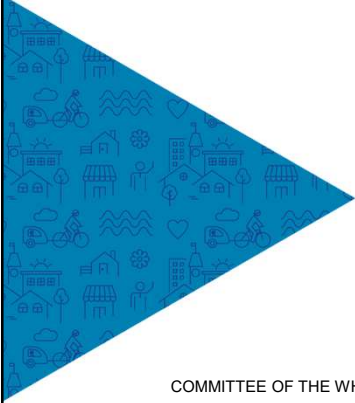



2022 | CITY OF VICTORIA | SUSTAINABLE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

# Downtown Core Area Plan – Design Guidelines

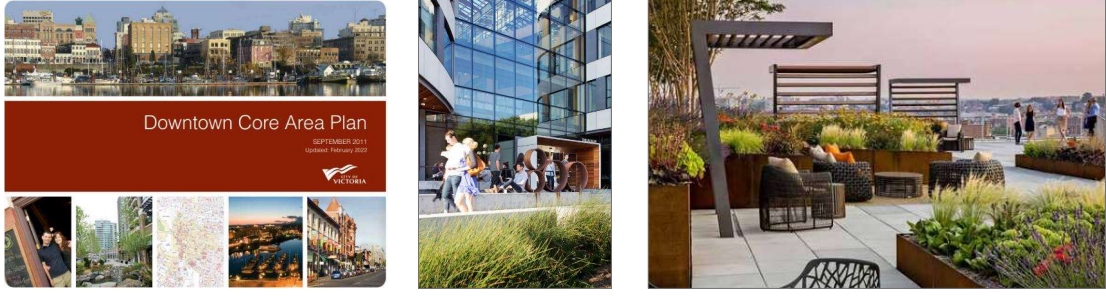
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE FEBRUARY 17, 2022




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## Purpose

- Present updated Downtown Core Area Plan (2022) and related Official Community Plan amendment bylaw



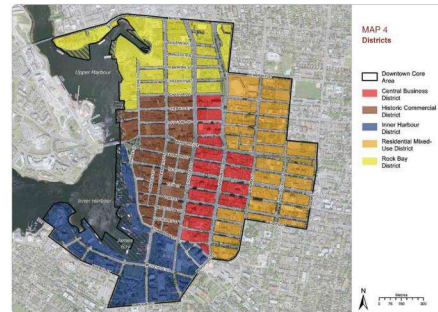
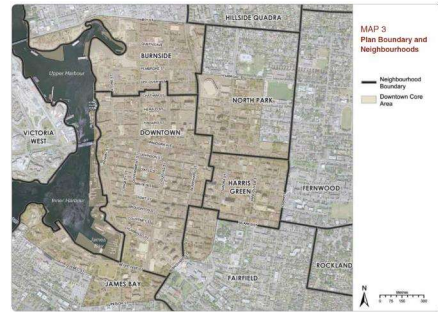
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## Background

- DCAP approved September 2011
- Developed to accommodate forecast growth while maintaining a strong office core (CBD)
- 30-year neighbourhood plan for Downtown and Harris Green
- Additional policy guidance in conjunction with neighbourhood plans for portions of Burnside, North Park, Fairfield and James Bay

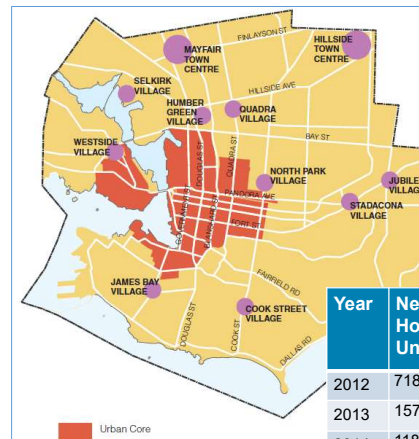


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## Background

- Downtown Core Area encompasses most of Urban Core (OCP)
- Residential growth in Urban Core exceeding OCP target (50%)
- Increased liveability concerns
- Project plan approved May 2020 to update guidelines
- Maintain land use policies (e.g. height and density)



Year	New Housing Units	City wide Share
2012	718	73%
2013	157	33%
2014	118	33%
2015	833	81%
2016	493	67%
2017	651	78%
2018	858	62%
2019	316	53%

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## Design Guidelines - Application

- Apply to development permits and heritage alteration permits as per Local Government Act (LGA)
- Evaluation tool for Council and staff
- Guide the exterior **'form and character'** of new buildings, additions or retrofits to existing buildings:
  - Building massing, bulk and orientation
  - Landscaping
  - Materials and finishes
- Guidelines differ from land use policies and zoning regulations
- DCAP design guidelines contained in Appendices

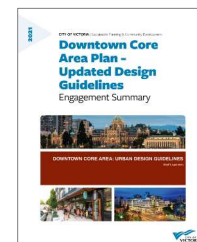
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## Project Engagement

- Aligned with City's Engagement Framework
- Initial stakeholder meetings
- Working Group - communities, development industry, design and heritage professionals
- *Have Your Say* - project webpage (Public)
- Virtual Engagement and Survey - feedback on draft DCAP
- Advisory Committee meetings
- Community Association meetings



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## What We Heard

- Survey hosted on Have Your Say webpage (April 12 – May 7, 2021)
- Advertised through community associations, stakeholder organizations, working group, email, social media, and City website
- Survey web page visited by 1153 people of which 109 completed the survey
- Strong level of support (approx. 70%-80%) by respondents that new guidelines will effectively achieve the DCAP design objectives and improve overall liveability within the Downtown Core Area

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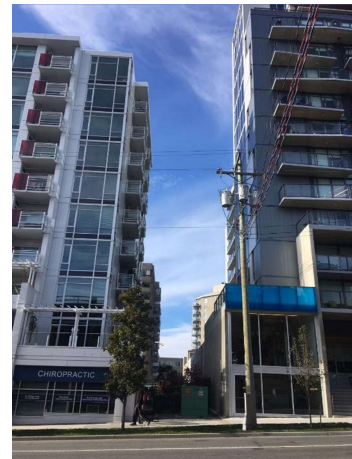
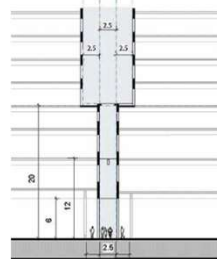


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## Current Issues

### Building Separation

- Tall buildings with large floor plates and insufficient building separation creates impacts on liveability (sunlight access and shadowing)



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## Current Issues

### Building Bulk and Massing

- Large upper storey floor plates and minimal side setbacks create bulkier buildings along the street
- Reduced liveability and privacy between buildings



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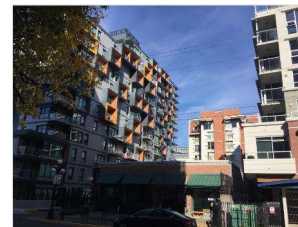


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## Current Issues

### Challenging Sites

- Undersized or residual parcels create challenges for applying guidelines to tall buildings
- Windows and balconies with minimal side yard clearance
- Creates false expectation for achieving maximum building height and density



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## Proposed Improvements

### Human scaled streetscapes and facades

- Perimeter block pattern - well defined streets, active edges and interesting and varied building facades
- Reflects the established built form and street wall pattern of the downtown



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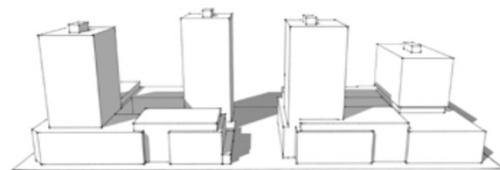


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## Proposed Improvements

### Built Form and Livability

- Vertically proportioned buildings with increased tower separation, side and rear setbacks
- Improved sunlight access and privacy for residential units
- Floorplate sizes reflect functional needs of commercial office uses
- Minimum parcel sizes:
  - 1400 sq m (Corner lots)
  - 1600 sq m (Interior lots)



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## Proposed Improvements Balconies and Patios

- Encourage integration of useable balconies and other private outdoor spaces
- Designed for usability, comfort, and building performance



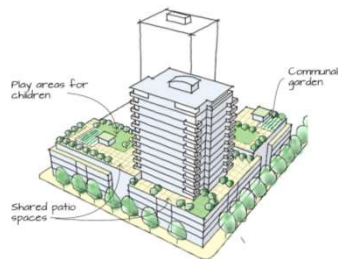
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## Proposed Improvements Outdoor Common Spaces

- Available for all building residents
- Encourage social interaction, play and urban food production



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## Proposed Improvements POPS (Privately Owned Public Spaces)

- Compact open spaces (e.g., patio plaza, atrium, green space, through-block walkways)
- Extension of the public open space network



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## Proposed Improvements Universal Accessibility

High standard of accessibility with (exterior) site, building and landscape design

- Building interiors and on-site exterior open spaces regulated through BC Building Code
- Guidelines reflect CSA Accessible Design for the Built Environment standards
- Guidelines provided to Accessibility Advisory Committee (October 2021)



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## Proposed Improvements High Performance Buildings

- Guidelines encourage high performance building forms
- Compatibility with Step Code in balance with form and character design goals



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## Proposed Improvements Bird-Friendly Building Design

- Specialized guidelines to mitigate bird strikes
- Incorporate 'best practices' appropriate for local urban context
- Focus on building design, treatment of glass surfaces, lighting, visual cues, and placement of landscaping
- Guidelines reviewed by *Safe Wings* organization



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## Proposed Improvements Inner Harbour and Heritage

- Ensure new buildings complement and reinforce the character and context of the Inner Harbour
- Maintain visual prominence of landmark historic buildings
- Specialized guidelines for new buildings adjacent to heritage buildings and additions to heritage buildings (outside of Old Town)



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## Interpretation and Use

- Address key urban design topics
- Clear statements of design intent
- Design strategies for achieving intent
- Responsive to individual context; unique site conditions, opportunities and constraints
- Foster design innovation, creativity and excellence on a case-by-case basis

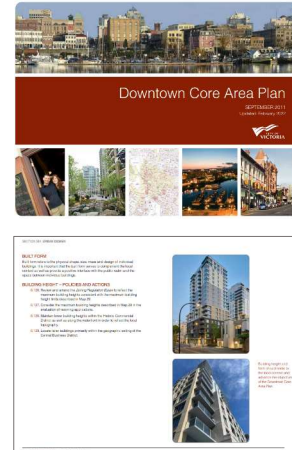


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## Other Updates to DCAP

- Updated maps
- Replaced conceptual illustrations with photos
- Updated reference to City policies (e.g., Downtown Public Realm Strategy, Go Victoria, Urban Forest Master Plan)
- Consolidated design guidelines from eight into four appendices
- Consolidated sidewalk width guidelines



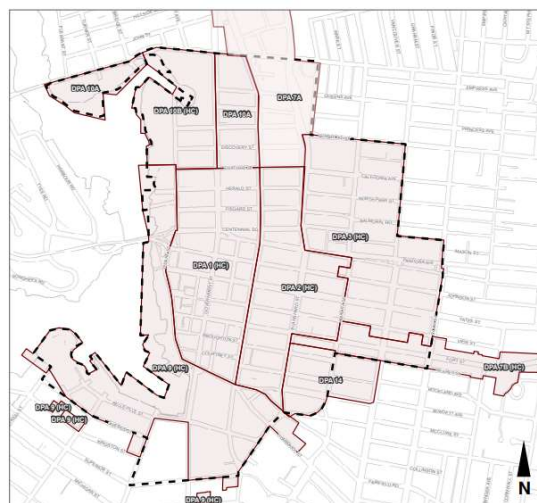
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## OCP Amendment Bylaw

- Implementation requires OCP amendments to the following:
  - DPA 1 (HC): Core Historic
  - DPA 2 (HC): Core Business
  - DPA 3 (HC): Core Mixed-Use Residential
  - DPA 7A: Corridors
  - DPA 7B: Corridors Heritage
  - DPA 9 (HC): Inner Harbour
  - DPA 10A: Rock Bay
  - DPA 10B (HC): Rock Bay Heritage
  - DPA 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct



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## OCP Amendment Bylaw

- OCP bylaw will take effect three months after approval
- Allows existing DP applications to be processed under current guidelines
- Allows forthcoming applications to be adjusted to align with new guidelines
- Avoids potential conflicts with new guidelines
- New guidelines will apply to all new applications received after OCP bylaw approval

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## Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 2018

- Amendments required to align development regulations with new guidelines:
  - Remove 5:1 angle of inclination (results in multiple upper storey step-backs)
  - Update (increased) side and rear setbacks for commercial and residential buildings



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## Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve the Downtown Core Area Plan (2022)
2. Receive feedback on OCP bylaw for information
3. Give 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings to OCP amendment bylaw prior to public hearing
4. Direct staff to report back with amendments to Zoning Bylaw 2018

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