



## Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of July 15, 2021

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 2, 2021  
**From:** Karen Hoese, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development  
**Subject:** Village and Corridor Planning Phase 1 Summary, Draft Directions and Next Steps

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### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive the Village and Corridor Phase 1: Stage Two Engagement Summary (Attachment A) and the What's Proposed Executive Summary (Attachment B).
2. Direct staff to prepare draft neighbourhood plans and design guidelines based on directions provided in Planning Summary and Draft Directions reports (Attachments C, D, E, F) and begin the final stage of engagement in accordance with the Stage Three Engagement Plan (Attachment G).
3. In addition to referral to other governments as directed by Council in September 2020, refer draft neighbourhood plans and design guidelines to the Advisory Design Panel and the Heritage Advisory Panel for comments.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of engagement, technical analysis and draft planning and design directions for the first phase of Village and Corridor Planning, which includes areas of the Hillside-Quadra, North Park, and Fernwood neighbourhoods; and to seek direction for the next steps in the planning process. Staff recently concluded the second stage of engagement for this project. The engagement approach was adapted based on public health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic but retained an emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Following the closing of engagement and the conclusion of several technical studies and analysis, staff prepared a summary of the process and draft planning and design directions. These key directions will form the basis for neighbourhood plan updates, design guidelines, and bylaw amendments.

The next step in the process will be to translate the key directions into polished planning documents and proceed with a third and final stage of engagement. This last stage of engagement will continue to emphasize equity, diversity, and inclusion and will remain nimble and responsive to community needs in the context of evolving public health circumstances.

## **PURPOSE**

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## **BACKGROUND**

The three-phased Village and Corridor Planning process was directed by Council on October 24, 2019. Early engagement for the first phase (including Hillside-Quadra, North Park, and Fernwood neighbourhoods) proceeded in the spring of 2020 and technical and policy analysis continued through the summer. In September 2020, following a report of engagement to date, Council directed staff to proceed with the next stage of engagement to prepare the anticipated *Official Community Plan* bylaw amendments. This engagement has concluded, and staff are now providing an update and proposed next steps.

## **ISSUES & ANALYSIS**

### **About Village and Corridor Planning**

The purpose of Village and Corridor Planning is to guide growth for more sustainable and inclusive communities over the next 10 to 20 years. Through the process, the City works together with the community to explore how to increase housing choice, advance sustainable mobility, design active, attractive and joyful public spaces, and create more resilient urban villages.

The process recognizes that the City of Victoria has worked closely and extensively with residents and stakeholders in recent years to develop a set of shared values around a variety of issues, notably housing affordability and climate action. It is focused on implementing these values and strategies at the local level.

The process also recognizes that village and corridor boundaries are permeable, and it is difficult to consider and plan for some things with a constrained geographic scope. Advancing sustainable transportation, for instance, requires consideration of mobility options outside of a defined area to get safely to and from that area. However, in terms of future land use, the process is focused on villages, mobility corridors, and nearby areas that may be considered for multi-family housing. Topics related to future land use and housing in areas expected to remain lower density (“Traditional Residential” areas) are largely addressed through the parallel Missing Middle Housing Initiative.

### **Engagement To Date**

The Village and Corridor Planning engagement process is focused on reaching diverse audiences, especially those that tend to be underrepresented in community engagement and emphasizes quality over quantity. Key aspects of engagement to date include:

- **Community-led Engagement:** Each neighbourhood association was provided a planning grant to complete community-led planning work that would inform the final outcomes of this process. Some have prepared surveys, others organized community events, and others commissioned independent studies. The diverse approaches to this work led to increased involvement of community members, deep discussions, and new ideas.

- Working Group: A Working Group was formed at the start of the planning process to help reach diverse stakeholders. Members include residents recommended by community associations and their land use committees, other community organizations, the local business community, the arts and culture community, the Intercultural Association and a diverse cross-section of residents.
- Early Engagement (January 2020 to March 2020): This stage explored issues, opportunities and big ideas. Key components included a survey, community pop-ups and discussions, and a “Meeting in a Box” tool. The result was a sampling and illustrative synopsis of what people love about these places today and what they would like to see improved in the future. See the Early Engagement Summary Report for details.
- Stage Two Engagement (September 2020 and April 2021): This stage involved a workshop series and a virtual open house. The approach included two series of planning and design workshops, adapted for a virtual setting, and a virtual open house which included four surveys and discussion forums, videos, targeted focus groups, presentations, and a variety of promotions to reach a diverse audience. See the Stage Two Engagement Summary Report (Attachment A) for details.

Though the process faced challenges, the novel forms of engagement, focused efforts to converse directly with equity seeking populations, and great support from the Working Group made up of diverse residents resulted in a robust and equitable process that can inform future engagement efforts. Engagement themes and results are provided by subject area in the individual summary and draft directions reports (Attachments C, D, E, and F).

### **Technical, Policy and Design Analysis**

Key findings of technical studies and analyses are also provided by subject area in the attached individual reports. Studies and analyses include:

- *Village and Corridor Planning Backgrounder* (made available throughout engagement) which provided a summary of the existing City plans, policies, and initiatives that would guide or influence the process.
- *Planning and Design Brief* (prepared to inform the workshop series) which included urban design analysis of the three villages and summaries of early engagement.
- *Victoria’s Housing Future* document (made available during the second round of engagement) describes the study of latent demand, household projections, and an assessment of capacity to meet future housing needs based on existing conditions.
- A retail study used population projections to estimate how much additional space would be needed to serve the growing population without detracting from existing businesses in the area using a gravity model for a variety of retail sectors.
- A land economic analysis reviewed development costs, land costs, and revenues to estimate the viability of different types of housing forms, particularly for rental housing.
- Additional urban design testing of forms and densities for mixed-use and residential buildings was conducted later in the process.
- Mobility-focused design studies for specific corridors are referred to in the summary and key directions reports as part of implementation. These studies will also consider the value and strategic role that corridors will play to support housing priorities as well as mobility priorities – at a local and regional scale.

## Summary and Draft Directions Reports

An executive summary of the key changes for the entire study area is provided for convenience (Attachment B).

Four planning summary and draft directions reports have been developed: Housing and Design (Attachment C), North Park (Attachment D), Fernwood (Attachment E), and Hillside-Quadra (Attachment F). Each report is divided into subject areas which include an analysis of what was revealed through engagement, how that relates to technical studies and existing policy, and based on this, the proposed draft directions and implementation avenues. The draft directions in this report form the basis for neighbourhood plan updates, design guidelines, and bylaw amendments.

Concepts that were developed together with the community through the focused workshops held in the fall received high levels of support in broader public engagement that followed, and most were supported by the technical studies and analyses. Many of the concepts also reflect or support established City objectives, like increasing diversity of housing options in the right locations (i.e., those that support sustainable mobility objectives and contribute to complete communities).

## Next Steps

The next step in the planning process will be to translate the key directions included in the reports into draft neighbourhood plans and design guidelines and proceed with a third and final stage of engagement in summer/fall 2021.

The next stage of engagement will continue to emphasize equity, diversity, and inclusion. Given the current public health restrictions, much of the proposed engagement approach continues to be virtually focused. However, in light of the Province of British Columbia's Restart Plan (*BC's Restart: A Plan to Bring Us Back Together*), opportunities for physically distanced and safe in-person engagement are also included and will be implemented, if possible. A summary approach, including potential strategies is provided in the Stage Three Engagement Plan (Attachment F).

The draft neighbourhood plans, design guidelines, and implementation steps will be further refined and detailed following this stage of engagement. As a final step, staff will present the planning documents to Council for approval and begin the process for related *Official Community Plan* amendments and, if required, *Zoning Bylaw* amendments, including the scheduling of a public hearing.

As part of implementation, we will be undertaking one or more corridor studies to prepare a regulatory framework that supports land use, housing, and transportation policy goals and objectives.

## OPTIONS & IMPACTS

### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

The City's Accessibility Framework is considered in all local area planning processes and informs final products and outcomes.

## *2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan*

The recommendations are supported by Strategic Plan Objective 8.17, under Strong Livable Neighbourhoods: Develop Local Area Plans. They also support a range of strategic plan objectives including 3.22, Identify opportunities for affordable housing in all neighbourhood plans.

### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

The recommendations do not impact the financial plan. Village and Corridor Planning Phase 1 is being delivered through existing funding for OCP Implementation.

### *Official Community Plan Consistency Statement*

The recommendations are consistent with the *Official Community Plan* (OCP). Section 20: Local Area Planning, envisions a range of local area plans, with a focus on corridors, villages and areas expected to undergo growth and change.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The latest round of engagement for Village and Corridor Planning Phase 1 has concluded. The results, together with technical studies and analyses has informed key directions for the study area and three neighbourhoods. These directions form the basis for neighbourhood plans, design guidelines, and bylaw amendments, draft versions of which can now be developed and presented to the public in a proposed third and final round of engagement.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc Cittone  
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**Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.**

### **List of Attachments**

- Attachment A: Stage Two Engagement Summary.
- Attachment B: What's Proposed – Executive Summary of Key Directions.
- Attachment C: Housing and Urban Design – Summary Report and Draft Directions.
- Attachment D: North Park Neighbourhood – Summary Report and Draft Directions.
- Attachment E: Fernwood Neighbourhood – Summary Report and Draft Directions.
- Attachment F: Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood – Summary Report and Draft Directions.
- Attachment G: Stage Three Engagement Plan.