



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of September 17, 2020

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** August 26, 2020

From: Karen Hoesé, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Subject: **Village and Corridor Planning: Summary of Early Engagement, Next Steps and Required Consultation**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive the Village and Corridor Planning Early Engagement Summary Report.
2. Direct staff to prepare Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment bylaws following consultation, and in accordance with feedback received. This may include amendments to the following sections of the OCP:
 - a. Section 6: Land Management and Development and related maps and policies;
 - b. Section 21: Neighbourhood Directions;
 - c. Appendix A: Development Permit Areas, considering new or updated development permit areas and guidelines.
3. Consider consultation under Section 475(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act* and direct staff to refer the proposed Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw to the Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, the Greater Victoria School District, the Capital Regional District Board, the Province, and the District of Saanich; and that no referrals are necessary to Island Health, the federal government, the Township of Esquimalt, and the District of Oak Bay.
4. Consider consultation under Section 475(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act* and direct staff to undertake consultation with those affected through a combination of printed materials and digital engagement tools including:
 - a. Workshops with stakeholders and Local Area Planning Working Group members;
 - b. An online open house process presenting policy options and concepts;
 - c. A mailing to residents, businesses and owners within the Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood neighbourhoods;
 - d. Referral to the Advisory Design Panel;
 - e. A second Open House process presenting proposed Neighbourhood Plans, OCP and Zoning Bylaw Amendments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to summarize early engagement held for Village and Corridor Planning for the Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood Village areas (Attachment A); to provide an update on Neighbourhood Planning grants; to present next steps in the process including anticipated amendments to the *Official Community Plan, 2012* (OCP) and *Zoning Regulation Bylaw*, and to ask that Council turn their minds to the required level of consultation for these amendments.

Village and Corridor Planning was directed by Council on October 24, 2019 and focuses on integrated planning for four key topics: future land use, urban design, public spaces, and local mobility. Plans generally focus on the areas in and near urban villages and transit corridors. Consistent with Council direction, the current phase of local area planning focuses on Quadra, North Park and Fernwood Village areas and associated transit corridors.

The results of local area planning will include:

- updated neighbourhood plans
- updates to the *Official Community Plan*, including Development Permit Area guidelines
- updates to the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* (whether implemented through City-initiated rezoning or adding new “model zones” to the bylaw for future rezoning applications).

Early engagement was held from February to April 2020, and focused on understanding issues, opportunities and big ideas. Public engagement with over 1,000 respondents, as well as some preliminary engagement carried out by community associations, identified a well-articulated set of key themes, desires and concerns (Attachment A).

Due to public health measures for COVID-19, public engagement was largely put on hold during late spring and summer 2020. During this time, staff met with the Working Group and researched best practices in public engagement during the pandemic. Staff have revised the engagement approach and are seeking Council direction on the level of consultation for associated amendments to the OCP anticipated for Section 6: Land Management and Development, Section 21: Neighbourhood Directions, and Appendix A: Development Permit Areas. Staff recommend a longer open house period in the fall of 2020, which will be delivered primarily online and through approaches which may include video, an online discussion forum, as well as print options and possible a physical display space (accessible in a socially distanced format).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the results of early engagement for Village and Corridor planning, provide an update on the use of Neighbourhood Planning grants, present anticipated next steps, and to receive Council direction on the level of required consultation for anticipated amendments to the *Official Community Plan, 2012* related to the Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood neighbourhoods.

BACKGROUND

1. Local Area Planning for Villages and Corridors

The current phase of village and corridor planning was directed by Council on October 24, 2019. Village and corridor planning focuses on integrated planning for four key topics:

1. future land use
2. urban design
3. public spaces
4. local mobility.

Plans generally focus on the areas in and near urban villages and transit corridors. The current phase of planning focuses on areas in and near Quadra, North Park and Fernwood villages and associated corridors.

The *Official Community Plan, 2012* (OCP) represents a comprehensive framework for sustainability and liveability, providing direction for how Victoria may grow and change over the coming decades. Local area planning is an important tool used to implement OCP objectives and policies, as well as other City priorities. The process enables staff to bring dated neighbourhood plans into alignment with the OCP and other City documents. It provides a dialogue through which broader objectives are translated into more detailed, locally-specific guidance that the City uses when considering future development and investment. Local area planning also provides the opportunity to incrementally update the OCP to address emerging needs and new strategic directions.

The impetus for the current village and corridor planning process came, in part, from recently updated regional population growth projections, as well as objectives and initiatives in foundational documents, including the *Housing Strategy Phase Two: 2019-2022, Go Victoria* (the forthcoming Sustainable Mobility Strategy), and the *Climate Leadership Plan* (2018). The process is generally focused on areas that the OCP identifies as strategic for accommodating future population growth in ways that support sustainable mobility, efficient land use, complete neighbourhoods, economic vitality, housing affordability, and more. Based on this, planning seeks to enhance complete communities that support:

- a diverse range of housing choices for different incomes and household types
- urban villages with shopping, services and social opportunities for daily living close to home
- welcoming and diverse public spaces
- safe, sustainable mobility options.

The scope of this project further encourages communities to explore other areas of local interest, identified by the community (for example, supporting urban food production or arts and culture).

The results of local area planning will include:

- updated neighbourhood plans
- updates to the *Official Community Plan*, including Development Permit Area guidelines
- updates to the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* (whether implemented through City-initiated rezoning, or by providing “model zones” to inform future rezoning applications by land owners).

2. Early Engagement

Early engagement was focused on understanding issues, opportunities and big ideas, and identified a well-articulated set of key themes, desires and concerns.

The approach emphasized quality and diversity of engagement. Staff made an effort to “go where people are” rather than focusing on events that required people to step away from their daily lives. The approach included:

- the City’s online engagement portal, which continues to serve as a central place for all project information, including a detailed Backgrounder for working together
- an online survey with over 800 responses (the deadline for which was extended in light of COVID)
- ten community discussions (including with community association boards and land use committees, advisory committees and other community organizations)
- five pop-up events

- 11 focused discussions (including diverse discussions hosted by working group members and meetings with business, cultural and service organizations)
- social media channels, direct e-mail outreach, community newsletters, posters, and fliers, which notified the public of specific events and attracted survey participation.

The City was nearing the end of early engagement when public health orders related to COVID-19 were enacted. The online survey deadline was extended to allow for additional feedback, with over 800 responses. Despite the cancellation of a small number of events and a planned mail-out, a broad and diverse audience was reached. Staff noted some gaps, due in part to COVID-related restrictions which required cancelling a small number of later events expected to attract youth.

3. Local Area Planning Grants and Community Association-Led Engagement

The City approved two of three available grants of \$10,000 to community associations to support community-led engagement as input into local area planning. The grants were approved by Council on October 24, 2019, and require consistency with the Terms of Reference for these grants to ensure engagement is conducted in an inclusive and diverse manner. The following community-led events were conducted and have resulted in input submitted to the City to inform this process:

- North Park Neighbourhood Association (NPNA) chose to use the funding to hire part-time staff to support a number of engagement initiatives. Engagement was held by the NPNA during a free holiday skate event in December 2019 and a community association meeting in 2020, with input submitted to the City.
- The Downtown Blanshard Advisory Committee chose to use the funding to undertake several studies to inform broader planning initiatives. These studies were used to undertake an analysis of publicly owned lands in the area and an Equity Assessment, as well as to enhance the existing capacity of the Quadra Village Community Centre to support engagement. The Community Centre accommodated a pop-up engagement session and facilitated engagement with youth groups.
- The Fernwood Community Association (FCA) was considering an application when public health restrictions were put into place. The FCA has already completed a survey in 2019, with over 400 on-line or written responses, the findings of which were shared with the City and incorporated into the Early Engagement Summary Report. The FCA also held a discussion circle on housing choice and affordability.
- The Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group (Fernwood NRG) accommodated pop-up sessions at the Fernwood Community Centre. The NRG deferred to the FCA in accessing Fernwood's Neighbourhood Planning Grant.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Following the first phase of engagement, due to public health measures for COVID-19, public engagement was largely put on hold during late spring and summer 2020. During this time, staff met with the Working Group and researched best practices in public engagement during the pandemic. The City also received requests from three of four Community Associations in the planning area requesting that engagement be put on hold during the summer.

While the current pandemic has provided challenges with meeting in person, online and distanced engagement also presents opportunities. The opportunities of moving to an online platform include: the ability to hold a longer, ongoing engagement process that is accessible to a broader range of the public; to make greater use of video to enable engagement; and to provide opportunities for back-and-forth dialogue with a broader range of people, who may not be able to come out to an event held at a specific time and place.

Based on these opportunities, staff have revised the engagement approach to emphasize a longer open house period in fall which will be delivered primarily online and through approaches which may include video, an online discussion forum, as well as print options and possibly a physical display space (accessible in a socially distanced format). The process has been revised with the same key objectives in mind that informed the original process, such as inclusivity of diverse perspectives including those who are often under-represented in planning processes (youth, young families, persons with lower incomes, renters, Indigenous persons and new Canadians).

1. Local Area Planning Next Steps

The following next steps are anticipated (illustrated in Figure 1, below):

1. Virtual Policy and Design Workshops (Charrettes)

Building on the early engagement, the focused workshops will create preliminary concepts, policy and design approaches with a small yet diverse set of stakeholders. This process may be thought of as the narrow point in a funnel, preceded and followed by broader public engagement. Working with the Working Group and key stakeholders, a design team will create preliminary policy and urban design option(s) over several iterative, virtual meetings, informed by the early engagement, analysis, and key City policies in areas such as housing, climate leadership and sustainable mobility.

These workshops replace in-person charrettes which had been planned.

Efforts are underway with key stakeholders and organizations to ensure diverse perspectives, including youth, Indigenous persons, and single parents are included in the workshops.

2. First Open House

The work generated through the virtual workshops will be unveiled at a virtual open house to provide the public with preliminary concepts to respond to. These concepts will not be polished or finalized, and depending on the workshop outcomes, may include multiple options.

This stage in the process will occur over a three- to four-week period in the fall of 2020, to present preliminary alternatives for the public to respond to and present their own ideas. The process will be widely promoted through social media, stakeholder email and direct mail. It will consist of a virtual (online) open house held over several weeks, and may also include physical display space as a socially distanced component. Offline, print options will be available for those who choose. Staff will continue to work with the Working Group to further detail this process.

This process replaces a one-to-two-week storefront and online pin-up of workshop results which had been planned.

3. Draft Plans and Second Open House

Based on the outcomes of the open house process, staff will draft updates to plans, policies and bylaws which will be presented in a second multi-week open house in early 2021.

4. Public Hearing

Revised draft plans, policies and bylaws will be presented to Council for consideration of setting a public hearing.

Figure 1. Engagement Process Summary (Revised August 2020)

Draft Process Diagram for Local Area Planning



2. Anticipated Official Community Plan Amendments

The *Local Government Act* identifies that the most substantive engagement often takes place before a public hearing is set. Village and corridor planning is anticipated to result in changes to the OCP and thus constitutes consultation on the following anticipated changes:

- changes to OCP land use policies in Section 6: Land Management and Development; and Section 21: Neighbourhood Directions, which may be reflected in changes to Urban Place Designation maps and policies
- updated Development Permit Areas, including guidelines, with a focus on urban villages within the Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood Neighbourhoods; lands near transit corridors; and other areas where higher density housing or employment uses are anticipated.

Because the area includes lands owned by the Capital Regional District as well as the Province (including BC Housing) which may be affected directly or indirectly by potential OCP amendments, staff recommend referrals to these governments as well as to the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation, the neighbouring District of Saanich and the Greater Victoria School District.

The process may also result in the following amendments to the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw*:

- the creation of new Zone Districts for multi-family and mixed-use development
- consideration of zoning amendments affecting some parcels with a focus on urban villages within the Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood Neighbourhoods; lands near transit corridors; and other areas where higher density housing or employment uses are anticipated.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact Statement

Staff will consider accessibility principles in holding open houses and related engagement, and will make alternative means of engagement available, including off-line (print) materials, availability for phone calls, and other means of accommodating diverse needs.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

This process broadly supports a number of Strategic Plan Objectives including:

- Objective 3: Affordable Housing, including the objective that “Neighbourhoods are diverse, accessible and affordable across all ages, incomes and abilities.” Specifically, this project will consider Action 2: Implement “Rental-only zoning,” and Action 22: Identify opportunities for affordable housing in all neighbourhood plans.
- Objective 4: Prosperity and Economic Inclusion, including the objective that “Neighbourhood and village centres have thriving economies.”
- Objective 6: Climate Leadership, and specific actions, including Action 4: Implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.
- Objective 7: Sustainable Transportation, including supporting the objective of an increase in residents using public transit, walking and cycling.

Impacts to Financial Plan

There are no impacts to the financial plan. This project will be completed within available budgets.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The proposed actions are consistent with OCP 6.19: Prepare local area plans for Large and Small Urban Villages, consistent with the broad objectives of the Official Community Plan, as well as Section 20: Local Area Planning.

CONCLUSION

Early engagement has identified key themes, and desires and concerns that will be considered further in the next phase of community engagement. After a pause in engagement due to COVID-19, the approach has been revised, based on early engagement and on emerging practices, to allow the project to move forward in a way which continues to seek diverse viewpoints, engage local knowledge, and address key issues facing our community.

Respectfully submitted,



Marc Cittone
Senior Planner
Community Planning Division



Karen Hoes
Director, Sustainable Planning and
Community Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: September 11, 2020

List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Village and Corridor Planning Early Engagement Summary Report, August 2020