to our neighbours, running focus groups, having a Town Hall meeting and having an e-vote of our membership, the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plaza Group (FPNG) have written our own Collaborative Community Plan. It focuses on what are our core values: preservation of front yard and private back yard green space, having a low profile for the built environment, single detached and duplexes being the core housing component of the neighbourhood, with town homes and house plexes in specific locations. Our plan harmonizes with the geology that we live on: Fairfield Plaza is on one of, if not the highest, amplification zone in the City. We recognize the folly and future costs burden of putting large populations on areas of the highest earthquake risk. Our plan respects the significant historical Ross Bay Cemetery. By not imposing in mass, (not having a “street wall”) our vision of Fairfield Plaza achieves a form and scale that takes into consideration the traditional single detached houses adjacent, as well as the open space and ambience found in the historic cemetery across the street.



Many, in the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood don’t want any change at all. However, a rise in population for the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood is inevitable. It is unrealistic not to accept population growth. The Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood wants a rate of gradual densification that does not destabilize our neighbourhood. Gradual densification will ensure that the future developments do not harm our successful commercial district, the Fairfield Plaza, or the residential areas. With these goals in mind, the neighbourhood supports more duplexes and basement suites in single detached houses and in duplexes. In appropriate locations, town houses in one row, each dwelling with front and back yards, will allow densification.



The Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group wants a Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan which is made by neighbours for neighbours. Our plan reimagines Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood as accepting gradual density without encouraging land speculation or destabilizing our neighbourhood or commercial district. The Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan must be clear in its intent in the by-laws and guidelines, so development expectations are understood by residents and developers. We want to avoid endless variance requests, and rezoning applications which will make the Neighbourhood Plan meaningless.

Community expectation is that our community collaborative plan will point the way in the form and pattern, the guidelines, and the new by-laws of the new Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan for the Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood.

Respectfully,  
Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group



# Fairfield Plaza

## What is the existing Fairfield Plaza? (And what does it mean to us !)

The Fairfield Plaza has been an integral part of this traditional single family neighbourhood since the mid 1900's. It provides for a wide variety of retail/service outlets and serves the local community's shopping needs. It also provides a place to meet and engage in community events.

It encourages "walk in" shopping by surrounding residents. It is local serving and **not** a destination shopping plaza.

The current zoning contemplates a small scale (one storey) commercial development as it presently exists. The built form is compatible with neighbouring residences and also provides a respectful transition from the historic Ross Bay Cemetery, not competing in terms of scale and built form.

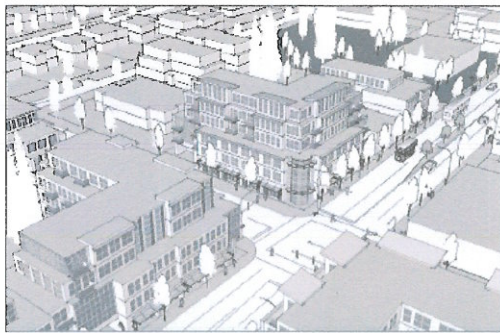
Family, community, and safety are all important values for this Fairfield Community. The Fairfield Plaza contributes to those values in a very meaningful way.

## What is envisioned in the City of Victoria DRAFT FAIRFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

In the draft plan, the Fairfield Plaza is designated Large Urban Village( examples of which are James Bay Village, Cook Street Village, and Quadra Village)

## What is a Large Urban Village?

It typically has a variety of shops and services that serve a much larger area in terms of circumference and popu-



Large Urban Village – Overview

Official Community Plan July 2012  
Update July 13, 2017  
City Of Victoria  
Section 6 Land Management & Development  
Figure 9A P 50



Large Urban Village – Street View

lation. Typically a Large Urban Village encourages "destination" shopping outside the local community.

Large Urban Village storefronts are typically right at the street frontage with direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk. Often there are separate buildings within a Large Urban Village, usually separated by streets.



## What is a Small Urban Village?

The draft Fairfield Plan also refers to areas designated as a Small Urban Village (examples being at Moss & Fairfield, and at Moss and May Streets).

A Small Urban Village as envisioned in the OCP (Official Community Plan), implies more of a cluster of shops/services typically around or separated by streets and within separate buildings. Access to stores is usually directly from the sidewalk

These areas are typically much smaller than a Large Urban Village and serve a local community.

## Which Designation Best Suits the Fairfield Plaza?

Neither. We believe the Fairfield Plaza site needs its own separate designation.

### **"THE FAIRFIELD PLAZA SHOPPING DISTRICT"**

*Neither of the above designations (Large Urban Village or Small Urban Village) capture the essence of what the Fairfield Plaza is or should be in the community.*

*It does not meet the definition of either a Large or a Small Urban village( It is a single building, with various shops /services therein, NOT separated by streets and has no direct pedestrian access to storefronts from the City Sidewalk). Shops are not clustered around nor separated by streets.*

*Fairfield Plaza is unique and needs its own designation as "The Fairfield Plaza Shopping District".*

## Why a separate designation?

It is to highlight the Plaza's uniqueness in the city and honour it as a long time community focal point. This is an iconic Plaza in a vintage neighbourhood across from a Designated Heritage Site (the Ross Bay Cemetery). A "one of a kind" local serving /meeting place.

While it would be nice to have the Plaza stay in its current form in perpetuity, this is not realistic, and therefore, it is likely redevelopment will take place at some future date.

The City needs to therefore partner with the community **now** to come up with a future "vision" for this site that would be palatable for stakeholders.



## What are we suggesting?

Along with an amendment to the OCP (Official Community Plan) for this site to have its own designation as **"The Fairfield Plaza Shopping District"**, we recommend site specific regulations and guidelines that would ensure any redevelopment, in design and function, will still be seen as a "local community" shopping area and by design **not** encourage "destination" shopping.

Guidelines should call for respecting the surrounding neighbourhood, achieving a form and scale that takes into consideration the adjacent traditional single family housing as well as the open space and ambience found in the historic cemetery across the street.



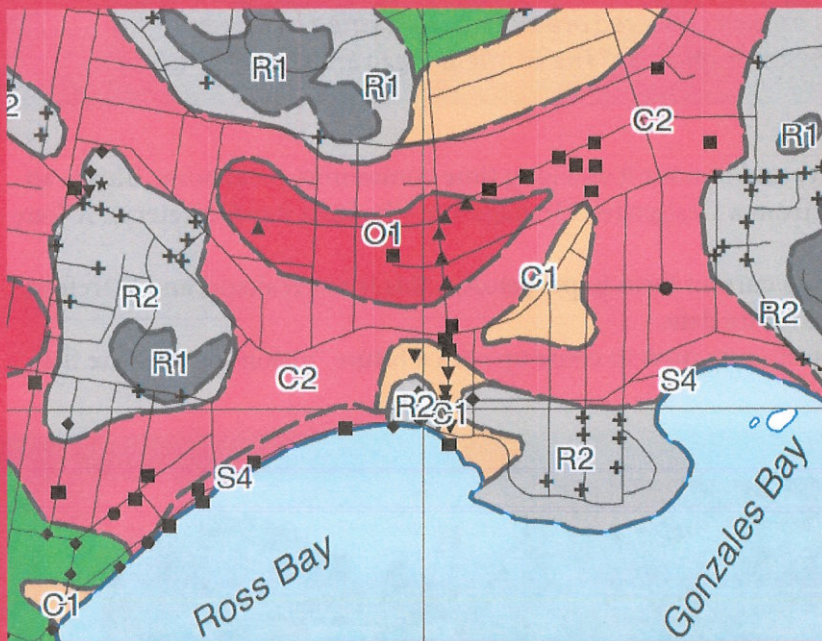
### Transitioning to adjacent sites must be achieved on site.

Guidelines should address improvements to the public realm and pedestrian ingress/egress from streets.

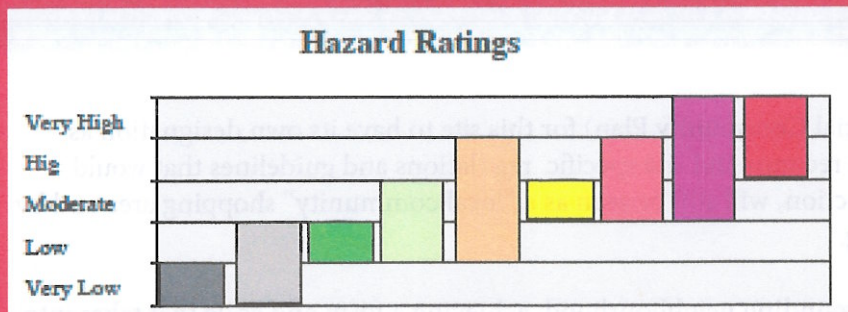
Uses would have to be carefully defined (i.e. retail commercial, office commercial, and service commercial) to ensure they are small scale and serve the needs of the local community.

In order to ensure that the number and variety of shops/services are maintained in any future development, we suggest max. 25ft frontages and restrictions on types of uses that can go in (on the ground floor particularly) to ensure they are pedestrian oriented (It would not be appropriate to have 3 shops consolidated into a large furniture store, for example). Shops and services should be pedestrian oriented.

If an upper floor was contemplated, types of uses therein would need to be appropriate for community use. For example, there is plenty of general office space in the city, and therefore, it would be discouraged (i.e. corporate offices). On the other hand a "commercial office" space, (for example, lawyers/accountants) would be encouraged it would serve the needs of the local community.



Geological Survey Branch Map  
Relative Amplification of  
Ground Motion Hazard of  
Greater Victoria  
Geoscience Map 2000-3b.



### Amplification AREA

The site is in an area of significant seismic amplification potential, and therefore, it is important that geotechnical analysis be required (**prior to any proposals**). This is to ameliorate any impacts from construction, including pile driving, on adjacent residences and also on the cemetery.



## Why change what we have?

The following is information obtained from a Colliers report (Jan 13, 2017 – Retail demand analysis for Fairfield/Gonzales):

“Of the two villages, Cook Street should be the focus of retail and residential intensification because Ross Bay Village (Fairfield Plaza) already has a grocery anchor (Thrifty Foods) and there is little room for further retail intensification. Concentrating retail and residential intensification along Cook Street between Oscar and Park Boulevard further strengthens Cook Street’s retail reputation and attractiveness.”

“The Fairfield and Gonzales neighbourhoods are desirable areas due to their established residential character, close proximity to downtown, high degree of walkability, and availability of shops and services. On average, households have greater incomes in the Fairfield and Gonzales neighbourhoods relative to the city as a whole.”

The existing Plaza serves the local community well in its current form. There is no indication that additional retail/service area is necessary, nor desirable, at this location.

The Fairfield Plaza is an integral part of our community, and we want to keep it that way.

**Therefore, should redevelopment occur, it should be similar, in scale and use, as existing.**

**We would recommend a “cap” on FSR at maximum 1.25 and a “cap” on height to maximum 2 storeys, to ensure that the character of our neighbourhood is preserved.**





# Back Yards Matter





# Traditional Residential Areas

The Traditional Residential Areas are envisioned to contain ground and street-oriented housing including single detached homes, small lot homes and duplexes, all with the possibility for secondary suites. Townhouses are a rare type of housing in Fairfield – Gonzales with current examples as intense land users void of private useable yard space for family living, and their growth is therefore not supported for this area.

A new housing concept that can be made to look and feel familiar to existing historic houses in Fairfield – Gonzales on suitably sized large lots is the houseplex type – a triplex or a quadplex – with 3 or 4 self-contained family residences of at least 3 bedrooms for each residential unit. Proposals for replacement housing must demonstrate that access to private use back yards for each residence matter.

This chapter seeks to provide the opportunity for a variety of infill and replacement housing types to be added incrementally, in appropriate locations. Design of new housing should always relate well to neighbouring housing, support street and private lot trees, respect and embrace landscaped front and back yards, and transition unobtrusively maintaining an low height level away from parks and institutions in the area.

## URBAN RESIDENTIAL HOUSING AREAS

### 8.2 Transition Urban Residential Areas

NB: this is a vulnerable low lying urban residential area between Dallas Road and Bushby Street

insert 8.2.1 c) Building Setback shall be the greater of 15m from the future Estimated Natural Boundary of the sea at Year 2100, or a horizontal distance until the natural ground elevation contour reaches the Year 2100 projected Flood Control Level (BC Ministry of Environment Guidelines for Management of Coastal Flood Hazard Land Use) for this area known as Sea Level Rise Focus Area 14 (Capital Regional District Flood Hazard Guidelines).



## TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL HOUSING AREAS

### INTENT:

The Council of the City of Victoria has a goal of accommodating more citizens within its boundaries. To aid this goal and accomplish gradual density over the next twenty year planning period without losing the quality of



life in the neighbourhood, this local area land use plan requires using existing site capacity and density zoning requirements for Fairfield – Gonzales. The community wishes to participate in the consideration of each application for rezoning. Therefore, pre-zoning all or parts of the area is not a part of this neighbourhood plan.

The objective of this neighbourhood plan is to support existing and new housing of different types to continue the gradual growth of our diverse population of families. The Fairfield - Gonzales neighbourhood is a traditional residential area for families living in ground and street-oriented housing with access to useable private yards. This open space element of each existing and new residence will continue the essential character of the Fairfield - Gonzales neighbourhood.

Buildings with pitched roofs are encouraged for architectural compatibility and buildings with flat roofs are considered an inappropriate design for the character of the neighbourhood. Architectural design for 'aging-in-place' and physically accessible housing should be incorporated in all new and renovated housing forms. The inclusion of secondary suites is not intended to support variances to building size to accommodate more above-grade floorspace than would otherwise be supported. Off-street parking spaces should be included for each self-contained residence, and accessed from a flanking street or laneway, where possible.

#### 8.4 SUB-AREA 1 – GENERAL AREAS

Maintain the existing neighbourhood character with infill and replacement housing appropriate to the neighbourhood context. An essential element of the Fairfield - Gonzales neighbourhood character includes useable private outdoor space for each self-contained residence.

Housing types in Traditional Residential Areas are listed in order of community preference in the table below. Their respective existing zoning bylaws are listed adjacent to them.

a) Single detached house	R1-B = Single Detached Dwelling R1-G = Gonzales Single Detached Dwelling
b) Small lot house	R1-S2 Zone Restricted Small Lot R1-G2 Zone Gonzales Small Lot
c) Duplex	R-2 Zone Two Family Dwelling
d) House conversion	Schedule G House Conversion Regulations
e) Houseplexes 3-4 units on lots of sufficient size	Not yet developed in Victoria
f) Street facing Townhouses in a single row on corner lots or laneways	R-K Zone Medium Density Attached Dwelling

All of the housing types may include secondary suites. Apartment buildings of any size are not a suitable family housing type for the Fairfield - Gonzales neighbourhood, for at least 400 metres surrounding Fairfield Plaza, nor Fairfield Road from Moss Street to Foul Bay Road.

#### Delete: 8.5 SUB-AREA 2 FAIRFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR

Remove the designation of Fairfield Road as a Corridor and keep it as Traditional Residential Area. To be considered as a 'Corridor' Fairfield Road would be identified as an Arterial or Secondary Arterial street (OCP DPA 7A Corridors page 217) and have a primary purpose of commercial, industrial and multi-family residential use,



particularly commercial. But, in fact, Fairfield Road does not qualify as a Corridor because it is rated as a Collector Street (Street and Traffic Bylaw), as it forms a primary route from local streets to arterials (Cook Street) and is a minor transit route and limited truck route (Highway Access Bylaw).

The three existing small apartment buildings on this portion of Fairfield Road between Moss Street and Foul Bay Road are 65, 71 and ~9 years old respectively. They are historical rezoning abnormalities in the neighbourhood that cannot accommodate families and should not be repeated under any circumstances.

## TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL HOUSING TYPES

### 8.7 SINGLE DETACHED HOUSE

#### INTENT:

Support the growth and adaptation of single detached houses throughout the Fairfield - Gonzales neighbourhood by supporting the replacement and addition of single homes within. Secondary suites are supported in existing and new single detached houses.

8.7.1 Locations: In all areas including Fairfield Road.

8.7.2 Site and density requirements – minimums and maximums:

<b>FPNG Proposal Single Detached Dwelling</b>	
Site: Minimum Lot Size	460 m <sup>2</sup> (5,000 SF)
Density: Site Coverage maximum	40% in F and 30% in G including accessory buildings
Density: Open Site Space minimum	50%
Density: Building Height maximum	2 storeys without a basement and 1 ½ storeys with a basement
Site: Minimum Lot Width	15 m (50 ft)
Site: Minimum Setbacks	7.5 m (25 ft) for front yard, 7.5 m for rear yard in Fairfield or 9.0 m in Gonzales or 25% of lot depth whichever is greater, 3 m (10 ft) for one side yard and 15% of lot width for the other side yard
Density: Floor Space Ratio maximum	0.5
Minimum Off-street Parking	1 parking space for each self-contained residence

F = Fairfield; G = Gonzales



