



Council Report

For the Meeting of July 11, 2019

To: Council

Date: July 3, 2019

From: Andrea Hudson, Acting Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Subject: **Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and Related Official Community Plan Amendments**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Give first and second readings of Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw (Bylaw No. 19-030) to clarify the intent of local area plan study areas and policies related to Urban Villages.
2. Give first and second readings of Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw (Bylaw No. 19-031) concerning Urban Place Designations and Development Permit Areas in the Fairfield Neighbourhood.
3. Consider the Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw in conjunction with the City of Victoria 2018-2022 Financial Plan, the Capital Regional District Liquid Waste Management Plan and the Capital Regional District Solid Waste Management Plan pursuant to Section 477(3)(a) of the Local Government Act, and deem those Plans to be consistent with the proposed Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw.
4. Consider approval of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, 2019, at the same Council meeting at which the above Bylaws are considered and allow public comment.
5. Rescind the Cathedral Hill Precinct Plan (2004) and the Humboldt Valley Precinct Plan (2005) following approval of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with a revised Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (Attachment A), a summary of engagement (Attachment B) and Official Community Plan (OCP) amendments including new and updated Development Permit Area guidelines to implement the proposed plan, consistent with Council direction of April 11, 2019 (Attachment C).

Engagement found that a majority of respondents were supportive of the proposed directions in the draft plan and OCP amendments. Specific concerns were raised regarding some policy areas or design guidance, and these have informed recommendations for minor revisions by staff (detailed later in this report). In addition to majority support, divergent opinions were expressed by some stakeholders in relation to policy areas including housing, urban design, transportation and heritage.

Staff has considered public comment and propose minor revisions to the draft plan and OCP amendments regarding land use and design guidelines, detailed in this report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to bring forward recommended Official Community Plan amendment bylaws to implement the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, including Development Permit Area guidelines, the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, 2019 for consideration of approval; and a summary of engagement.

BACKGROUND

On April 11, 2019, Council directed staff to undertake a final phase of public engagement and to prepare OCP amendment bylaws for alignment of plans.

Staff carried out community engagement which included:

- an online survey open for two weeks, and completed by 197 people
- an Open House event attended by 95 people
- three pop-up events attended by 176 people
- promotion through existing email lists (based on those interested in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, the Gonzales Neighbourhood Plan, and lists maintained by the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and others)
- meetings with or presentations to Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan steering committees, Cook Street Village Merchants' Association, Fairfield Plaza Neighbourhood Group, and owners of properties in Five Points Village. Offers were extended to meet with several other groups
- referral to the Greater Victoria School District Board, Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation
- meeting with the Esquimalt Nation.

This engagement reflects the last round of engagement of a three year process involving a range of engagement events during which over 4,000 individual contacts were made in response to surveys and face-to-face engagement.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

1. Summary of Engagement

A. Survey Results

The online survey was open for two weeks in June, and was completed by 197 respondents. Overall, those indicating they are "supportive" or "strongly supportive" of the key directions ranged from 53% (Fairfield Plaza) to 72% (Cook Street Village), while the proportion who indicated they are somewhat or not supportive ranged from 9% (Moss at May village) to 31% (Fairfield Plaza). Nonetheless, respondents expressed some specific concerns which have been taken into consideration in the staff recommendations later in this report. The majority of survey respondents reported living in Fairfield or Gonzales neighbourhoods; the engagement summary provides further detail of demographics of respondents.

Although all areas received majority support among respondents, survey results continued to show some diverging opinions among stakeholders. These areas included:

- Housing, with some stakeholders favouring added opportunities for housing in village areas, along Fairfield Road, or within Traditional Residential Areas (in the form of townhouses); and other stakeholders feeling the plan provided too much potential for change in certain areas, including Fairfield Road, Fairfield Plaza and west of Cook Street Village
- Transportation and mobility, with some stakeholders wishing for policies to go further in encouraging alternatives to the automobile and reducing land dedicated to parking, some concerned about impacts to on-street parking, and divergent opinions regarding policies for Cook Street
- Urban design and heritage, with some stakeholders expressing concern that the plan should provide stronger guidelines for contextual development, provide stronger incentives for heritage retention, or reduce density in some areas with heritage resources, including the Humboldt Valley area, the block east of Pioneer Square and the blocks west of Cook Street Village.

The survey results are detailed in Attachment A.

B. Comments from Stakeholder Groups

Merchants who attended a stakeholder meeting in Cook Street Village expressed support for elements of the revised draft plan including maintaining on-street parking, providing opportunities to add commercial space and future improvements to streetscape and crossings. Merchants also expressed desire to see the development of a parking management strategy (an objective of the neighbourhood plan) implemented soon, and to provide opportunities for visitor parking on side streets during daytime hours. Merchants expressed concerns to maintain Cook Street Village as both a local-serving village and destination, and that possible long-term addition of bicycle facilities may constrain vehicle movement, parking, and loading, given automobile traffic that would be directed away from Vancouver Street.

Property owners in the Five Points area expressed opposition to removing opportunities for 4-storey buildings and possible density bonus along Fairfield Road within the village. These opportunities were presented in the earlier draft plan (November 2017) and align with current zoning which anticipates buildings of up to 12 metres. Owners indicated that while they retained zoning rights, that they saw the provisions in the plan were important in supporting future land uses, including provision of rental housing; that they felt that other sites in the Small Urban Village should consider similar heights and densities as was approved at 1303 Fairfield Road; that the area should remain a Small Urban Village; and that management of public parking was important to the future vision of the village.

2. Referral to First Nations and Other Governments

The draft Neighbourhood Plan and OCP Amendments were referred to Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation and the Greater Victoria School District. Esquimalt Nation requested a meeting and provided verbal comments.

Esquimalt Nation representatives indicated several broader concerns. Representatives expressed concern for how archaeological finds on private lands are considered, including chance finds, and what protocols are in place. A second comment is that the City should participate in funding and providing affordable housing opportunities to band members, given the historically constrained land base of the Esquimalt, the number of band members staying in Victoria, and the fact that provision

of affordable housing for Esquimalt Nation members reduces the needs within Victoria. A further concern raised was for consideration of possible impacts if the E&N Rail corridor was again used for transportation, given that it would serve Victoria commuters while impacting the Esquimalt Nation reserve lands.

3. Referral to Advisory Design Panel

Advisory Design Panel members provided comments and concerns at their May 22 meeting. Concerns included balancing the potential for added housing with encouraging livability, building separation, and retention of existing rental and historic buildings (not just facades). Specific concern was expressed for the proposed density range along Vancouver Street and in the half-block east of Pioneer Square: while the latter is lower than the current OCP range, some members felt that the potential bonus (maximum) density in this half-block was still too high given the concentration of buildings with heritage status and the unlikelihood of achieving the maximum density.

An additional comment concerned the scale of street wall along Fort Street (with a desire expressed to have a lower-scale street wall within this established high street). Other comments touched on transportation and mobility, a desire for clearer direction through zoning and design guidelines, clear policies to encourage undergrounding of utilities in urban villages, and a desire to present a clear picture of what Vancouver Street between Fort Street and Beacon Hill Park could look like in terms of land use and public realm.

The full ADP minutes are included as Attachment D.

4. Recommended Revisions to the OCP Amendment Bylaws

Staff recommend one change to the proposed OCP amendments related to land use, and minor changes to the proposed design guidelines, based on analysis of the input received.

A. Land Use Policy Change:

For Five Points Village, staff recommend restoring provisions from the earlier draft plan (November 2017) to consider development up to four storeys / 13.5 metres and approximately 2:1 floor space ratio on lots within Five Points Village and fronting Fairfield Road, where the following conditions can be met:

- the provision of rental housing, affordable housing contribution, heritage conservation and/or public amenity contribution
- demonstration that development can meet design guidelines for sensitive transitions to adjacent lower-scale housing.

Rationale:

- current zoning can accommodate 12 metre buildings, which may support 3-4 storeys
- economic analysis shows that the addition of housing, in particular rental housing, is not likely to be viable within the current zoned density of 1.4:1 floor space ratio
- the possibility of four storeys and 2:1 floor space ratio, included in the earlier draft plan of November 2017, received considerable support
- analysis of lot patterns shows the ability to transition sensitively to adjacent lower-scale development
- public engagement indicated interest in seeing improvements to pedestrian comfort, public space, and the inclusion of housing with a particular concern for rental housing and affordability

- while public engagement showed some stakeholders preferred a 3-storey development, interest in housing diversity and enhancement of public realm are recommended as a higher priority
- the community expressed concern about the designation of a Large Urban Village at 1303 Fairfield Road and possible implications for surrounding lands. The proposed OCP amendments for the Fairfield Plan would return this site to the Small Urban Village designation.

B. Design Guideline Changes

Northwest Area and Fort Street Corridor:

- addition of a guideline for DPA 7(HC): Corridors Heritage (applicable to Fort Street) to recommend a streetwall of up to 3 to 5 storeys, with upper floor(s) set back (current design guidelines consider streetwalls of 15 – 20 metres, or up to approximately 6 storeys)
- addition of a guideline in DPA 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct addressing consideration of wind impacts on the public realm, for taller buildings.

Fairfield Plaza:

- enhanced guideline regarding the characteristics desired in a plaza/public space
- revision of guidance regarding internal circulation network, to remove requirement that this network accommodate vehicles, while continuing to provide guidance for pedestrian-friendly design in the circulation network
- revise guidelines regarding parking to discourage surface parking lots, while encouraging accommodating accessible and limited convenience parking designed as part of the circulation network
- strengthening of guideline addressing noise impacts from loading, vents and mechanical equipment
- addition of a recommended maximum entry spacing for storefront modules
- revision of Fig. 9 (illustrative example of Fairfield Road cross-section) to address how 4 and 5-storey buildings may be sited to accommodate recommended setbacks and stepbacks
- addition of an illustrative concept diagram showing how design guidelines for site layout and mitigation of impacts may be achieved.

Cook Street Village:

- addition of a guideline addressing noise impacts from loading, vents and mechanical equipment.

Five Points Village:

- addition of a guideline regarding setbacks to accommodate sidewalk and street tree planting, with further setbacks along portions of buildings for patio seating and display areas.

Traditional Residential Areas:

- add clarity on what constitutes a “courtyard townhouse” development, specifying that the courtyard provides shared and private outdoor amenity space; and add an example photograph from the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

- clarification of guideline for landscape and building interface with parking areas
- revision of the guideline encouraging clustering parking on a site, where it can minimize impacts of parking and circulation on site area and building design, particularly when combined with transportation demand management.

5. Recommended Changes to the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

Based on public engagement and consideration of objectives and outcomes, staff recommend the following revisions, which are included in the plan in red text:

- A. Revised acknowledgement to recognize that the City is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People.
- B. In Chapter 5, 5.1: Future Land Use Summary Table, add a clarifying note that in considering rezoning, site specific conditions and approved City policies will be considered, including considerations for heritage and for retention of affordable housing.
- C. For the Northwest Area:
 - Add a policy statement in reference to Map 7: Maximum Density Map, clarifying that site specific conditions and approved City policies will be considered, including considerations for heritage and for retention of affordable housing.
 - In the context section, add reference to additional properties that are Heritage Designated and listed on the City's Heritage Register in the Cathedral Hill and Humboldt Valley area.

Rationale: This proposal is in response to public concerns that the full range of policies and objectives, including policies to retain heritage buildings and rental housing, be considered when evaluating an application. The second recommendation is based on concern that the introduction to this chapter does not recognize the Humboldt Valley and the heritage sites located there as part of the context of this area.

- A. For Five Points Village:
 - update land use policies consistent with consideration of buildings up to 13.5m (approx. 4 storeys), and up to 2:1 floor space ratio, along Fairfield Road within this village, where rental housing, affordable housing, heritage conservation, or public amenity is provided, and where sensitive transition can be achieved.
 - add a policy recommending completion of a parking management strategy, and encouragement of Transportation Demand Management in new development.

Rationale: See rationale under land use changes, above. In addition, business and property owners have recommended creating a parking management strategy to support commerce in the village, and transportation demand management measures to reduce the impact and parking demand from future development.

- B. For Fairfield Plaza:
 - make minor changes to the policies to provide further direction for characteristics desired in a plaza/public space, to allow for pedestrian-oriented internal circulation (not just internal street network), consistent with changes to design guidelines addressed above.
 - with regard to consideration of a larger retail space sufficient to accommodate a full-service grocery store, clarify that the commercial size is not meant to be so large as to support a regional destination store.

- add a policy emphasizing the creation of transit-oriented development (given the location on a Frequent Transit route) incorporating Transportation Demand Management practices to reduce demand for automobile use, encourage other modes of travel, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce impacts on the neighbourhood.

Rationale: These recommendations result from analysis of public comments and are consistent with OCP and community-wide directions.

C. For the Traditional Residential Areas:

- For areas west of Cook Street Village and along Fairfield Road:
 - Revise policies to specify that buildings of up to 2.5 storeys (rather than 2.5 – 3 storeys) be considered, and that these buildings may include a daylight basement
 - In sub-area 1 (Area Near Cook Street Village), clarify that the retention and adaptive re-use of buildings of heritage merit is strongly encouraged, consistent with sub-area 2 and 3 and other plan policies.
- Addition of a policy encouraging transportation demand management and considering innovative infill housing projects to reduce impacts of automobile use on the site and neighbourhood.

Rationale: The first recommendation is based on analysis of public feedback expressing concern for encouraging forms compatible with historic properties, and mitigating shadowing of adjacent properties if smaller lots are redeveloped, and further corrects an oversight in policy for sub-area 1. Staff do not find that 2.5 storeys reduces the achievable habitable space, particularly with the inclusion of a basement, and could achieve more compatible development forms. This change is also consistent with the proposed design guidelines, which would seek compatibility with context and massing in order to reduce impacts on adjacent properties.

The second recommendation is based on public input that infill policies should allow for creative approaches to parking that can result in better site designs accommodating housing and green spaces, and reducing the overall cost of housing.

D. Throughout the Fairfield Plan, include suggested heights in metres where storeys are given.

Rationale: This recommendation is in response to public concerns regarding overall building heights.

E. Throughout the Fairfield Plan, align the language regarding density bonus and inclusionary housing policies with recently approved citywide policy using the phrase "...where community amenity contribution or affordable housing contribution that is consistent with city wide policy is secured."

Exceptions to this include specific instances where the plan provides more guidance than the citywide policy. This includes for Fairfield Plaza (which would be considered a non-standard rezoning per the City policy, and where staff believe the large site lends itself to the inclusion of non-market housing), and for Five Points Village, where there is a strong interest in density bonus being used to support rental or affordable housing.

Rationale: This change is intended to ensure compatibility with existing and future density

bonus policies, while noting specific areas where housing benefits should be clearly encouraged.

F. Other minor changes for clarity throughout the document.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

This initiative fulfills Strategic Plan Objective 8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Action 1: Complete the Fairfield Local Area Plan. It also supports 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 result in impacts to the financial plan. The plan identifies a number of desired neighbourhood improvements which would inform future City 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 part 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 OCP are proposed in order to align with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.

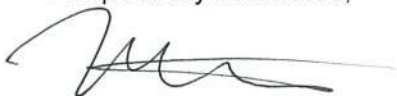
Plan policies further support a range of OCP objectives related to urban design, parks, transportation, heritage, community well-being, sustainability and related topics.

Removing Fairfield Plaza as a Large Urban Village removes it from consideration as a strategic area for focussing housing growth and change. However, the land use policies for the village do not significantly reduce the future potential for housing within the village itself.

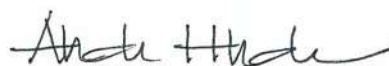
CONCLUSIONS

The last round of engagement on the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan shows support in general, but also several concerns which staff have addressed with minor revisions to the draft plan, proposed OCP amendments and design guidelines. Staff believe that the revised plan represents a compromise informed by a variety of feedback and achieves key goals of the Official Community Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Carolyn Jenkyns
Date: *July 5, 2019*

List of Attachments

Attachment A: Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, June 2019

Attachment B: Engagement Summary and Correspondence

Attachment C: Council Direction of April 11, 2019

Attachment D: Advisory Design Panel Minutes, May 22