

Fernwood

Planning Summary and Draft Directions



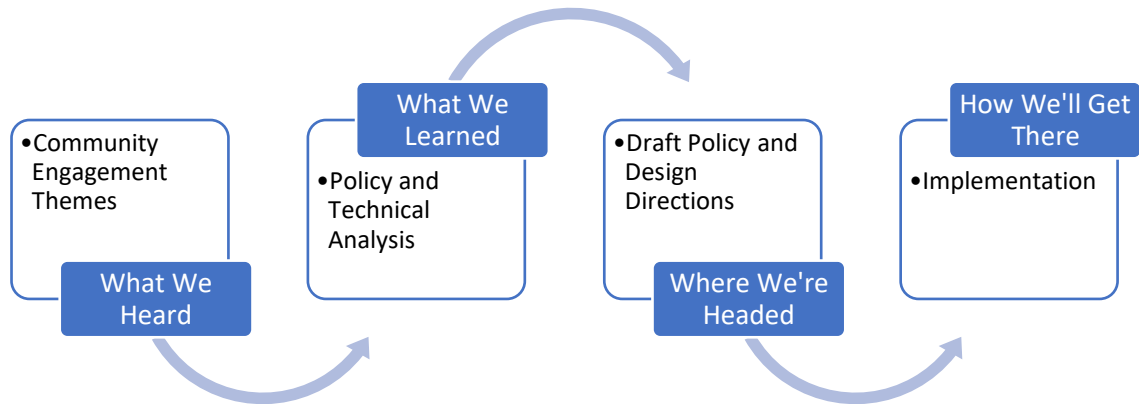
Village and Corridor Planning Phase 1:
Quadra, Fernwood & North Park Villages, Corridors & Surrounding Areas

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About this Report

This report outlines the planning process and **draft directions for Fernwood**, which includes Fernwood Village, the Fernwood Road Corridor, the Bay Street Corridor, and surrounding areas. Each of the subject matter sections describes community engagement themes, policy and technical analysis, the resulting draft policy and design directions, and finally the required implementation steps.



Please see the Stage 2 Engagement Summary for details of the engagement process.

About the Fernwood Neighbourhood

Fernwood is a neighbourhood that is rich with arts, culture, and opportunities for community connection. The community is known for being home to artists, artisans, and makers, as well as people of all ages and many families. As of 2016, the neighbourhood had the city's highest total number of families with children at home, and one of the highest shares of young adults aged 15-34. However, rising housing costs in the neighbourhood, and the city, have left fewer opportunities for young families and others looking to make a start and find suitable housing.

The area's history of offering family and community connections through arts, culture, and local festivals is reflected in its most beloved assets. Among these assets are the Belfry Theatre, Fernwood Square, and local community organizing and supporting groups like the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resources Group (NRG) and the Fernwood Community Association (FCA).

The neighbourhood is bounded by Haultain Street to the north, Fort Street to the south, Cook Street to the west, and Belmont Avenue, Begbie Street, and Shelbourne Street to the east (Map 1). Many of Fernwood's residents benefit from its proximity and connections to the downtown core, and several large and small urban villages (including Fernwood Village, Haultain Corners, North Park Village, and Stadacona Village) within walking distance.



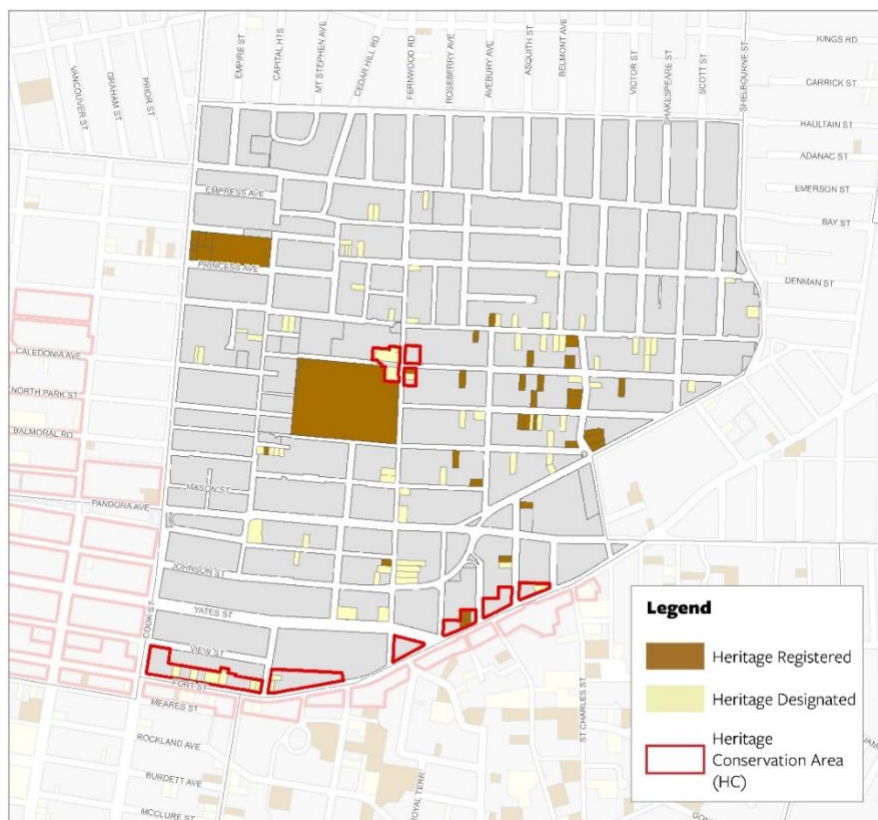
Map 1: Fernwood Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is home to close to 10,000 residents in over 5,000 households¹. While the neighbourhood has the highest total number of family households, household types and age of residents is quite diverse – with a mix of families, seniors, youth, couples, and singles.

Most of the housing in the neighbourhood is either single family with and without suites (about 24% of dwellings) and apartments (about 63% of dwellings, most of which are closer to Downtown, Stadacona Village, Pandora Avenue and the Fort Street Corridor). Apartment buildings are typically three to four storeys and include both rental and strata, most built between the 1960's and 1990's. The neighbourhood has a slightly higher share of renters (66% of households) than the city as a whole (at 60%).

The area is intrinsically tied to the historical growth of Victoria. Just east of Fernwood Village is a district known as Spring Ridge. Gravel deposits left after the retreat of the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago underlie this area. Numerous freshwater springs gave it its name. Until the damming of Elk Lake in the early 1870s, these springs were the principal source of drinking water for Victoria.

There are several registered and designated heritage assets in Fernwood, particularly in and near Fernwood Village, in addition to a number of older character homes (Map 2). The area has seen little growth in recent years. According to the City's building permit data, just 42 new housing units were built in the neighbourhood between 2012 and 2018. Fourteen additional units were approved through BPs in 2019-2020. An current application near Caledonia Street is seeking a rezoning to provide approximately 140 net additional homes, a majority of which are proposed to be deeply subsidized or rent-gated-to-income.



Map 2: Fernwood Heritage

¹ Unless otherwise noted, data references the 2016 Census.

Proposed Key Directions for the Plan (Fernwood)







-  Large Urban Village
-  Small Urban Village
-  Commercial corner or new village
-  Making room for housing
-  Placemaking or formalized Public Space
-  Key pedestrian and active transportation routes



Figure 1: Proposed Key Directions

Fernwood Village



About Fernwood Village

Fernwood Village surrounds the intersection of Fernwood Road and Gladstone Avenue, with Fernwood Square providing a central gathering place for much of the community. What now serves as a heart of the neighbourhood, the area first developed in the 1890s and early 1900s as a terminus of the streetcar line connecting the neighbourhood to downtown. Many of the commercial and service buildings from that era still stand today and are home to local businesses, restaurants, and cultural institutions. Fernwood Square saw significant revitalization starting in the 1990s and the square is now an active village and public space.

Several major community assets are in and near the village. The Belfry Theatre is one of the main landmarks of the village, producing contemporary plays and promoting artistic, cultural, and educational events for the Greater Victoria Region. The Belfry building is a former Baptist church and the company's history is rooted in community, having once shared the site with a homeless shelter operated by the Cool Aid Society. The Fernwood Community Centre, operated by the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resources Group (NRG), is located just west of the square on Gladstone Avenue. The NRG provides childcare, family support programs, and recreational activities. The NRG has also developed several social enterprises in the community over the years. Victoria High School, a heritage building, is located just south of the square. And just across the street is the Fernwood Community Association which often displays local art and provides a space for community meetings at Paul Phillips Hall (1923 Fernwood Road).

The area is rich with other opportunities for social connection, including through the Compost Education Centre, Spring Ridge Commons, Gower Park and William Stevenson Park. Smaller retail businesses, restaurants, coffee shops, and a pub all draw local customers as well as others from across the city and region.

Fernwood Avenue is a bus route and collector road, connecting to Bay Street and Pandora Avenue. All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling routes (planned, designed, or constructed) are close to the village area. The neighbourhood's travel mode share largely reflects that of the city's, with 50% of trips by walking, cycling or transit (similar to the city-wide average of 49%).

Fernwood Village is identified as a Small Urban Village in Victoria's *Official Community Plan (OCP)*. The area has many of the features that characterize a Small Urban Village, and others that are often found in larger villages, including:

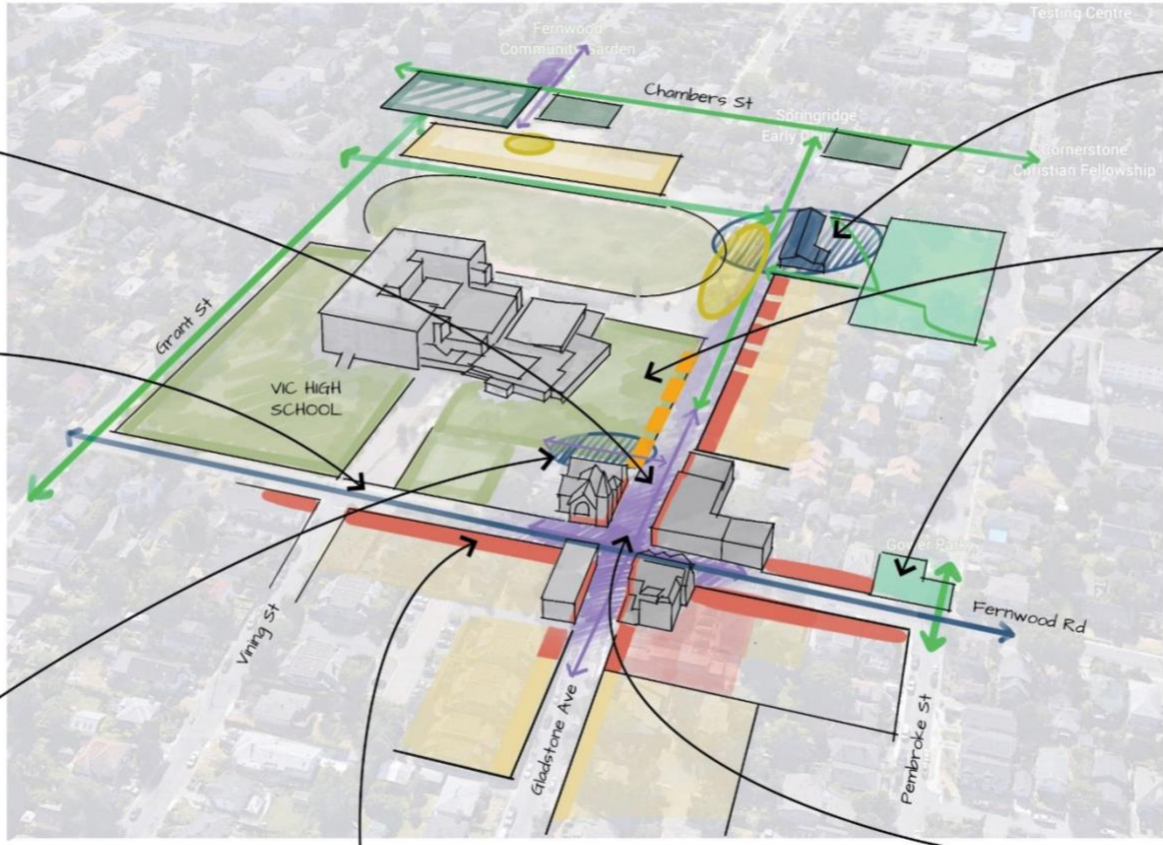
- Ground-oriented commercial and community service buildings in and near the village.
- Services to meet daily needs, including restaurants, cafes, and a small grocer.
- Clear sense of place, character, and identity.
- Local transit service.
- Proximity to parks and community amenities.

Fernwood Village Directions

Enhance the public realm along Gladstone Avenue, considering pedestrian enhancements, pedestrian-scale lighting, and potential locations for kiosks supporting emerging small businesses.

Support pedestrian-priority elements along Fernwood Road including enhanced crossings, relocating or enhancing bus stops, and expanding sidewalks when opportunities arise.

Support the expansion of cultural space adjacent to the Belfry Theatre if the opportunity should arise, with enhanced connectivity between the square and the Vic High grounds.



Support the renewal of the Fernwood Community Centre space, with mixed-income housing above if the opportunity should arise.

Retain existing nearby greenspaces and enhance Gower Park with additional public.

Retain existing heritage buildings, considering sensitive additions.

Encourage urban design, public realm, and placemaking features that build on or complement the historic assets of the Village, including reflections of Indigenous or environmental histories.

Allow for a flexible expansion of Fernwood Village along Fernwood Road and west along Gladstone Avenue in a way that enhances the existing commercial, art, and community uses, emphasizes the creation of diverse housing options, and reflects the small spaces and visually eclectic storefronts that exist today.

Manage parking to balance needs of businesses, arts and culture, and residents.

Refresh Fernwood Square through placemaking and expand the feel and function of the Square along Gladstone Avenue to the east.

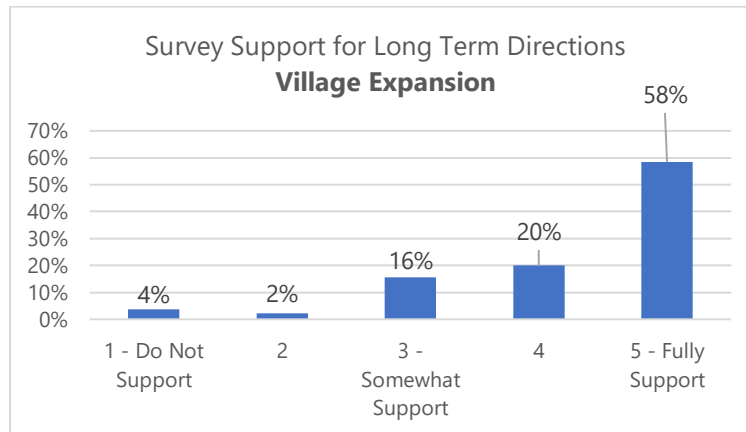
Figure 2: Key Directions for the Village

What We Heard

Community Engagement Themes for **Fernwood Village**

Expanding the Footprint of Fernwood Village

While a priority among residents is to preserve the small village feel and heritage features of the buildings that surround Fernwood Square, and to maintain the lower-cost rents for the businesses that occupy them, there is strong support for more activity in and near the village and increased diversity of retail and personal and professional services. Of the 306 survey respondents to this question, 78% indicated strong or full support for an expanded village footprint.



Participants noted that more businesses could improve the liveliness of the square. There were diverse comments and opinions about the types of retail uses, with some noting that small, eclectic shops would best complement the existing vibe of the village, while others noted the area could use more practical daily services. Childcare spaces and spaces for families and youth are desired. Additionally, participants noted a desire for more free, publicly accessible, and diverse spaces for activity.

"It would be nice to have some more areas where people can go without having to pay. A mix of businesses and other friendly community spaces would be great."

When asked about where the most appropriate locations were for expanding the footprint of the village (see Figure 3), participants saw benefits and drawback of all proposed locations – many noted that all locations should be considered over time, especially if diverse and/or affordable housing options are included.

"I am in favour of all 4 options. More retail/restaurants will create a more vibrant neighborhood for all"

"I'd like to see the option for business expansion in all directions, but I've prioritized the east west options because they'll be more pedestrian friendly and generally nice to lounge in. Fernwood is a busy road."

However, the greatest support for expansion was for the area along Gladstone Ave to the west (C), to better connect the square to the existing Fernwood Community Centre and Vic High grounds. The area along Fernwood Road to the north (B) had the next greatest degree of support (though was quite close in ranking to the other two areas).



Figure 3: Fernwood Village expansion areas explored during engagement.

"I think having C and D for village expansion would allow a commercial strip to flourish along the pedestrian Gladstone St. This would allow these businesses to seasonally expand onto the street and create a more lively strip while not encroaching on the more residential adjacent streets."

"Expanding west has the best connectivity to the growing North Park area and downtown."

"The east part of the Village is definitely the more vibrant, so I'm in favour of encouraging more development on the west side to bring more interest into the square itself. I also think there is a great opportunity to connect [Gower] Park with the rest of the Village. How wonderful would it be to be able to seamlessly go between a shop, say for a coffee or ice cream and enjoy it in the park. Right now there is too much of a disconnect between commercial and the park to make it a destination."

"The intent prioritizing C and A is that if the height and density is enough, it acts as a bit of barrier for the residential behind, allows for more "action" in the square and hopefully less arguments with neighbours about noise and such. Only for these if they do not result in a net loss of affordable housing though."

Many comments, both from survey participants and in focus groups, were concerned with potential impacts to existing rental and affordable housing (including older single-family homes). Many participants also wanted to ensure that any new housing cater to a broad diversity of residents. There were several comments related to design and parking should the village expand. This input is detailed in the related sections of this report.

Support for Arts, Culture and Community Uses

An ongoing theme was how valued arts, culture, and community is in the Fernwood area. Residents appreciate the Belfry Theatre and the way it attracts activity for other local businesses around the square. There is general support for expansion of the Belfry and a desire to manage parking to accommodate regional visitors. There is also a desire among residents to continue to support smaller and diverse arts, culture and community uses in and near the village, including by creating opportunities for local artists and makers to showcase and sell their work in temporary or modular spaces like kiosks.

"I would like to see more public, shared spaces / corners / intersections around Fernwood. Not necessarily with a commercial focus, but just more areas to encourage socializing in neighbourhoods comprised of mostly single-detached homes e.g. benches on corners, seating near little-free-libraries, etc."

What We Learned

Policy and Technical Analysis for **Fernwood Village**

Fernwood Village Development Patterns

Fernwood Village has a mix of commercial and commercial-residential mixed-use buildings of one to three storeys. Commercial spaces range from small spaces to the medium-sized Fernwood Inn, and host a range of beloved eateries, coffee shops, specialty food shops, varied retail, and personal and professional services. Over the years, commercial space has expanded to the south and west typically introduced into existing residential buildings and the creation of one new building at 1310 Gladstone that brought below-grade workspaces in addition to retail and residential space.

Heritage and historical development patterns define the village. The Village is characterized by several heritage-registered or designated buildings, including Paul Philips Hall (1921-1923 Fernwood Road), the Cornerstone Building (1301 Gladstone Street), the Belfry Theatre, and the Rennie Block north of Fernwood Square. The building at 1300 Gladstone Avenue (the Fernwood Inn) was renovated with a faux-heritage façade.

The village's strongest focus is at Fernwood Square and along Gladstone Avenue to the east, with business activity extending north and south along Fernwood Road. The square was rehabilitated in the 1990s and contains a gazebo, information kiosk, two trees (including the "wishing tree"), and some patio seating. The square is well-used most days and especially for community celebrations which often spill into the Vic High grounds. The square suffers from drainage issues as well as wind impacts during winter months. Pop-up patios installed along Gladstone Avenue east of Fernwood Road in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are popular.

Fernwood Road in and near the village has a narrow right-of-way of approximately 12.2m (40 ft), accommodating sidewalks, two travel lanes, and on-street parking on the east side. A bus pull-out on the southwest side of the intersection serves local routes. Most curbside parking spaces prioritize residential use, with only five spaces regulated as short-term for turnover that would support businesses.

Sidewalks along Fernwood Road are approximately 1.8 metres (quite narrow for a commercial area with high amounts of foot traffic) which may limit the ability to draw pedestrians north or south from the square. A single crosswalk at the Gladstone-Fernwood intersection connects the square to the activity along Gladstone east.

Current Prominent Development Proposals

The City is considering a development proposal for affordable housing at the site west of Vic High between Gladstone Avenue and Grant Street. Through this proposed redevelopment amenities and public realm improvements for the area could be secured, including an indoor community amenity space, new expanded community garden, accessible living units, and public realm improvements, including contributions of rights-of-way for pedestrian improvements along Gladstone Avenue, Grant Street, and Fernwood Road.

Existing Land Use Policy and Zoning

Fernwood Village is currently designated as a Small Urban Village in the City's *Official Community Plan (OCP)*, which can consider a range of uses with ground floor commercial spaces of approximately 3 to 4 storeys and 1.5:1 to 2:1 Floor Space Ratio. The current OCP considers these higher densities along arterial and minor arterial roads. Much of the area surrounding the Small Urban Village is designated Traditional Residential which generally supports development with a density of 1:1 FSR.

Commercial or mixed-use buildings in the village have a mix of zoning, including C-1 Limited Commercial, which allows buildings up to 3-4 storeys. Buildings around the village have varied zoning including for duplex, townhouse, and single-detached. Zoning represents current entitlements and not necessarily the future vision.

Making room for new housing in and near urban villages is an important element of the OCP's 30-year Growth Framework, which emphasizes focusing growth in areas that will create complete communities and support sustainable mobility. Areas in and near Fernwood Village have limited capacity for development based on current policy, and the village and surrounding area have seen very little redevelopment in recent years.

For larger redevelopments, the City's *Inclusionary Housing and Community Amenity* policy indicates that desired amenities be negotiated. Desired public benefits may be informed by local area plans, design guidelines, the *Victoria Housing Strategy*, and desired elements of a "complete village" as articulated in the OCP.

Retail Needs, Capacity, and City-wide Objectives

A retail assessment concluded that the area encompassing Hillside-Quadra, Fernwood, North Park, Oaklands, and Jubilee neighbourhoods could accommodate up to approximately 255,000 additional square feet of retail and services (an approximate 26% increase) between 2020 and 2040. This growth would help to meet the needs of people, without negatively impacting the amount spent per square foot (i.e., without negatively affecting existing or future business viability). The assessment is based on anticipated population changes and trends regarding consumer behaviour. It captures sectors like general merchandising, restaurants and coffee shops, grocers and specialty food shops, and personal, professional, and health services. Without changing existing policy, it is estimated that about 20% of this would be accommodated within existing urban villages at sites which are likely candidates for redevelopment over the next 20 years.

The retail study shows that by 2041, the Fernwood area could support up to approximately 100,000 additional square feet of retail and service space serving local residents (by comparison, Fernwood Village currently contains 52,000 square feet of commercial space, and Haultain Corners contains 36,000 square feet). This expansion is supported in part by the fact that many residents near and north of Bay Street in Oaklands, Fernwood, Jubilee and Oak Bay live more than a 15-minute walk from existing, larger urban villages or commercial areas, and the current and future population would support additional retail and services.

Village expansion in any direction (noted on Figure 3 above) could be supported, with varying potential for redevelopment. With a continued desire to ensure retail vitality in the downtown, maintain the current feel and scale of Fernwood Village, and to focus on creating more access to services where they are lacking, retail policies within Fernwood Village should take care not to dominate. Rather, policies should emphasize the need to create diverse housing options, while accommodating smaller-footprint spaces for retail and services where possible. Policies for Bay Street could encourage a broader range of neighbourhood-scale retail and service spaces to meet area needs.

Victoria 3.0 - Recovery Reinvention Resilience - 2020-2041 is the City's long-term economic action plan. It supports local retail and small businesses, both in recovery and resilience following the COVID-19 pandemic and growth and expansion into the future. The plan emphasizes diversity and inclusion of youth, Indigenous residents, and Canadian newcomers.

Other existing directions, to be completed outside of the local area planning process, will address other concerns and some desired actions to support local businesses. *Build Back Victoria* is a set of city-led initiatives to support local businesses and the community to reopen and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including \$575,000 in economic stimulus grants. The City's *2019-2022 Strategic Plan* includes an action to "Explore the

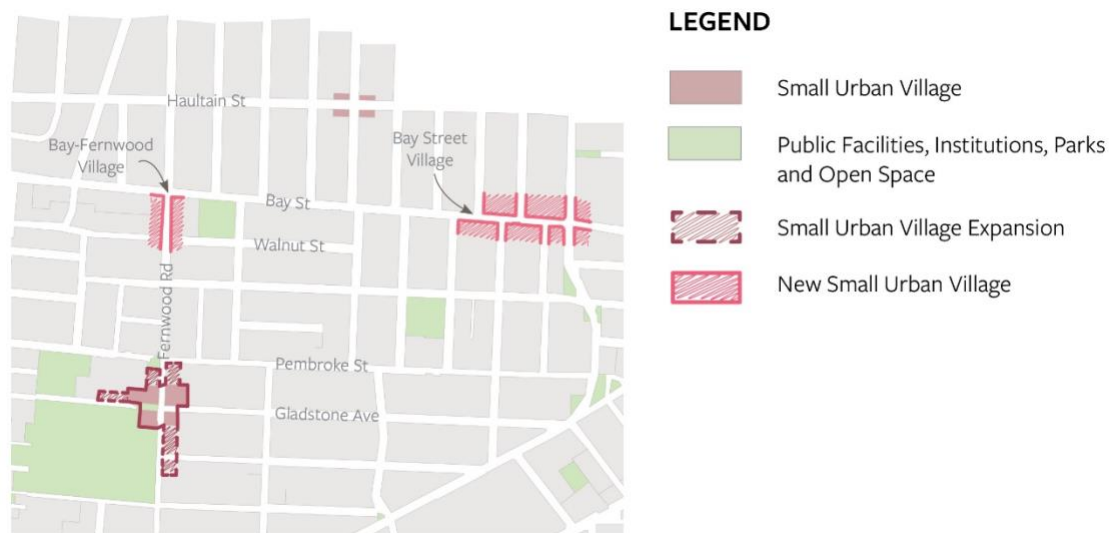
creation of a Legacy Business Program that specifically protects and highlights longstanding local businesses that are being priced out of our neighbourhoods.”

Land Economics Analysis

Land Economic analysis more generally carried out for the City shows that on typical Small Urban Village sites, to create mixed-use commercial-residential buildings, generally requires densities of around 2:1 Floor Space Ratio. Buildings that include rental housing may be marginal at this density. Purely rental residential buildings (without a commercial component) near the village could be viable, however, at 2:1 Floor Space Ratio.

Where We're Headed

Draft Planning and Design Directions for **Fernwood Village**



Map 3: Proposed Village and Village Expansion Areas

Principles for Fernwood Village

- **Historic Character:** Retain and respect the unique and historic scale, fabric and built form of Fernwood Village's buildings and their relation to public space.
- **Community Identity and Public Space:** Maintain and enhance the ways Fernwood Village's public spaces work with the mix of commerce, art, and culture to create a unique community focal point. Seek to refresh Fernwood Square, retaining the key features that make it a beloved amenity; to expand public space in adjacent locations through community-led and City-supported Placemaking initiatives, with a focus on Gladstone Street; and to enhance connections of community activity to surrounding green spaces.
- **Arts and Culture:** Support the success of key arts and culture venues, including the Belfry Theatre which provide a regionally significant cultural space supporting established and emerging artists in the region.
- **Sensitive Urban Design:** Seek a high-quality design in new buildings and public spaces, guided by the Principles for Urban Design in this document. Ensure new development adjacent to the historic heart of the village is of high quality, and is compatible with and complementary to, but is distinguishable from, the iconic, intact, and regionally significant heritage fabric of Fernwood Village.
- **Business Diversity:** Support and strengthen the diversity of smaller shops, community services and eateries, through improved public realm, the use of placemaking programs, the maintenance of a variety of smaller-size storefronts, and changes to parking management. Fernwood Village remains a place for smaller-scale shopping, with opportunities for medium-sized establishments in nearby villages and corridors, including those proposed on Bay Street.
- **Thoughtful Expansion:** Thoughtfully expand the footprint of the Village in a manner that:
 - enhances the existing commercial, art, and community uses available to the local residents;
 - emphasizes the creation of diverse housing options; and,
 - reflects the small spaces and visually eclectic storefronts that exist today.

- **Placemaking and Public Space:** Seek to refresh Fernwood Square, retaining the key features that make it a beloved amenity, and expand public space in adjacent locations through community-led and City-supported Placemaking initiatives, with a focus on Gladstone Street.
- **Housing Choice:** Create opportunities to add a mix of housing in and near the village that supports people of different incomes, lifestyles, and household types.
- **Sustainable Mobility:** Support growth and change that encourages walking, cycling, transit, and shared mobility; that improves the pedestrian experience within and to the village; and that ensures access for deliveries, commercial needs, and those with mobility needs.
- **Urban Forest and Landscapes:** Consider opportunities to bring experience of nature into the area, including healthy street trees and public and private landscapes, and more sense of connection between the village and nearby parks.

Key Policy Directions for Fernwood Village

General Land Use Directions

- Expand the Small Urban Village Urban Place Designation along Gladstone Avenue between Fernwood Community Centre and Fernwood Square, and along Fernwood Road between Vining Street and Pembroke Street (excluding Gower Park), as indicated on Map 3 with the following **commercial desired** strategies:
 - Support mixed-use development with publicly-oriented active ground floor uses that may include retail, community and public serving spaces, arts spaces, and other uses that enliven or activate the street.
 - Consider developments that build flexible ground floor space appropriate for future commercial uses but allow residential occupancy in the interim.
 - Consider the adaptive re-use of existing residential houses for commercial or community uses.
- Consider development of approximately 4 storeys in height and approximately 1.5:1 Floor Space Ratio, consistent with the intent of the current Small Urban Village Designation.
- Consider density of approximately 2:1 Floor Space Ratio, considering public or housing benefits consistent with City policies.
- The achievable scale on any one site should consider site size, orientation, and context. See Urban Design and the Public Realm section for specific design guidance for new buildings.

Heritage and Character

- Retain the existing heritage buildings in the village, considering sensitive additions, encourage additions to the Heritage Register and heritage designation, and ensure new development is responsive to the context of these buildings.
- Encourage urban design, public realm, and placemaking features that build on or complement the historic assets of the village, including reflections of Indigenous or environmental histories (see Public Realm and Placemaking directions for further detail).
- Ensure the spire of the current Belfry Theatre building remains a prominent feature of the village (see Public Realm and Placemaking directions for further detail).

Business Diversity

- Encourage buildings with smaller footprints (15.2-30.5 metres frontage along Fernwood Road and Gladstone Avenue) by reducing, eliminating or minimizing vehicle parking requirements for smaller-footprint buildings (see Mobility section for more details).

- Encourage small format ground floor uses to better support a diversity of smaller, local businesses and to maintain the existing narrow shop front pattern. Consider the inclusion of small commercial spaces (as small as 150-300 square feet) for emerging businesses.

Public Space and Mobility

- Together with the community, prepare a design and seek funding for a refresh of Fernwood Square (see Urban Design and Public Realm section for more details).
- Seek improvements to pedestrian connections, including the Fernwood-Gladstone intersection, and bus waiting areas as identified in the Mobility section of this document.
- Secure public rights-of-way through development, to facilitate continued pedestrian improvements and connections, building on those identified in the proposed development west of Vic High.
- Consider bold moves for commercial and residential parking in the village per the key directions in the Mobility section.



Figure 4: Concept developed during engagement for improving the connection between Fernwood Square and Gladstone Avenue to the east

Arts, Culture and Community Uses

- Support expansion of The Belfry Theatre / arts and culture space, consistent with the *Create Victoria* Arts and Culture Master Plan and needs identified in the upcoming Cultural Spaces Roadmap.
- Encourage public art programs through community action and existing grant programs, to create events, murals, art installations, and other artistic and cultural expressions identified by the community, and to involve, empower, and reflect Indigenous and multi-cultural people and perspectives.
- Support community-led placemaking initiatives, partnerships, and public investments that:
 - Enliven Gladstone Street east of Fernwood Square with publicly-accessible seating and spaces.
 - Activate the stretch of Gladstone from Fernwood Square to the Community Centre and provide opportunities for local artists and entrepreneurs, including through temporary or seasonal markets, or more permanent fixtures like pedestrian-scale lighting, kiosks, and sidewalk enhancements (see Urban Design and Public Realm and Mobility directions for further detail).

How We'll Get There

Implementation Steps for Fernwood Village

<p>Update the Official Community Plan (OCP) Update the OCP, including the Urban Place Designations, maps, development permit areas, and neighbourhood sections, as required to implement the draft directions herein.</p>
<p>Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the community objectives and draft directions herein.</p>
<p>Update the Zoning Bylaw Update zoning for Fernwood Village and surrounding areas to support the directions herein.</p>
<p>Deliver Village Parking Management and Undertake Parking Modernization for New Developments Guided by <i>GO Victoria</i>, the City will develop and implement parking strategies to manage existing on-street parking in villages and develop new approaches to parking supply for new developments which balance multiple City objectives.</p>

Bay Street Corridor and Villages



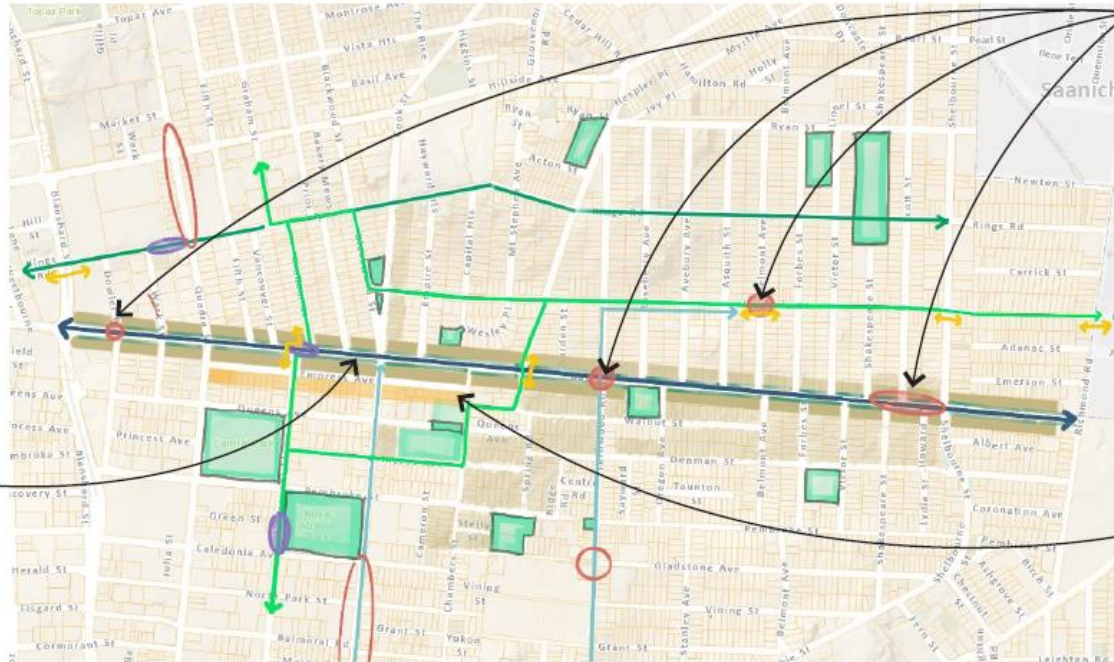
About Bay Street Corridor and Villages

The Bay Street Corridor is a prominent east west connector in the city and has been an important part of this planning process. The corridor provides several opportunities to increase housing choice, align land use, mobility, and climate action objectives, and develop complete communities with walkable villages.

The structure diagram on the following page summarizes key moves for the corridor. The emerging villages in the corridor are discussed in the subsequent section, and specific themes related to design, mobility, and housing for Bay Street are included in the corresponding sections of this report.

Bay Street Directions

Support diverse housing options along and near the Bay Street Frequent Transit Route to connect more people to jobs and communities.



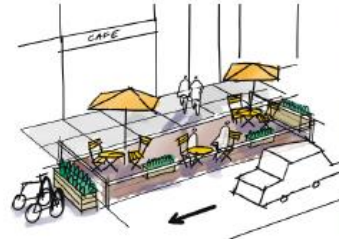
Allow small villages and commercial corners to evolve along the route and support the diverse needs of Oaklands, Fernwood, North Park, Hillside-Guadra and Burnside-Gorge.



Retain and enhance heritage assets.



Improve pedestrian comfort and calm traffic along Bay through planned mobility improvements (AAA network crossings).



Enhance the public realm through placemaking high-quality urban design, and improvements to public spaces in redevelopment.

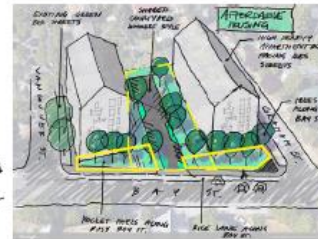


Figure 5: Proposed directions for Bay Street.

What We Heard

Community Engagement Themes for **Bay Street Corridor and Villages**

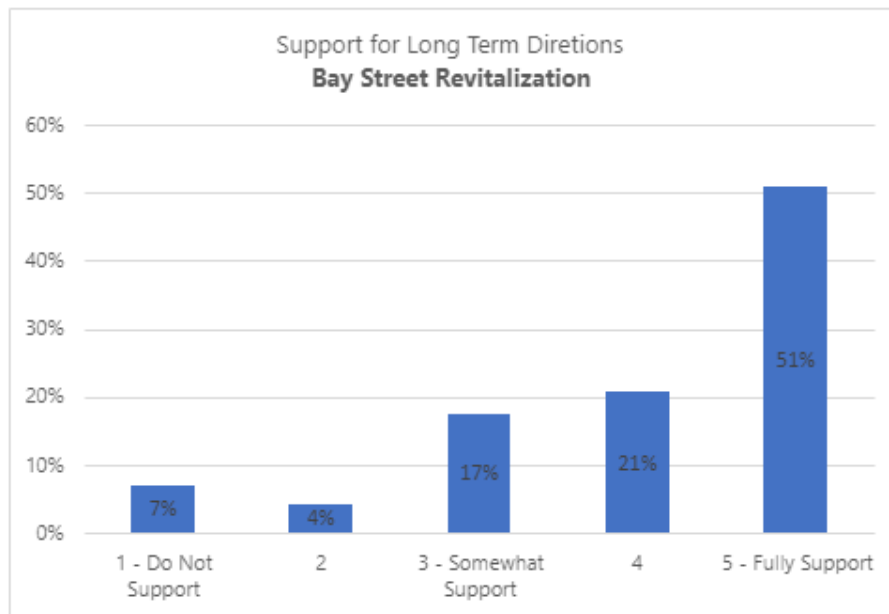
Support for New Small Villages or Commercial Corners

Ideas emerged in the workshops for ways to revitalize Bay Street, including through the creation of a small village or commercial corner. Participants noted that the residential areas around the Fernwood and Oaklands neighbourhood border do not have easy access to the services found in larger villages like North Park and Quadra.

The intersection of Fernwood Road and Bay Street, and the stretch of Bay Street between Shakespeare and Shelbourne Streets were noted as potential locations, which already have some emerging commercial activity. Survey and focus group participants were asked about these locations and many were supportive of either or both, should there be adequate demand to support them. Others noted that Haultain Corners (near Haultain Street and Belmont Avenue) was a more desirable location for enhancing a small village with additional uses and public realm improvements.

Bay and Fernwood received the greatest level of support in both the survey comments and in community discussions. Participants were particularly excited at the idea of a grocery store eventually being located here, with notes about how it would serve residents of Fernwood and Oaklands well. Others, however, noted that any new services should not pull from the smaller, independent, and specialized grocers that already exist in proximity to this area.

"I think Bay and Fernwood is the ideal location. It will bring Fernwood Village and Haultain businesses in closer proximity which will help that area to thrive."



See the Housing and Mobility sections for more of what we heard about Bay Street.

What We Learned

Policy and Technical Analysis for **Bay Street Corridor and Villages**

Bay Street Corridor Development Patterns

Development along the Bay Street Corridor is characterized by a mix of single-family homes and multi-family buildings, with emerging commercial nodes near Fernwood Road and in the area between Shakespeare Street and Shelbourne. Lots vary in shape and size, and there are some heritage assets along the corridor. There are also major employment lands that anchor the corridor including, Royal Jubilee Hospital to the east and the Rock Bay employment areas and the Downtown Core to the west. There are parks and amenities along the corridor as well.

Bay Street is identified as a Frequent Transit Route in BC Transit's Transit Future Plan (with local bus service at present). At the east end of the Bay Street Corridor, a future BC transit hub is identified that would serve up to five Frequent Transit routes. Two north-south All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling routes cross Bay Street and an east-west connector is located just to the north along Haultain Street and Kings Road. Current right-of-way, mobility conditions and development patterns pose risks of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and generally contribute to an uncomfortable pedestrian environment.

The Housing and Mobility sections of this report describe conditions of the Bay Street Corridor in greater detail and propose directions that would support the emerging small villages along Bay Street, including through increasing population adjacent to the villages.

Existing Land Use Policy and Zoning

Most of the Bay Street Corridor is currently designated Traditional Residential in the City's *Official Community Plan* with some Urban Residential areas. The emerging commercial area at Fernwood Road and Bay Street is Urban Residential at one corner and is otherwise Traditional Residential, as is the emerging commercial area between Shakespeare and Shelbourne.

The existing commercial or mixed-use buildings have a mix of zoning, including C-1 Limited Commercial, which allows buildings up to 3-4 storeys. Buildings around the commercial areas are primarily zoned for duplex, townhouse or single-detached residential. Zoning represents current entitlements and not necessarily the future vision.

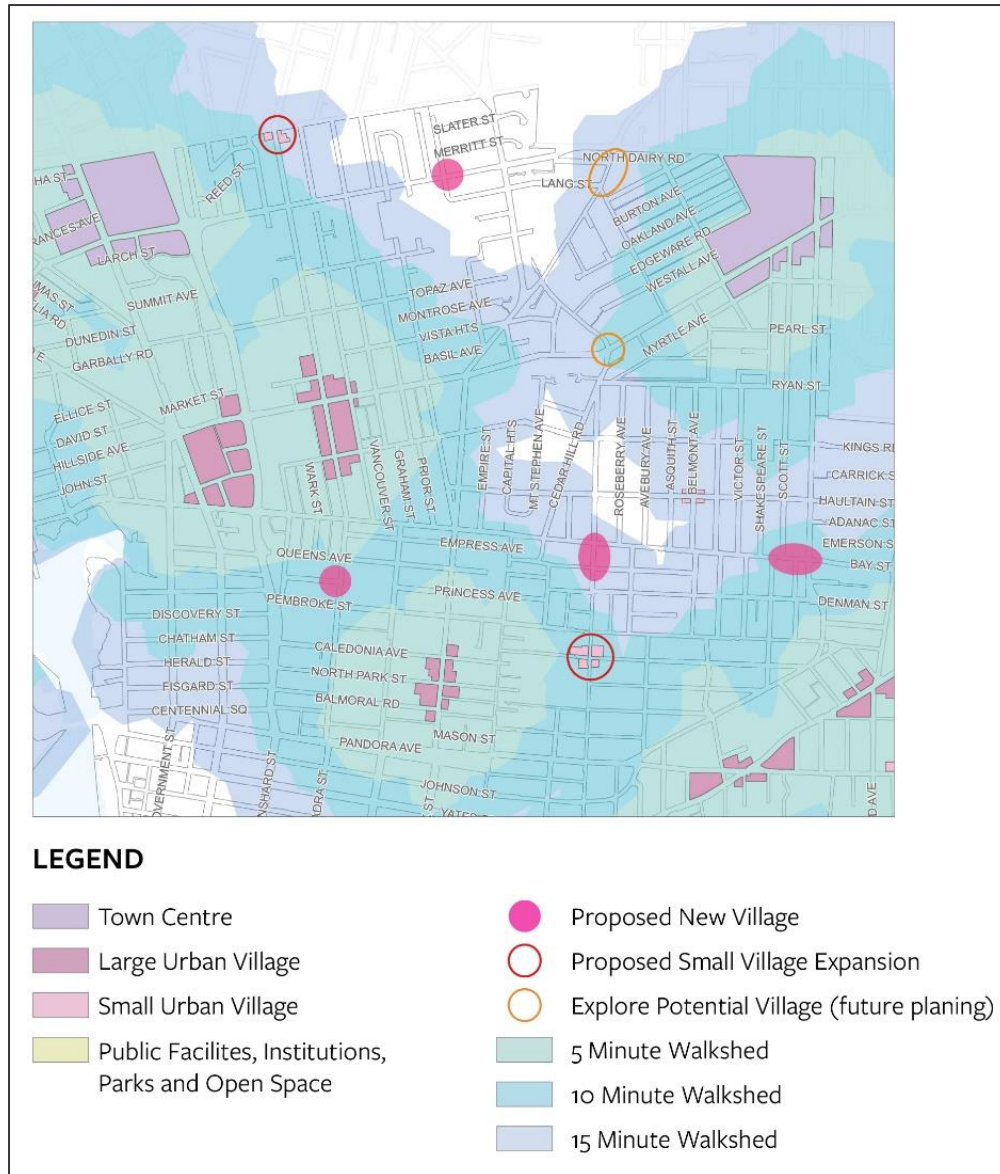
Retail Needs, Capacity, and City-wide Objectives

The retail assessment (discussed in detail in the Fernwood Village section of this report) estimates that the Fernwood area could support approximately 100,000 sq. ft. of additional retail and service space through 2041, meeting the needs of residents without negatively impacting the amount spent per square foot (i.e., without negatively affecting existing or future business viability). It considers sectors like general merchandising, restaurants and coffee shops, grocers and specialty food shops, and personal, professional, and health services.

The proposed expansion (noted on Map 3 above) could accommodate just over half of this retail and commercial space on sites with potential for redevelopment over 20 years (a commercial floor area approximately equal to the existing Fernwood Village), in an area where many residents live further than a 15-minute walk from a large urban village.

Though this process is not specifically considering the future of Haultain Corners (which will be considered through consultation for Oaklands planning), the study did note that even with the proposed Bay Street

commercial corners and village, there would still likely be opportunities to expand or enhance Haultain Corners over time if desired.



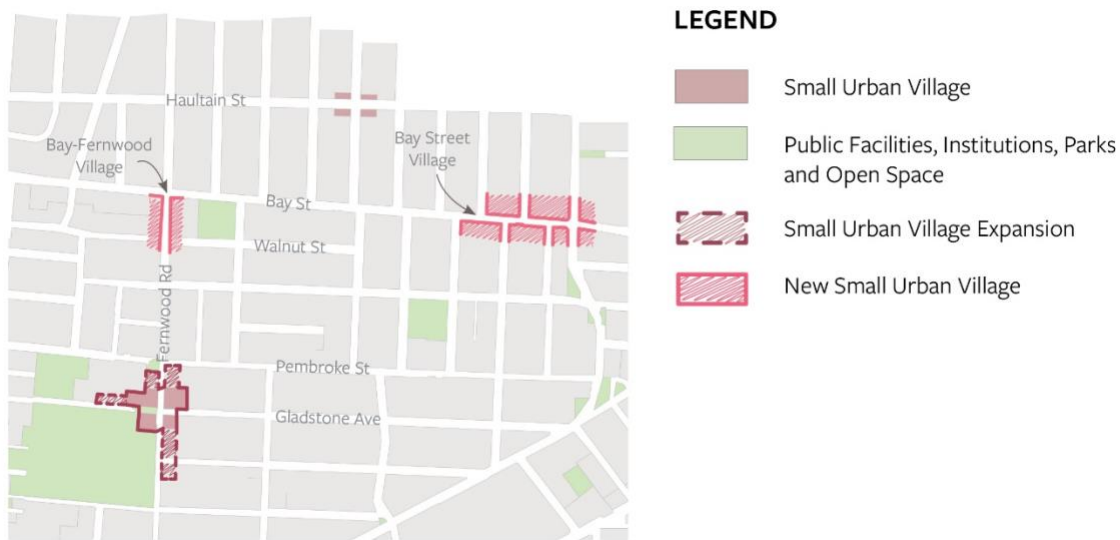
Map 4: Walking distances from large urban villages, with proposed new urban villages shown.

Land Economics Analysis

Land Economic analysis more generally carried out for the City shows that on typical Small Urban Village sites, to create mixed-use commercial-residential buildings generally requires densities around 2:1 Floor Space Ratio for buildings that include strata housing. However, mixed-use buildings containing rental, rather than strata, housing may be marginal at this density and would generally require higher densities. Purely rental residential buildings (without a commercial component) near the village could be viable, however, at 2:1 Floor Space Ratio.

Where We're Headed

Draft Planning and Design Directions for **Bay Street Corridor and Villages**



Map 5: Proposed Fernwood Small Villages

Principles for Bay Street and New Villages

- **Community-Serving Business:** Considering the current and future needs of residents in Fernwood and Oaklands areas, support the development of commercial uses in smaller and medium-sized commercial spaces in the proposed villages along Bay Street (identified on Map 3Map 55) to enhance access to goods and services within a 15-minute walk of home, while ensuring existing commercial areas continue to flourish.
- **Sustainable Mobility and Pedestrian Conditions:** Considering Bay Street as a current and future route for frequent transit and emergency vehicles, enhance the comfort of pedestrians and those using mobility devices along and crossing Bay Street, and accessing new or existing commercial areas (see Mobility section for further details). Support growth and change that encourages walking, cycling, transit, and shared mobility. Ensure access for deliveries, commercial needs, and those with mobility needs.
- **Green and Leafy Streets:** With new development, ensure the maintenance and creation of a healthy tree canopy, adequate sidewalks, and in residential areas, landscaped building setbacks.
- **Public Space:** In the designated village areas, create spaces along the public sidewalks or at corners, for patios, pedestrians, and public seating areas.
- **Quality Urban Design:** Seek a high-quality design in new buildings and public spaces, with sensitive transition to surrounding lower-scale housing, guided by the Principles for Urban Design in this document.
- **Placemaking and Public Space:** Support community-led placemaking initiatives, partnerships, and public investments that enliven Bay Street, particularly in or near the proposed villages, with publicly accessible seating and spaces.
- **Housing Choice and Livability:** Create opportunities to add a mix of housing along and near Bay Street that supports people of different incomes, lifestyles, and household types. Prioritize livability in development and building design (see Urban Design, Public Realm and Mobility directions for further detail).



Figure 6: Concept developed during engagement for livable buildings and a revitalization of Bay Street.

Key Policy Directions for Bay Street Villages

- Apply the Small Urban Village Urban Place Designation on the west side of Fernwood Road from Bay Street to just south of Walnut Street (per Map 55) with the following **commercial required** strategies:
 - Support mixed-use development for this area with publicly-oriented ground floor commercial uses that provide amenities and services for the surrounding areas.
 - Encourage local-serving businesses and a diversity of services that meet daily needs, by providing smaller commercial spaces along with space sufficient to accommodate a medium-sized grocer to serve the surrounding area but is not a regional destination.
- Apply the Small Urban Village Urban Place Designation on the east side of Fernwood Road from Bay Street to just south of Walnut Street (per Map 55) with the following **commercial desired** strategies:
 - Support mixed-use development for this area with publicly-oriented active ground floor commercial uses or ground floor residential use with “doors on the street” and functions that enliven the area (including community gathering spaces, shared laundry, bike storage, and other on-site amenities that activate the frontage).
 - Consider developments that build ground floor space appropriate for future commercial uses but allow residential occupancy in the interim.
- Through any larger development at the Bay-Fernwood Village, seek to create small outdoor spaces at corners or along Fernwood Road to provide a visual cue for entering the Fernwood Neighbourhood.
- Consider development of approximately 4 storeys in height and approximately 1.5:1 Floor Space Ratio, taking into consideration the scale of adjacent sites (including existing buildings and future potential developments).
- Consider buildings of approximately 5 storeys and additional density of approximately 2.5:1 Floor Space Ratio where public amenities or housing benefits are considered consistent with City policies.
- Identify the area along Bay Street from Victor Street to just east of Shelbourne Street as a **Small Urban Village (Bay Street Village)** and continue to explore opportunities for this area through the next phase of Village and Corridor Planning which will consider the nearby Haultain Corners area. As an interim policy, rezoning to purely residential uses (e.g., without commercial or community-serving uses on the ground floor) would be discouraged in this area.
- Support community-led placemaking initiatives adjacent to the proposed Bay-Fernwood Village or the potential Bay Street Village, including in conjunction with the planned AAA cycling improvements (see Public Realm and Placemaking and Mobility directions for further detail).



Figure 7: Concept developed during engagement visioning a revitalization of Bay Street and the proposed Bay-Fernwood Village

How We'll Get There

Implementation Steps for Bay Street Corridor and Villages

Update the Official Community Plan (OCP)

Update the OCP, including the Urban Place Designation definitions and maps and neighbourhood directions, as required to implement the draft policies and design directions herein.

Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan

Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the community objectives and draft directions herein.

Complete a Comprehensive Study for the Bay Street Corridor

The study would focus on integration of land use, urban design, and mobility, considering short-term strategies and long-term housing needs identified herein, as well as broader city transportation network connectivity, function, and design.

Urban Design and the Public Realm



What We Heard

Community Engagement Themes for **Urban Design and the Public Realm**

Village Area Public Realm and Design

Many community members noted desires for more natural features in the public realm, like street trees, bioswales, pollinator routes, and other landscaping features in and near the village, along Fernwood Road, and Bay Street. Abundant parking and cars were often cited as something that detracts from the village feel.

"Prioritize people in your designs. Few are clamouring for further development in our neighbourhood - what we do want is to keep it safe, to reduce traffic and cars that take away the public realm (one only needs to see how people reclaim the streets during a snow day to know that people live here, not cars), and to keep it affordable, so we can retain our grassroots identity and continue to keep creatives and not-for-profit initiatives in the community."

Many referenced the small footprints and closeness of buildings as a key defining feature of the village.

"On a tangent, I do not believe large building set backs suit this neighbourhood or any neighbourhood for that matter. I personally believe they should be banned all together but particularly in this neighbourhood."

Heritage

Throughout engagement the heritage value of Fernwood, particularly in and near the Village was highlighted. Many participants who strongly supported village expansion, additional retail, and more housing options also noted the numerous heritage assets (registered or not) that are valued.

Generally, residents want to see these assets preserved and ensure new structures take care to complement them. Participants also noted that new developments present an opportunity to reflect other heritage elements in the built form or related public realm improvements, including Indigenous and natural heritage.

Bay Street Public Realm and Design

During the workshops, there was broad discussion about the role of Bay Street both as a key mobility route in the city, and proximate opportunities for new housing. Many participants noted that Bay Street feels like a barrier and is uncomfortable to travel on by foot – there is a desire to make the residential areas to the north and south feel more connected. There was ample discussion throughout the engagement process about adding opportunities for more housing along Bay Street.

While many noted the desire to also provide options away from the busy corridor, in quieter neighbourhoods, people also recognize future redevelopment as an opportunity to improve the public realm. Most people agreed that new housing on Bay Street should prioritize livability, health, and safety for the residents, as well as providing good transition to adjacent lower density housing.

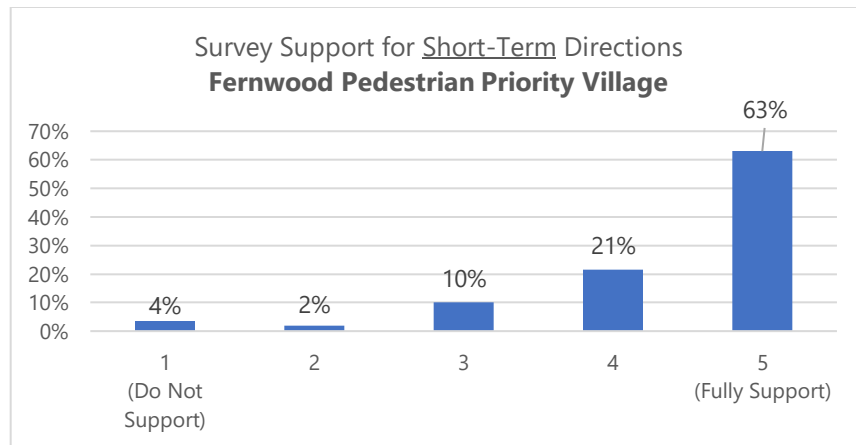
"love the potential for green roofs, more trees, and other ecological considerations while increasing density, providing mixed housing while creating a vibrant street level with local businesses"

"I hate walking on Bay St right now, I LOVE the idea of revitalization. Creating boulevards to make it more pedestrian friendly sounds so good!"

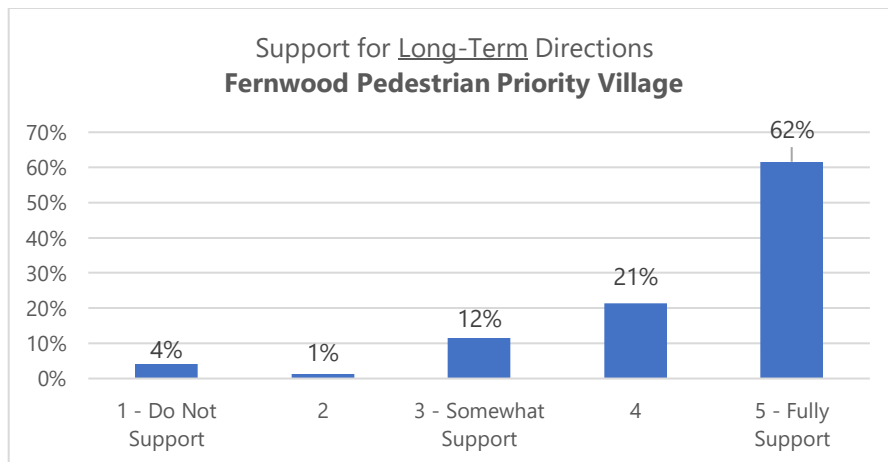
"Ensure set backs on Bay street for all new builds allowing green space, alternatives to concrete, [which is] a non environmental supportive material, and allow for place making activities"

Placemaking: Refreshing and Expanding Fernwood Square

There was broad support for both the short-term and long-term directions to enhance Fernwood as a pedestrian priority village, including a refresh of Fernwood Square through new design and placemaking features. Beyond the proposed directions in the survey, residents would like to see more bike parking, more green features that enhance ecological health (pollinator corridors, bioswales), replacement of the gazebo with a more functional and modular shelter, space to support new small businesses (like food trucks, temporary kiosks), and wind breakers for the colder seasons. There is a desire to have more public washrooms, water fountains, shelters, and seating in public spaces and parks throughout the city, Fernwood Square often came up as an example.



Community members highly value the placemaking features that were introduced as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response on Gladstone Street, east of Fernwood Road and would like to see them made permanent, as proposed in the long-term directions of the survey. Many participants commented that the proposed improvements should even be taken a step further, by incorporating a tabletop crossing and fully closing Gladstone Avenue from Fernwood Road to the driveway at 1315 Gladstone, bridging the existing square to a mirrored version along Gladstone. However, some noted that newly created outdoor spaces should have more public access (i.e. not be limited to patrons of the nearby businesses).



What We Learned

Policy and Technical Analysis for **Urban Design and the Public Realm**

Urban Design Analysis

Fernwood has ample properties with heritage merit. In Fernwood Village, these buildings (both commercial and residential) give a unique identity to the Village and the surrounding residential areas. There are opportunities for redevelopment in the areas, including some mixed-use buildings, without disrupting this identity, but design is a key consideration.

The Fernwood Road Corridor has a mix of heritage, character, and post-war single-family homes. Given the heritage assets in certain locations, a consistent pattern of redevelopment that could contribute to expansion of the right-of-way (for instance, to accommodate wider sidewalks) is unlikely. Fernwood Road accommodates a local bus route, walking and vehicle traffic. More details about transportation conditions are available in the Mobility section.

Bay Street, from Quadra Street to Shelbourne Avenue is predominately single-family homes, with some apartment forms and house conversions. Most are post-war homes, however, there are some pockets with heritage homes or homes with heritage merit (both directly adjacent to Bay Street and just off the corridor). There are a wide variety of lot sizes, depths and conditions, with some under 30 metres deep and some over 45 metres. There is also a mix of single and double lot depths along the corridor.

The Bay Street corridor has several unique transportation conditions and functions. It is one of the few routes that provides a direct west-east connection across the city and as such it has many roles to play. It is an arterial (secondary arterial east of Fernwood Road), and emergency route and is identified as part of the Frequent Transit Network (FTN). It accommodates cyclist with painted bike lanes for portions, and several connections cross Bay for the developing or planned north-south AAA cycling routes, including one at Bay and Shakespeare Streets, which a potential future village is being considered. Per the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw as of 2021, right-of-way acquisition sought in rezoning for new development ranges from 2.7m east of Chambers Street to approximately five metres west of Chambers Street, which can make accommodation of new housing challenging on some sites. Further analysis is needed to determine how much right-of-way is needed and is unlikely to meet the many desired functions and designs for this corridor. More details about transportation conditions are available in the Mobility section.

Existing Design Policies

The whole of Fernwood Village (area identified as a Small Urban Village in the *Official Community Plan*) is within *Development Permit Area (DPA) 6B (HC): Small Urban Villages Heritage*. It is designated as both a Development Permit Area and a Heritage Conservation Area, for the purpose of conserving heritage assets, establishing objectives for the form and character of new development, and revitalizing the commercial district. The applied guidelines are primarily the general *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, which provide overall guidance but are not very specific in application.

Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) is a tool similar to a DPA in that it enables the City to manage change within the designated area to ensure that new construction is appropriate and that the valued aspects of a neighbourhood preserved. Unlike individually designated properties on the heritage register, properties in an HCA are significant as a group. The City adopted the *Citizen-led Heritage Conservation Policy* in 2019 which establishes a standardized procedure for identifying, evaluating, and approving new HCAs. The policy indicates that the City will primarily rely on citizens to identify and nominate potential new Heritage Conservation Areas.

The City has a DPA for Corridors (not applied to most of Bay Street or Fernwood Road), the intent of which is to establish objectives for the form and character of new development and revitalize commercial areas.

Public Space Considerations and Placemaking Guides

Fernwood Square is considered a park in the City's land use inventory. Long-term asset management and maintenance is a shared role among City departments. Infrastructure issues in the square (such as drainage improvements) may be addressed through the City's Engineering and Public Works departments but require budget allocation for a capital project. Programming of the square, including both for one-time events, like festivals and markets, and more permanent fixtures, like benches and tables can be supported by the City through permits, grants, and coordination.

The City of Victoria encourages the community to utilize public areas for placemaking. Streets, alleyways, sidewalks, boulevards, parking areas all can serve as a canvas for creating new public spaces. The *Placemaking Toolkit* provides direction, guidelines, and support for realizing placemaking opportunities. Community-led Action is way for the community to come together and create strategic directions for placemaking opportunities and other issues of community importance.



Figure 8: Examples of placemaking: parklet (left); interactive musical installation (right).

Where We're Headed

Draft Planning and Design Directions for **Urban Design and the Public Realm**

Multi-family Housing Design Guidance

For design policies and guidance for new residential development, see the *Housing and Urban Design* report.

Village Built Form Design Guidance

For design policies and guidance for new development in villages, see the *Housing and Urban Design* report.

Guidance for the Public Realm and Placemaking

The following principles and directions would guide the development of public spaces and of proposed Design Guidelines within villages. These principles and directions build on the unique qualities and identity of North Park village and neighbourhood to guide the next chapters in its evolution.

Principles for Public Space and Placemaking

1. **Identity:** Maintain and enhance welcoming, diverse, and inclusive public space that supports community gathering, celebrates creativity, reflects the community's identity, and adapts to its changing needs over time.
2. **Fernwood Village Historic Character:** Ensure new development adjacent to the village is compatible with and complementary to, but is distinguishable from, the iconic, intact, and regionally significant heritage fabric of Fernwood Village.
3. **Great Streets:** Design, locate and shape buildings to create sunny, welcoming, and walkable public streets with space for pedestrians, patio seating and greenery. Emphasize Gladstone Street and identify opportunities to enhance pedestrian spaces along Fernwood Road and Bay Street.
4. **Human Scale:** Design buildings and open spaces to that create visual interest, diversity and identity when approached by pedestrians.
5. **Neighbourliness:** Ensure new buildings are good neighbours within the street and neighbourhood and to existing and future buildings next door.
6. **Urban Forest:** Support a healthy, mature, and continuous tree canopy along all streets with a priority for key gathering spaces, pedestrian routes, connections to parks and other greenspaces, and the maintenance and establishment of mature tree canopy along Bay Street.
7. **Public Spaces:** Create joyful and welcoming public spaces for everyday use and community celebration, incorporating public seating and gathering areas appropriate to the scale of urban villages and commercial corners. Refresh Fernwood Square while maintaining its beloved function and character for everyday use and community celebration. Consider future public seating along Gladstone Street. Consider the establishment of a smaller public gathering space in the proposed Bay Street Village.
8. **Incremental and flexible improvement:** Pilot new public space ideas through placemaking in the public realm and/or on private lands. Successful ideas may evolve to become more permanent features for public gathering and enjoyment in the future.
9. **Sustainable Mobility:** Integrate support for sustainable mobility options (walking, cycling, transit, and shared vehicles and reduced on-site parking) into building and public space design). Support the evolution of future Frequent Transit and high quality pedestrian space on Bay Street.

Corridor and Off-Corridor Multi-family Housing (see Housing Section)

- See the Design Principles and Directions in the *Housing and Urban Design* report for directions for multi-unit residential buildings.

Key Directions for Placemaking in the Public Realm

- Prioritize and enhance Fernwood Village public spaces for pedestrian and social activity, including public gathering, seating, patio dining, and other daily social activity, and for a range of special events, performance, and programming.
- Together with the community, prepare a design and seek funding for a refresh of Fernwood Square that considers the following desires:
 - Elements to encourage use and provide comfort in all seasons.
 - Diverse opportunities for gathering for people of all ages, abilities, cultures, and lifestyles.
 - Heritage elements that reflect the story of the community, including both Indigenous and environmental history in addition to the settlement and development history that is evident in the built form.
 - Pockets to stay and enjoy, as well as routes that allow people to pass through.
 - Pockets that support free, public enjoyment of the square as well as opportunities to support the nearby businesses and community spaces.
 - Future opportunities to expand the feel of Fernwood Square east and west along Gladstone Avenue (through community-led placemaking as described below or redevelopment).
- Support community-led placemaking initiatives that activate the stretch of Gladstone from Fernwood Square to the Community Centre and provide opportunities for local artists and entrepreneurs, including:
 - Temporary or seasonal markets and festivals.
 - Flexible, but more permanent fixtures like kiosks and food trucks.
 - Improved lighting, planters, benches, murals, and other elements of art.
- Support community-led placemaking initiatives adjacent to the proposed Bay Fernwood Village.
- Support community-led placemaking initiatives adjacent to the potential Bay Street Village as part of the planned All Ages and Abilities cycling route along Shakespeare Street.

Figure 9. One idea suggested at the workshops was to accommodate free-standing kiosks on Gladstone Street west of the square to support pop-up and emerging small businesses and makers and add to sense of place. The concept shown at right illustrates this idea, albeit in a different setting in Hillside-Quadra.



How We'll Get There

Implementation Steps for **Urban Design and the Public Realm**

Update the Development Permit Areas and Design Guidelines
For Fernwood Village and the proposed Bay Street villages, prepare updated Design Guidelines based on the directions contained herein and in the <i>Housing and Urban Design Report</i> .
Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan
Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the directions herein.
Updated the Zoning Bylaw
Update the Zoning Bylaw as required to implement directions herein, including related to rental housing and for typical rezonings (e.g., not larger sites) in Urban Villages.
Support a Community-led Action Process
If there is desire from community organizations, introduce a Community-led Action Process to identify additional community priorities and strategies with funding and support identified by the organizations (e.g., for local food and placemaking projects).

Mobility



What We Heard

Community Engagement Themes for **Mobility**

Fernwood Road Corridor Desired Improvements

Pedestrian safety and comfort along Fernwood Road are top concerns. The narrow sidewalks and placement of utility poles present notable problems for those with accessibility issues or young children. Fernwood is an important collector road in the neighbourhood, providing private and commercial vehicle access.

Areas of concern were those with high pedestrian activity, like Fernwood and Gladstone, Fernwood and Pembroke, Fernwood and Bay, and the areas near Vic High. Various traffic calming measures that also support active transportation uses, public realm improvements, and enhancement of the natural environment were proposed. Some residents expressed concern that interventions like traffic signals would detract from the charm of the village and would prefer “softer” interventions. Cycling comfort and safety along Fernwood Road was also a common theme (noting that the planned cycling network does not include Fernwood Road).

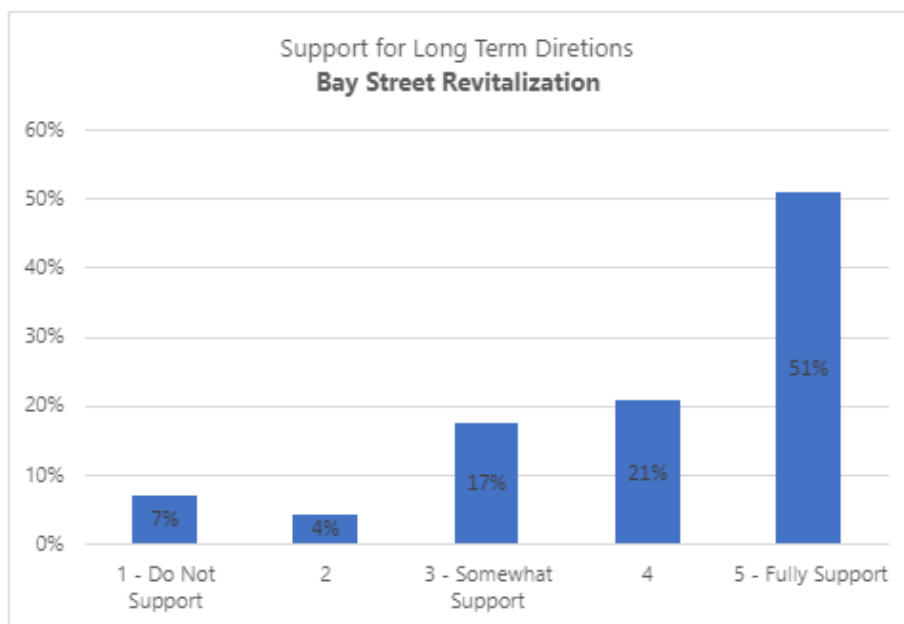
Transit along Fernwood Road is highly valued, with few transit amenities, and many noted a desire for increased service. Traffic along Fernwood Road was a noted concern, specifically regarding expansion of the village and the addition of housing. There was mixed support for moving the north and south bound bus stops near Fernwood Square with some concerns around convenience and proximity to the square as well as traffic flow. But there was support for adding accessible parking in the location of the existing south-bound stop and identifying ways to increase the feeling of safety at all bus stops. Some also noted a desire to move or improve the north-bound bus stop currently outside of Fernwood Inn to reduce conflicts and improve comfort.

“The bus stop and sidewalk on Fernwood Rd. adjacent to the Fernwood Inn should be turned into a bus bulge (i.e. pulling the curb out to the road to keep the bus in the lane and create more sidewalk space) rather than a bus pull in that is there currently. When the bus is there, the travel lane is too narrow anyway for cars to pass. This would provide more pedestrian space in this critical area. It would also make it more accessible as the location of the mailbox and bus stop pole at the current stop makes it harder for people using wheelchairs, strollers, etc. to get around. The same idea could also be done at the Belfry stop but the Fernwood Inn side seems more of a priority right now, especially given COVID and where people are gathering.”

Bay Street Corridor Desired Improvements

Participants value the bus service on Bay Street and look forward to transitioning the service that is currently on Haultain Street to Bay Street, as well as future expansion of services. Many noted that improved bus stops are needed in most locations, and that a more comfortable pedestrian experience, including for transit users, is desired (including benches, trees, and boulevards).

There was general support for revitalizing the Bay Street Corridor, including through redevelopment of higher density housing forms that could support wider sidewalks and boulevards. However, many participants noted the experience along Bay Street is quite poor (noisy, truck fumes, etc.) and is not the most suitable place for housing without improvements.



"I fully support the described new housing along the Bay Street corridor, but only insofar as it isn't used as a politically-expedient alternative to building more desirable housing off-corridor (including off-corridor 3-5 story buildings 1-2 blocks off of Bay). I.e. my strong preference is for both and I'd be disappointed if the majority of new residents were concentrated along busy, noisy streets."

"I think it is unfair to locate multi-unit, 'affordable' housing only on major transit corridors, where air quality is worse and noise is higher. I strongly support locating higher densities within local and neighbourhood streets."

"Would love to see one or two little microparks/refuges from traffic and busy-ness with benches/trees/a bit of space from traffic. For seniors/new parents on walks to and from stores have somewhere to sit and rest."

Local businesses were also supportive of revitalization and suggested traffic calming (including reduced speeds) to improve comfort in the village areas. Others noted the importance of maintaining traffic flow for emergency vehicles. As was a theme in other topics, many participants would rather reduce parking than forgo other improvements.

"Fully support with exception of on street parking. As stated before street space needed for commercial deliveries, [emergency vehicles] etc., but with a regular (preferably electric) park and ride system - no need for on street parking."

Support for Traffic Calming and Active Transportation Connections

Cycling access in and around the area was a common theme. Many participants noted they use Fernwood Road as it is the most practical route, but find it to be uncomfortable. Some specifically expressed a desire for the priority All Ages and Abilities network to be on Fernwood Road, noting the distance from the Vancouver-Graham-Jackson Corridor and lack of continuity in the planned route. However, cycling facilities (even painted bike lanes) cannot fit on Fernwood Road without substantial redevelopment activity that would provide more space along the roadway. Making cycling more comfortable on Fernwood Road can come in the form of slowing vehicle speeds and managing on-street parking to prioritize transit use.

There is a desire to provide better east/west cycling access through Gower Park and generally to seek ways to reduce cycling and pedestrian conflict in public spaces (e.g., through the square, emerging public space on Gladstone, and parks). Ideas included dismount zones and indicators of shared space.

Some participants expressed concern about traffic volumes and safety at Gladstone Avenue and a desired intersection improvements at Stanley Avenue. The safety and comfort of Gladstone Avenue from Chambers Street to Fernwood Square is also a concern, with ideas to add more lighting noted as a potential solution.

Support for Modern Parking Management

There are mixed opinions on how to best manage parking in and near the village, but a recognition that change is needed. Some participants pointed to the lack of parking for the regional serving Belfry Theatre and parking needs of visitors, particularly those with limited mobility or other accessibility concerns. Designated parking for visitors and patrons is desired by some – there was more support for time-limited parking in and near the village than for metered parking. However, some also noted the households of the many secondary suites and house conversions in the area are served by on-street parking. Survey participants and local businesses noted a desire for reduced commercial parking requirements to support more businesses and business expansion.

“The concept is good, but challenging due to lack of parking”

*“I would like to ensure that this expansion encourages multi-modal transportation and prioritizes accessible parking for those who *need* it, not necessarily making it easier for all to drive and park.”*

Many participants noted that having adequate parking should not be a priority and that no more space should be allocated for vehicles, even with expansion of housing or services, in order to make it a true pedestrian priority village.

“Do not overestimate the anticipated need for parking and then have inadequate support for public transit. Reduce parking in favour of other uses and find other, non-vehicular options to get people to the site.”

“If infrastructure encourages visits by car, by providing parking, there will always be more vehicle traffic than parking capacity. Encourage patrons and users to visit on foot and by bicycle, which will bring more visitors with less impact.”

“I like the idea of encouraging new businesses in the area in mixed used buildings, but think that transportation in the area should prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit over parking spaces. I would love to see the area as a friendly and safe place for people to walk or cycle to from elsewhere in Fernwood and other neighbourhoods. Right now I take an alternate route to get to Fernwood Square as it is not super enjoyable to walk up Fernwood Rd. or that safe to bike it some days.”

“It depends upon what is being considered for parking. I would not support the removal of trees or greenspace for parking. Nor do I believe that people own the street in front of where they live. “Residents only” parking is a thing of the past.”

Bike parking, including for modern bikes like e-bikes, cargo bikes, and scooters is a top desire, particularly in areas proximate to Fernwood Square, Vic High and the Fernwood Community Centre.

What We Learned

Policy and Technical Analysis for **Mobility**

The *Official Community Plan* and *GO Victoria*, the City's sustainable mobility strategy, provide the framework for an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning. The broad vision is to align land use planning and transportation investment to create complete, connected communities. Key policy positions include:

- Streets are places for people.
- New growth is serviced by transit.
- Compact land use and densification reinforces sustainable travel behaviour.
- Complete communities centre on multi-modal mobility hubs.

This framework, and the existing and planned mobility conditions and functions (see Maps 6, 7, and 8) inform future planning for both land use and transportation.

Fernwood Road

Mobility functions include:

- It hosts a local bus route that carries an average of 2,000 passenger trips per day prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, connecting Victoria General, Hillside Mall, and Downtown.
- The functional classification is Collector Road, providing access and movement for residents and businesses, carrying approximately 2,500 vehicles per day, including autos, trucks and bicycles (2014).

Current conditions include:

- Fernwood Road has a current right-of-way width of approximately 12 metres, widening to approximately 14.5 metres north of Denman Street. While the amount of right-of-way desired in redevelopment per the *Subdivision and Development Servicing* Bylaw is 20 metres, it is unrealistic that the right-of-way would reach this even through redevelopment (noting parts of the corridor contain heritage assets). Given these constraints, southern portions of Fernwood Road are not expected to be able to accommodate separated bicycle facilities.
- It includes a mix of residential and unrestricted parking on one side of the street, including areas where on-street parking is permitted only outside of rush hour in some locations. Of the current parking regulations, approximately five spaces along Fernwood Road provide short-term or time-limited parking serving the village, with limited additional short-term parking found on Gladstone Street.
- Sidewalks are generally 1.6 to 1.8 metres wide (less than the desired minimum of 2 metres), some with impediments such as hydro poles. There is generally no additional space available to widen sidewalks, without acquisition of additional land (the opportunity for which is limited), unless on-street parking were to be repurposed for pedestrian space.

Bay Street

Mobility functions include:

- It is identified as part of the Frequent Transit Network (FTN) in BC Transit's *Transit Futures Plan*, with a planned regional transit hub at Royal Jubilee Hospital, where 6 different transit routes currently meet.
- It currently carries two local bus routes, one connecting Vic West, Douglas Street, the Jubilee area and Foul Bay Road, and another Victoria General, Downtown, Fernwood Village and Hillside Mall. Together these two routes carry an average of 2,500 passenger trips on an average weekday prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- It is a primary emergency route.
- The functional classification is Arterial Street west of Fernwood Road, and Secondary Arterial Street east of Fernwood Road, and carries approximately 16,000 vehicles per day, including autos, trucks and bicycles. It accesses Rock Bay, the downtown shoulder, and the Bay Street Bridge to the west and Royal Jubilee Hospital, a major employer, to the east.
- It is currently designated as part of the long-term bicycle network. The sustainable mobility strategy calls for a reconciliation of various networks (e.g., bicycle, transit, freight routes, and priority pedestrian routes) in the future to confirm this status.

Current conditions:

- Bay Street is currently approximately 18.3 metres wide in most areas. Sidewalks are generally attached (not separated from the roadway by a landscaped boulevard, as would be desirable on a higher-traffic street) and 1.5 metres wide (less than the 2 metres generally desired). Outside of the sidewalks (away from the roadway), there is generally a 1.5 metre landscaped boulevard, with street trees planted regularly. Three-phase power lines on the south side result in significant pruning of trees.
- The amount of right-of-way desired by the *Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw* varies from 30 metres in the western portion (designated Arterial Street) to 25m in the eastern portion (designated Minor Arterial Street). Additional right-of-way is often sought to support transportation functions and wider sidewalks and boulevards when rezoning of adjacent land is proposed. A corridor study could better define the amount of right-of-way desired to accomplish these functions while allowing sufficient space for future housing.
- The right-of-way includes 2-3 travel lanes, some turn lanes, some stretches of bicycle lanes, and some areas of on-street parking. Recent improvements allow for the easier crossing for people cycling along the Graham Street All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle route.
- Other than major cross streets, most intersections are T-shaped which limits the efficiency of pedestrian and cycling crossings and increases the potential for conflicts.
- Though it is not identified as a freight route, Bay Street does experience truck traffic likely accessing the Rock Bay area and the Bay Street Bridge, which contributes to noise levels along the street.
- Like Cook Street, Quadra Street, and Hillside Avenue, it is considered a high crash corridor.
- Bay Street currently has frequent driveway accesses along both sides, resulting in slower traffic and disruptions of the sidewalk for pedestrians and those using mobility devices.

Other Corridors, Streets and Connections

Related corridors and neighbourhood streets mobility conditions and functions include:

- A AAA north-south cycling route just east of Fernwood Road along Stanley Avenue, Oregon Avenue, and Avebury Avenue (“The Fernwood Connector”).
- A planned AAA east-west cycling route along Haultain Street.
- A planned AAA east-west cycling route along Pandora Avenue east of Cook Street (with a constructed AAA facility already in place west of Cook Street).
- A planned AAA north-south cycling route along Shakespeare Street, north of Bay Street.



LEGEND

Proposed | Existing



Rapid Transit



Frequent Transit



Local Transit



Transit Hub



Large Urban Village



Small Urban Village



New Urban Village (Proposed)



Commercial Corners (Proposed)

Map 6. Designated Transit Routes (Transit Futures Plan for the Victoria Region, BC Transit)



LEGEND

Planned | Existing

Priority On-Street AAA

Planned

Long-term AAA Corridors

Long-term Bicycle Network

Large Urban Village

Small Urban Village

New Urban Village (Proposed)

Commercial Corners (Proposed)

Map 7. Designated Bicycle Network, City of Victoria, including All Ages and Abilities network.



LEGEND

-  Greenway (Designated)
-  Greenway (Proposed)
-  Key transit corridor in need of pedestrian improvements
-  Crossing improvements/ Proposed new crossings
-  Large Urban Village
-  Small Urban Village
-  New Urban Village (Proposed)
-  Commercial Corners (Proposed)

Map 8. Designated Greenways network, with proposed additions and desired crossing enhancements

Where We're Headed

Draft Planning and Design Directions for **Mobility**

Principles for Integrated Mobility Corridors

- Continue to advance the policy objectives and targets outlined in *GO Victoria*, the City's sustainable mobility strategy:
 - Integrate land use and transportation.
 - Align different transportation networks.
 - Improve multi-modal level of service.
 - Value the public right-of-way to support our goals.
 - Operate and maintain our assets to support these goals.
- Continue to advance the six key priority areas in *GO Victoria*:
 - Achieve Vision Zero to eliminate traffic fatalities.
 - Transform Public Transit.
 - Accelerate Active and Accessible Transportation.
 - Shift to Zero Emissions.
 - Rethink the curb (how we use space adjacent to the curb).
 - Harness data and technology to improve transportation choice and efficiency.
- Enhance corridors as places for pedestrians, those using mobility devices, and transit.
- Consider enhancements to mobility for people walking, cycling, or using mobility devices to support the future vision for Fernwood's villages, placemaking features, and improved connections.

Urban Villages

- Develop Urban Villages Public Realm Design Standards to update existing pedestrian standards, considering desired sidewalk widths to accommodate accessibility, activity, pedestrian traffic, and furnishing and frontage zones consistent with best practices and local contexts.

Fernwood Road

- Recognizing the limited right-of-way and limited opportunities to procure additional right-of-way, support improvements for the following prioritized travel modes along Fernwood Road:
 - Walking
 - Transit
 - Vehicles
- Focus on opportunities to create wider sidewalks and improved transit facilities through redevelopment or as funding and programming permits.
- Consider mobility enhancements or interventions to support the future vision for Fernwood Square, placemaking features, and improved connections from the square to the commercial area along Gladstone Avenue east of Fernwood Road.

Bay Street

- Enhance Bay Street as a place for people, by enhancing pedestrian conditions and landscapes through public improvements and new development of housing and village areas, while accommodating key transportation functions, including transit and emergency response.

Pandora Avenue

- Continue to advance the prioritization of cycling, walking, and multi-modal movement through the implementation of the All Ages and Abilities (AAA) network along Pandora Street.
- Consider land use changes along Pandora, east of Cook Street to further support increased access to high-quality facilities in the next stage of Village and Corridor Planning (which includes Stadacona Village and the Fort Street Corridor).

Key Directions for Local Mobility

Fernwood Village and Fernwood Road

- Create more public bicycle parking in and near the village.
- At the intersection of Fernwood Road and Gladstone Avenue, adjacent to Fernwood Square:
 - In the short-term, consider features to improve pedestrian comfort and safety at the crossing of Fernwood Road at Gladstone Avenue, including Rapid Flashing Beacons ; balance interventions with placemaking features that may also increase comfort and retain and enhance the feel of the village.
 - In the long-term, consider additional improvements for comfort, safety, and enhanced sense of place at the crossing of Fernwood Road at Gladstone Avenue, including a tabletop intersection that continues the design themes of Fernwood Square.
 - Continue to monitor the success of the current partial closure and traffic calming measures along Gladstone Avenue east of Fernwood Road and explore opportunities for a full and/or more permanent closure of the road through community-initiated placemaking or a Community-Led Action process, if there is interest.
- On Fernwood Road between Gladstone Avenue and Bay Street:
 - Through redevelopment seek wider, accessible sidewalks, as well as transit stop improvements or boulevard spaces as applicable.
 - To better facilitate the improvements described above, consider removing on-street parking south of Denman Street, balancing the need to accommodate parking and loading near Fernwood Village and the proposed Bay Fernwood Village with desired pedestrian improvements.
 - In the Bay Street Village, encourage new development to accommodate patio spaces on private land to provide lively interaction with street.
 - Consider a new crossing of Fernwood Road at Pembroke Street
- On Fernwood Road between Gladstone Avenue and Pandora Avenue:
 - Consider opportunities to improve or relocate bus stops near Gladstone Avenue to enhance public space and bus waiting areas.
 - Consider removing on-street parking on the east side of the road to facilitate wider sidewalks and boulevards, in conjunction with a broader program of parking management to support village businesses and cultural institutions.
 - Consider additional curb bulges at Vining Street.
- On Gladstone Avenue, from Chambers Street to Fernwood Square:
 - Through redevelopment seek wider, accessible sidewalks and boulevard spaces.
 - Consider temporary, partial closures of Gladstone Avenue to facilitate placemaking in connection with Fernwood Square.
 - Continue to facilitate truck and delivery access to the Belfry Theatre and Fernwood Square businesses and seek opportunities to improve turning movements and facilitate the expansion of the Square if redevelopment occurs.

Bay Street

- Continue to implement pedestrian improvements along Bay Street to improve pedestrian comfort along the street, encourage traffic to slow down, and make it easier to cross.
- Complete a comprehensive integrated mobility study for Bay Street between Blanshard Street and Richmond Road, with the following considerations and draft directions:
 - Prioritize investments and development contributions to support walking, transit, and vehicle movement as the priority modes.
 - Define the right-of-way acquisition that would be required through new development to realize the priorities described above, and ways to balance acquisition requirements with the desire to accommodate quality residential developments (as described in related sections), giving special consideration to the varied size and shape of lots along Bay Street.
 - Identify opportunities to establish a sidewalk on the south side of Bay Street between Wark Street and Quadra Street.

Neighborhood and Connections

- Through redevelopment seek wider, accessible sidewalks with a boulevard.
- Build an accessible pathway from Fernwood Square to the Vic High grounds through new development for a cultural space that may be considered west of the Belfry Theatre.
- Through potential future expansion of Haegart Park, consider a closure of Chambers Street in front of the park with placemaking features (such as planters, benches, murals, and other elements) and cycling access.
- Complete bicycle connections from Haultain Street via Princess and Chambers streets and Oregon and Stanley streets.

Principles for Parking Management and Modernization

- Per the goals and objectives in *GO Victoria*, the City's sustainable mobility strategy, value the city's limited right-of-way to support access for people, sustainable travel behavior and convenient access for high-occupancy, low-carbon, and active travel modes and the efficient delivery of goods.
- Given the limited allocated parking and curb space in and near Fernwood Village, prioritize parking management to encourage turn over and align with broader goals, including accessibility, vibrancy, and local economic development.

Key Directions for Parking Management and Modernization

- As part of a city-wide parking modernization program, seek to implement parking management solutions in and near Fernwood Village and along Bay Street in areas proximate to commercial uses, including:
 - Working with neighbours and local businesses to reallocate public space from vehicle parking to bicycle parking, in addition to other placemaking initiatives.
 - Piloting the elimination of or modifications to resident only parking programs.
 - Piloting time-limited parking that supports improved turn-over of business patrons.
 - In the long-term, consider transportation demand management (TDM) methods such as increased and diverse bicycle parking, car share spaces, and others.
- Consider updates to relevant bylaws to be included in the parking modernization program that reduce parking requirements for commercial uses where appropriate (e.g., where the use does not require extensive parking and/or where alternative mobility options are highly accessible).

- Seek to implement parking management solutions for new housing, including shared parking, reduced parking requirements, and TDM, particularly for purpose-built rental projects and for new housing near large urban villages, active transportation routes and frequent transit routes.

How We'll Get There

Implementation Steps for **Mobility**

<p>Complete a Comprehensive for the Bay Street and Cook Street Corridors</p> <p>The study would focus on integration of land use, urban design, and mobility, considering short-term strategies and long-term housing needs identified herein, as well as broader city transportation network connectivity, function, and design.</p>
<p>Deliver Village Parking Management and Undertake Parking Modernization for New Developments</p> <p>Guided by <i>GO Victoria</i>, the City will develop and implement parking strategies to manage existing on-street parking in villages and develop new approaches to parking supply for new developments which balance multiple City objectives.</p>
<p>Develop Urban Villages Public Realm Design Standards</p> <p>As part of implementing <i>GO Victoria</i> update existing pedestrian standards for urban villages through an integrated consideration of desired mobility and urban design.</p>
<p>Update the Subdivision and Development Servicing Standards bylaw</p> <p>Guided by the <i>GO Victoria</i> Sustainable Mobility Strategy and updated Urban Village Public Realm standards, update the desired elements, widths, and frontage works desired in the public right-of-way.</p>
<p>Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the community objectives and draft directions herein.</p>
<p>Update the Official Community Plan (OCP)</p> <p>Update the OCP to reflect any changes in the greenways or active transportation network based on the directions herein.</p>

Housing



What We Heard

Community Engagement Themes for **Housing**

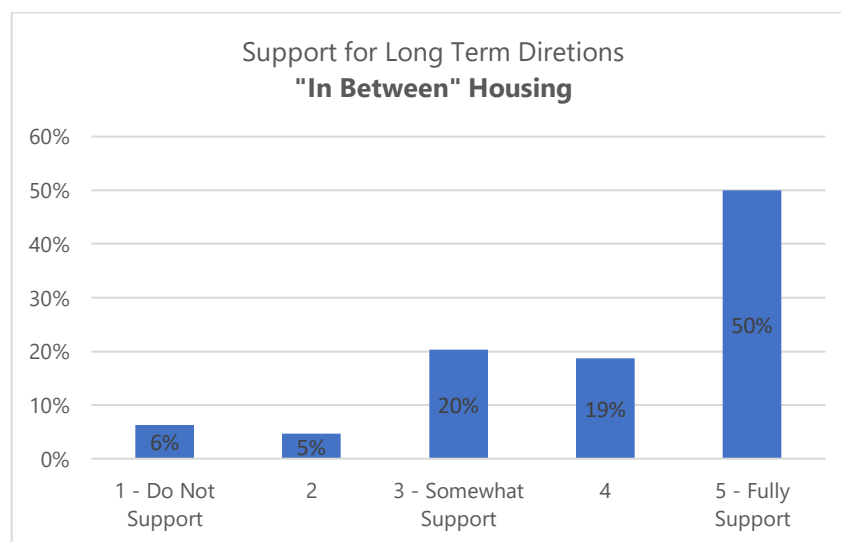
Summary Themes – City and Study Area

The below key summary themes are elaborated in the *Housing and Urban Design* report.

- Both owners and renters expressed desire for a diverse range of housing choices to maintain a diverse community, meet future needs, and support households of different incomes, family types, ages, and lifestyles.
- Many were also concerned about preventing displacement of current low- and moderate-income residents, although there were differing opinions on the best approach to prevent displacement.
- There was broad support for housing that provides opportunities to live and move more sustainably, including through parking management and recognizing the trade-off between parking, green space, and affordability.
- Specific concerns included:
 - Provision of amenities with new housing.
 - Providing multi-family housing choices in quieter neighbourhoods, not just transit corridors.
 - Inclusion of affordable housing options.
 - Distribution of new housing within the region.
 - High quality design, including form and character, accessibility, green space, and heritage retention.

Support for “In-Between” Housing

During the workshops, the idea to consider the unique area in between Fernwood Village and North Park Village as an opportunity for diverse, affordable housing options emerged, particularly unique options that would offer more than the traditional, lower density residential that exists today and the higher density forms found closer to downtown (i.e., in-between forms, in between the villages). When the question was posed in the survey and focus groups there was ample support for the idea, with 69% of survey participants indicating full or strong support. For those that indicated they “somewhat support” the concept (an additional 20%), notes were largely geared towards concern that new housing would not be affordable to people with moderate to low incomes, could result in loss of trees and greenspace to make way for parking and driveways, and loss of buildings with heritage value.



"Greater density and affordability would be great for the area in terms of community, culture and business. Please also consider forcing new builds to include underground parking to all the village to make better use of greenspace and better use of the roads with fewer cars parked on the street."

"It was hard for me to choose, because I love the charm of our neighbourhood current density, but it's really expensive and I am sad that I will never be able to own a house in this neighbourhood. So ultimately I chose to prioritize affordability."

"I believe the most important component of neighbourhood character is people, and option A allows for the greatest diversity and greatest number of people."

"Could there be a mix of A & B offered? Could the mixed density offerings be allocated to areas where there it would make sense to add commercial space on the ground floor?"

"my major concern with this proposed redevelopment is that this neighbourhood currently provides significant low-cost housing, shabby and run-down though it may be, that will be lost through redevelopment. developers profit, the tone of the neighbourhood changes dramatically, and people with lower incomes will no longer be able to afford to live here. part of the pleasure of living in Fernwood is the unique mix of residents and incomes - there's room for students, artists, musicians, seniors, small business owners, families."

Some participants also noted that the proposals don't go far enough in terms of allowing more density, while others noted that making infill (secondary suites and garden suites) easier should be a greater priority.

Support for Improved Housing Choice and Affordability

Throughout the study area, a theme that emerged through engagement was general support for more housing choice, diversity, and affordability in and near the villages. Support was typically grounded in a desire to have diverse housing forms to meet the needs of diverse households, and to provide options for more people to have better access to the services and amenities that villages provide, including sustainable transportation options.

"Primary concern is that these improvements, which I think will be wonderful and are in keeping with the spirit of Fernwood, would continue to drive up housing costs in this area and contribute to further gentrification of the area. As it stands our family, who has lived in Fernwood for 8 years and has a net income of about \$100,000 is unlikely to be able to afford a home in this area if we choose to have a second child. I feel deeply concerned about how many people who come from less privileged economic backgrounds are going to be displaced from this neighbourhood. These improvements will look wonderful, but the true culture and vibrancy of our neighbourhood is in the people who live here."

Support for Renters

Many participants in both the survey and the focus groups identified key struggles for renters in the area, including difficulty in finding rentals that were suitable in size, price, location, or amenity (e.g., for pets or families with children at home). Another key concern among renters was the precarity of the secondary rental market.

"Today's policies are not supportive or even preferable for renters. Third party unregulated basements suites and such in option C can be truly terrible (I would know, I have been there!) Change is needed to retain young people, especially bright university students."

What We Learned

Policy and Technical Analysis for **Housing**

Future Housing Needs and Capacity

The City of Victoria is anticipated to grow by more than 11,000 households between 2016 and 2041. On top of this anticipated growth, there is latent demand in the market today. The city needs to catch up with housing needs today, while keeping up with the anticipated needs of tomorrow.

An assessment of capacity in the *Official Community Plan* (OCP) Urban Place Designations revealed that at a city-wide scale, current capacity falls short by somewhere between 15% and 30%, and that the targets in the OCP's Growth Management Framework related to accommodating growth near walkable urban villages are unlikely to be realized. Through local area planning the City needs to make room for more housing while considering related objectives, including:

- Creating the "right supply" in the "right places" (providing diverse options for diverse households in areas that reinforce complete communities and sustainable mobility)
- Supporting affordability and equity, both through the development of housing for people of different incomes, and housing that considers housing + transportation costs.
- Minimizing displacement of existing affordable housing stock.
- Meeting the community infrastructure, amenity, and service needs of a growing population.

Fernwood Village is identified as a Small Urban Village in the OCP, but given its walkability and nearby community amenities, it is a desirable location to accommodate housing. Modest expansion of the Small Urban Village footprint (as proposed in the Fernwood Village section of this report) would include some additional housing opportunities and support the need to grow in the right locations.

To continue to preserve the affordable rental and ownership opportunities in Fernwood, the OCP's Urban Place Designations should not support rapid redevelopment of such sites. However, the OCP must provide more room for housing in or near Fernwood Village, emerging villages, and proximate to sustainable mobility routes to meet the overarching objectives of creating complete communities, advancing climate action, and improving affordability.

Economic Analysis

A 2020 land economics analysis found that in Fernwood, market rental housing may be viable at densities of 1.6 Floor Space Ratio (FSR) and above in some locations, but other locations would likely require 2:1 FSR or more, assuming underground parking is provided at 0.5 spaces/unit on average. Alternatively, a building with "tuck-under" parking may be viable for market rental housing at densities as low as 1.5 FSR, depending on the location. The variability in viability between locations occurs mainly because achievable rents vary between areas.

This analysis represents market conditions as of 2020. It is meant to paint a broad picture as it cannot predict with accuracy what may be viable on any given site, or over time. It assumed that no government subsidies are provided, and profit margins are towards the lower end of the range of what is considered for private financing. Viability is also sensitive to factors such as lot size and pattern.

The above findings are focused on market rental viability. Generally, a strata development is viable at lower densities than a rental development. If a strata development were developed at the densities mentioned above, it would likely support contributions towards public amenities or housing benefits (affordable housing).













Areas for Consideration of additional Multi-Family Housing

This section is organized by sub-areas that were explored through engagement as potential areas to add multi-family housing. See the *Housing and Urban Design* report to learn more about the draft form, density, and design parameters and potential housing needs that would be met.



- ① Off Corridor: In Between Villages Mixed-Density Housing
- ② Bay Street Corridor
- ③ Off Corridor: Off Bay Street

LEGEND*

 Urban Residential	 Change to Urban Residential
 Traditional Residential	 New Housing Opportunity Areas
 Large Urban Village	 New Mixed-Density Housing Areas
 Small Urban Village	 Large Urban Village Expansion
 Core Residential	 Small Urban Village Expansion
 General Employment	 New Village or Community Corner
 Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space	

*Includes only Designations Shown

Map 9: Fernwood Multi-family Housing Sub-areas.

Off Corridor: In Between Villages Mixed-Density Housing (#1 on Map 9)

In addition to being an area that was identified and supported by many community members, this location has other attributes that support inclusion of multi-family housing, including:

- Walkable access to two established urban villages and an array of shopping and services.
- Within a 10- to 15-minute walk of the Downtown Core.
- Good mobility options, including All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network, and current and future designated Frequent Transit routes.
- Proximity to current and future amenities, including proposals for renewal of the Crystal Pool within the general area, and the addition of community centre space serving North Park and Hillside-Quadra neighbourhoods.
- Several parks within walking distance, with proposed directions calling for the addition or enhancement of public green spaces nearby.
- Added population will boost the success of local businesses and support transit investments.

In addition, making room for housing in this area would address some key concerns heard during engagement:

- Many stakeholders emphasized the desire for multi-family housing options that are not located on busy transportation corridors, yet still have access to transit and urban villages.
- Given the valued heritage character of the area, and some intact rows of houses with heritage merit, supplementary policies that encourages retention of heritage assets and complementary design approaches could be valuable. Consideration of a Heritage Conservation Area through a citizen-initiated process (if there is local support) would be effective.

This area contains a mix of lot sizes and economic analysis shows that areas with smaller lot sizes would be less likely to be viable for multi-family housing. The area also has a mix of housing types, including single-detached homes, suites, “missing middle”, and multi-family buildings, as well as a mix of existing conditions and properties with heritage merit. Given these conditions, a mixed density approach (generally supportive of lower scale multi-family forms) could be successful in realizing a range of housing choices. Capturing the full extent of the area for mixed density would help to ensure new housing can be achieved, while still being sensitive to this context.



Figure 10: Concept of mixed density housing developed during engagement.

Bay Street Corridor (#2 on Map 9)

Bay Street is an ideal area to better integrate land use and transit objectives, both through the creation of new housing opportunities that support transit ridership and investments, as well as mixed-use opportunities that can support the development of complete communities and offer services and amenities ‘along the way.’

- The corridor is along and adjacent to transportation options, with Bay Street identified as a Frequent Transit Route in BC Transit’s *Transit Future Plan* (providing local service at present). Frequent Transit routes are also provided on Quadra Street and Shelbourne Avenue. At the east end of the Bay Street Corridor, a future transit hub is identified that would serve up to five Frequent Transit routes. The area is also served by two north-south AAA cycling routes cross Bay Street and an east-west connector is located just to the north along Haultain Street and Kings Road.
- The corridor provides connections to employment, at Royal Jubilee Hospital to the east and the Rock Bay employment areas and the Downtown Core to the west.
- There are nearby parks and amenities along the corridor and to its north and south.
- The eastern parts of Bay Street are in an area which can support additional walkable shopping and services, which can be established through the evolution of the proposed villages.
- There are both design constraints and opportunities along the corridor, including varied lot shapes and sizes, which will result in context-specific responses along the corridor. An integrated study of mobility, housing and urban design could better define the desired widths needed along Bay Street to accommodate transportation and establish sidewalks, boulevards which support healthy trees, and building setbacks.

New development opportunities could provide the opportunity to create wider, detached sidewalks and maintain landscaped boulevards that support healthy canopy street trees along a roadway which would benefit from enhanced conditions. In recent years, some properties have been subdivided with new small-lot houses that have driveway access along Bay Street. This subdivision has added curb cuts along Bay Street, which slow traffic, create breaks in the sidewalk, increase the likelihood of conflicts with cars and pedestrians, and reduce the number of tree-planting spaces along the street, while adding little new housing or affordability. As a well-travelled road, emergency route, and designated Frequent Transit Route, improvements the Bay Street corridor may be more desirable through multi-family housing that can reduce curb cuts and enhance frontages with wider sidewalks and boulevards:

Off Corridor: Off Bay Street (#3 on Map 9)

Most of the same advantages noted for the Bay Street on-corridor housing (above) apply to the identified off-corridor opportunities, except the opportunity to use redevelopment as a mechanism to improve the public realm. Additionally, off-corridor housing in these locations is strongly desired as an option for renters and those living in multi-family housing.

Where We're Headed

Draft Planning and Design Directions for **Housing**

The areas explored through community engagement and policy, technical, and urban design analysis are proposed to be updated in the *Official Community Plan* to make room for additional multi-family housing.

Draft directions for forms, densities, and design parameters are detailed in *Housing and Urban Design* report. The draft directions in that report are intended to make room for additional housing of varied forms and tenures in locations that help to advance sustainability and equity objectives and have received support from the community. The directions would be implemented through policy updates, design guidelines, and zoning bylaw amendments.

Key Directions

- See the *Housing and Urban Design* report.

How We'll Get There

Implementation Steps for **Housing**

Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the community objectives and draft directions herein and in the <i>Housing and Urban Design</i> report.
Update the Official Community Plan (OCP) Update the OCP as required to reflect the draft directions herein and in the <i>Housing and Urban Design</i> report.
<i>See Housing and Urban Design report for additional implementation steps.</i>

Parks, Facilities, and Community Assets

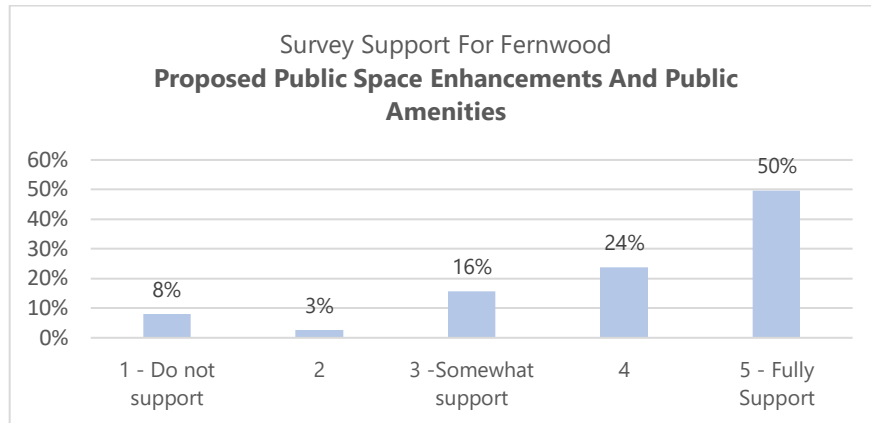


What We Heard

Community Engagement Themes for **Parks, Facilities, and Community Assets**

Overall Support for Proposed Public Space Enhancements and Public Amenities

A majority of respondents expressed support for the range of public space enhancements and community amenities proposed in the survey and which are detailed in the following sections.



Parks and Open Space Improvements

Desired enhancements to specific green spaces (e.g., Stevenson Park, Alexander Park, Grant Park) include new or enhanced playgrounds; benches, seating, and picnicking areas; a splash park; restrooms and water fountains; and more age-diverse recreational opportunities. Some common reoccurring specific ideas included:

- Enhancements to Gower Park and improved connections to Fernwood Square and the surrounding area through placemaking and redevelopment.
- Improvements to the dog park at Alexander Park.

There is a desire for spaces, features, and improvements for different ages, interests, and cultural backgrounds, including:

- Playgrounds for different ages, a splash park, exercise equipment, seniors' activities, youth, skating, bocce, hard spaces for basketball and roller hockey, reservable tennis courts, etc.
- More seating, spaces for picnicking, bar-b-ques, and gathering.
- More washrooms & water fountains for pedestrians and visitors to parks and urban villages.
- Concerns about management and sense of safety (cleanliness, needles in parks, night lighting).
- More celebration of Indigenous cultural heritage and more public spaces designed for and by Indigenous communities.

Community Centre Expansion

People would like to see an enhanced Fernwood Community Centre space, modernized, with more offerings (recreation, meals and teas, and childcare). Additional space for arts incubation, including affordable maker spaces is desired. The most commonly noted desired services include childcare and a library branch.

"More indoor shared space for the arts, coworking and community events like professional workshops or art exhibits."

"I believe there needs to be specific space allowance for teens to feel comfortable to hangout and not feel unwelcome."

Use of School District Lands

The Vic High grounds, track, and bleachers serve as places to recreate, see open views, and watch fireworks. Enhancement of Spring Ridge Commons and improved opportunities for use, which is also owned by the School District, was a common theme.

Rock Bay Creek

Stakeholders have expressed interest in seeing the Rock Bay Creek incorporated into public spaces and the consciousness of the community through opportunities to daylight the creek in the future, and/or ways of celebrating the creek through signage, art, and landscapes. The creek once flowed from Spring Ridge towards Rock Bay and has since been confined to underground storm sewers. Several public art and signage installations recognize the creek, including where it flows below Blackwood Park and along Kings Road. It also flows at varying depths under public spaces including Alexander Park and Wark Street Park, or through larger properties such as the Fairway Shopping Centre and BC Housing's Evergreen Terrace.

What We Learned

Policy and Technical Analysis for **Parks, Facilities, and Community Assets**

Parks and Open Space Planning

The City's *Parks and Open Space Master Plan* provides a high-level road map guiding planning, management, and investment over 25 years. It includes priority short-term, medium-term, and ongoing actions. Individual parks and open spaces may have a park improvement plan to guide improvements. Funding for municipal park improvements comes primarily from the City's tax base or capital reserves. New development also contributes Development Cost Changes (DCCs), which can help to fund park improvement and acquisition based on needs generated by the anticipated population increase.

Parks and Community Assets in the Area (see also Map 10):

- Gower Park
- Grant Park
- Fernwood Community Centre
- Haegert Park
- Spring Ridge Commons (Permaculture Garden)
- Stevenson Park
- Alexander Park
- Compost Education Centre
- Fernwood Community Centre
- Paul Phillips Hall
- Pandora Green



Map 10: Fernwood Parks and Open Spaces, Current

The *Official Community Plan* calls for 99% of Victorians to have a park or open space within 400m of home by 2041. Fernwood as a whole meets this target.

Though some opportunities to add pockets of green space or environmental enhancement were identified through this process, the emphasis for this area is around improving existing assets for greater public use. The *Parks and Open Space Master Plan* reflects a theme that was common throughout engagement – the desire to locate a water/spray park in the northeast area of that city because of the limited access to the waterfront.

Community Facilities and Assets

Fernwood is served by two community facilities, the Fernwood Community Centre at 1240 Gladstone Avenue and Paul Phillips Hall at 1923 Fernwood Road. They are operated by the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Centre (NRG) and by the Fernwood Community Centre respectively and owned by the City of Victoria. The Fernwood Community Centre receives annual funding support from the City and provides a range of services in approx. 8,500 sq. ft., including a childcare centre, recreational and family programming, meals for families and seniors, and food distribution. Paul Phillips Hall, with an additional 5,800 sq. ft., provides meeting space and space for the arts.

Local Food Systems

The Fernwood Neighbourhood is rich with local food system assets and has a passion for food security, evident in the Compost Education Centre, the Spring Ridge Commons, the Fernwood Community orchard, and various allotment and other gardens.

The *Growing in the City* urban agriculture program is comprised of several program streams to support community-based initiatives. This model provides local residents with a wide range of benefits including social opportunities and access to healthy food through the establishment of community gardens, orchards, and boulevard gardens on public and private lands. The City provides gardening materials, offers licenses for gardening on public land, along with guidance for boulevard gardening. The City also offers voluntary guidelines to inform food production in multi-family development (food production spaces are one possible use within open spaces identified in various design guidelines documents to encourage sociability and amenity space in multi-family housing).

Planned City Initiatives

The City has already identified and will be undertaking several actions that will contribute to amenities in the area. Some of these actions are not place-specific at this time, but have been identified in one or more plans or projects including:

- Construction of a new artificial turf sport field at Vic High by School District 61
- Replacement of the playground at Stadacona Park
- Locating a library branch in the north part of the city.
- Replacing or renewing the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre
- Consulting on the establishment of a community garden within the city.
- Expanding grant streams to support the establishment and ongoing operation of community-initiated community gardens
- Strengthening the Tree Preservation Bylaw which includes protections for trees on private lands (completed 2021).
- Developing neighbourhood tree planting plans.
- Development of a Neighbourhood Learning Centre at Vic High by School District 61.

Current Prominent Development Proposals

The City is considering a development proposal for affordable housing at the site west of Vic High between Gladstone Avenue and Grant Street. Through this proposed redevelopment amenities and public realm improvements for the area could be secured, including an indoor community amenity space, new expanded community garden, accessible living units, and public realm improvements, including contributions of rights-of-way for pedestrian improvements along Gladstone, Grant, and Fernwood Road, in addition to a majority of the homes being deeply subsidized or rent-g geared-to-income.

Where We're Headed

Draft Planning and Design Directions for **Parks, Facilities, and Community Assets**

Principles for Parks and Open Spaces

- **Protect the environment:** Parks and open spaces protect and improve native ecosystems and help the city adapt to climate change.
 - Increase protection and enhancement of native ecosystems in parks and open spaces across the city.
 - Improve sustainability and ecosystem services.
 - Mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- **Foster engaging experiences for everyone:** The parks and open spaces system meets current and future needs of Victoria residents, provides a range of different experiences, encourages active living and is multi-functional, inclusive, and accessible.
 - Parks and amenities are equitably distributed and well maintained.
 - Expand the variety of experiences and activities within the parks and open spaces system.
 - Parks and open spaces offer a wide variety of activity spaces that contribute to the health and wellness of residents and engage youth and children.
 - Improve and maximize the utility of existing sports amenities.
 - Encourage community gardening and local food production by providing multigenerational, collaborative opportunities for learning and growing.
 - Parks and amenities are easy to find and well-connected by pedestrian and cycling routes.
- **Celebrate Victoria:** Special places and amenities in the parks and open spaces system animate the city and support events for residents and visitors.
 - Parks and open spaces highlight Victoria's unique features and character, and support arts, culture, and tourism.
- **Strengthen partnerships:** Community members, stewards, and partners help enhance all parks and open spaces in the city.
 - Collaborate with owners of public green space, other partners, and volunteers throughout the city to maximize community benefits.
- **Maintain and enhance the Urban Forest:** The urban forest, habitat, and native ecosystems are maintained and enhanced per the directions in the *Urban Forest Master Plan*.

Key Directions for Parks and Open Spaces

- Through the future expansion of parks or the development of park improvement plans, consider the following community priorities:
 - Creating a water or spray park and/or other water features that help draw people to and animate the space in a park in the north-central neighbourhoods of Victoria.
 - Incorporating more benches, tables, and sheltered areas for weather protection and seasonal comfort in parks and public open spaces.
 - Incorporating public washrooms and drinking fountain facilities.
- Through parks and facilities planning and partnership, seek to locate indoor and outdoor spaces for Indigenous gathering and cultural practice within the central neighbourhoods of the city.
- Through planning for arts and culture facilities and implementation of the Music Strategy, consider the location of an outdoor space designed to accommodate small-scale, outdoor music performance in the northern/central neighbourhoods of Victoria, complementing the Cameron Bandshell at Beacon Hill Park.

- Seek opportunities to enhance or expand Haegert Park including through redevelopment, land acquisition, street closures (see Mobility section) and/or a park improvement plan that considers the community priorities noted above.
- Consider future enhancements to Stevenson Park through a park improvement plan that considers the community priorities noted above in addition to the following:
 - Preserving and enhancing the skate park adjacent to the community centre.
- Consider future enhancements to Gower Park that considers the community priorities noted above in addition to the following:
 - Improving the landscaping.
 - Supporting mobility connections through the park.
 - Design features and space planning that better connects the park to Fernwood Square (e.g., seating areas that can be used freely by residents as well as restaurant and café patrons).
- Consider future enhancements to Alexander Park through a park improvement plan that considers the community priorities noted above in addition to the following:
 - Improving management of pet zones.
 - Improving drainage.
- Consider future enhancements to Pandora Green / Harris Green and consider ideas developed during the Pandora Green Charrette.
- Support community initiatives to explore opportunities to create small green spaces, pockets of nature or food production on underused lands, including through placemaking programs and the *Growing in the City* program.
- Consider both community-led or City-led improvements to Fernwood Square, including temporary and permanent placemaking features like moveable tables, improved weather protection, improved drainage, and other design features (see Public Realm and Placemaking section).
- Better connect green spaces to one another and to areas of higher-density housing through new greenways (see Mobility section).
- Work with the Greater Victoria School District to continue to consider publicly accessible uses on the Vic High grounds through partnerships between the City, the District and/or the Community. Work with the School District to enhance and program the Spring Ridge Common space for community use and enjoyment.
- Identify opportunities for daylighting or celebrating Rock Bay Creek, focusing on public spaces (considering how daylighting would interact with other uses of these spaces), large sites that might redevelop in the future, and streets (Haultain Street, Blackwood Street, Kings Road).

Principles for Community Facilities

- Continue to support the current and evolving needs of the diverse population in Fernwood including households of all ages, incomes, family types and lifestyles.

Key Directions for Community Facilities

- Through facilities planning and partnership, seek to locate indoor and outdoor spaces for Indigenous gathering and cultural practice within the central neighbourhoods of the city.
- Continue to work with the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group and the Fernwood Community Association to sustain and enhance community programming, services, and facilities that meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Work with the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resources Group in exploring the potential redevelopment and enhancement of the Fernwood Community Centre, including opportunities to co-locate affordable housing and additional community amenities like youth and childcare spaces.

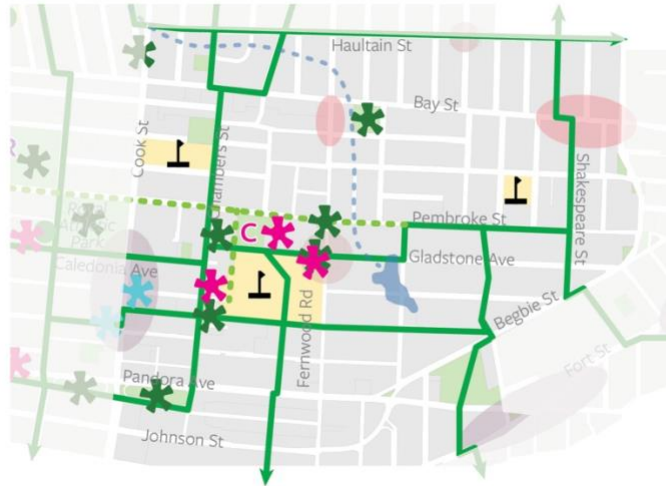
- Seek an indoor community amenity space with the proposed rezoning for affordable and mixed-income housing west of Vic High, with access to outdoor spaces.
- Work with the School District to make school facilities more broadly available for community programming, sports, and indoor and outdoor gathering.
- Support community organizations and groups to prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion in their services and engagement with the community, in line with the City's emerging equity framework.

Principles for Local Food Systems

- Build on the strong network of community food systems in Fernwood to reflect the values of food security and sustainability.
- Continue to support opportunities to grow, access, and learn about food close to home and encourage the prioritization of equity, diversity and inclusion in food, cooking, and gardening programs.

Key Directions for Local Food Systems

- Support the planned enhancement of the Compost Education Centre and encourage ongoing community access and public education.
- Support community-led efforts to enhance or establish additional community gardens including allotment gardens, native plantings, pollinator gardens or community orchards through the *Growing in the City* program and other placemaking programs.
- Support community programs to distribute food and enhance food security, including "Good Food Boxes", community supported agriculture, and others.
- As part of any expansion in community facilities, support additional capacity for commercial kitchen uses and space for family meal programs, community teas and other social connections around food (e.g., "Family Dinners," cooking programs, or social enterprises).
- Support the development and enhancement of public spaces that includes opportunities to share, sell, and grow food.
- Support further exploration of local food systems improvements through community-led planning, including a *Community-Led Action* process, if there is interest.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|---|
|  | Designated Greenway |  | Park |
|  | Proposed Greenway |  | Open Space |
|  | Community Centre |  | Plaza or Formalized Public Space (Proposed) |
|  | Recreation Centre |  | Community Use Space (Proposed) |
|  | Arena |  | Desired Enhancement to Park or Open Space |
|  | Existing Public School |  | Rock Bay Creek |

Map 11: Desired Parks, Open Spaces, Community Facilities and Greenways enhancements

How We'll Get There

Implementation Steps for **Parks, Facilities, and Community Assets**

<p>Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan Update the Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the community objectives and draft directions herein.</p>
<p>Consider Opportunities for Community Gardens Consider additional gardens through the City's community-led, city-supported food systems initiatives, as well as consideration of a City-initiated, community-managed garden within the city.</p>
<p>Seek Dedicated Cultural Spaces for Indigenous Residents As opportunities arise, seek partnerships to create cultural spaces for Indigenous residents in the centre of the region.</p>
<p>Consider Opportunities Through a Parks Acquisition and Development Plan Continue to explore opportunities for land acquisition or access to greenspace for public use, through a park acquisition/development plan, or as opportunities arise (including through major rezonings or partnerships).</p>
<p>Support a Community-led Action Process If there is desire from community organizations, introduce a Community-led Action Process to identify additional community priorities and strategies with funding and support identified by the organizations (e.g. local food and placemaking projects).</p>
<p>Work with the School District for Community Use in Open Spaces Work with the Greater Victoria School District to continue to consider publicly accessible uses on the Vic High grounds and to enhance and program Spring Ridge Common through partnerships between the City, the District, and/or the community.</p>