



**Committee of the Whole Report
For the Meeting of February 22, 2018**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** February 8, 2018
From: Jonathan Tinney, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: Council Workshop - Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct staff to prepare a revised Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, including revisions outlined in Table 1 of this report, in response to feedback from the community and any additional feedback from Council.
2. Conduct expanded community engagement on the next version of the plan and proposed Official Community Plan amendments needed to align with the draft plan.
3. Refer the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and associated design guidelines to the Advisory Design Panel and the Heritage Advisory Panel for comment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, report on community feedback received to date, and seek direction from Council on certain plan directions and next phases in the process. In the spring of 2016, a process was launched to develop a new neighbourhood plan for the Fairfield neighbourhood involving residents, business owners and community groups. Over the course of the last 28 months, more than 30 events were held to identify neighbourhood-specific goals, key planning issues and emerging directions. The mostly workshop-based events involved over 1,500 people, and three surveys received 1,450 responses. Two additional phases were added to the original process to seek more engagement and clarity on issues.

Staff have prepared a draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (Attachment A) based on input from the broader community, and the Emerging Directions for the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan approved by Council in September 2017.

Key directions in the draft plan include:

- more future housing accommodated in the northwest
- mixed-use development up to four storeys in Cook Street Village, with a diversity of housing on surrounding blocks
- design guidelines for Cook Street Village and direction for future streetscape improvements
- policy directions for any future redevelopment of Ross Bay Village (Fairfield Plaza), encouraging a walkable village hub with shops, services and 3-4 storey mixed-use buildings and townhouses

- mixed-use buildings and improved public spaces in small urban villages
- retention, investment and retrofits of older rental apartment buildings encouraged
- more options for secondary suites, including in duplexes, small lot houses, and some townhouses
- townhouses on lots of suitable size envisioned in certain locations:
 - single row: near small urban villages and larger corner lots
 - 1-2 rows: near Cook Street Village and north of Fairfield Plaza
- completing neighbourhood pedestrian and cycling routes
- guidance for future park and waterfront planning.

The Fairfield community was invited to review the draft plan from November 10, 2017 to mid-January 2018 through a series of online and in-person opportunities. Engagement results show moderate to good support for many of the directions in the draft plan, with concerns or diverging perspectives on certain issues such as housing types in traditional residential areas, Cook Street Village design, heritage conservation areas, Ross Bay Village, rental housing retention and cycling facilities. Concerns have also been expressed regarding the plan's engagement process, including requests for an extension to the project timeline and additional community engagement opportunities.

In order to proceed with preparing a revised draft plan, staff are seeking Council's direction on several key policy issues (Attachment B), as well as upcoming steps for the plan process. Staff have provided options and recommendations for Council's consideration. Subject to Council's direction, the draft plan will be revised to incorporate community and Council feedback, and a revised plan and proposed Official Community Plan amendments will be presented to the community for review in late spring 2018.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and community feedback received to date, and to seek feedback from Council on the draft plan and proposed next steps.

BACKGROUND

In October 2015, Council directed staff to initiate a new, accelerated approach to neighbourhood planning. In the spring of 2016, a process was launched to develop a new neighbourhood plan for the Fairfield neighbourhood.

Phase 1: Pre-Planning (April – June 2016)

- community meeting to launch project (90 participants)
- collaboration with a working group to identify key values, confirm process and engagement approach and identify key planning issues that the plan should address.

Phase 2: Imagine (June – October 2016)

Numerous joint engagement events were held to identify planning issues for Gonzales and Fairfield and develop neighbourhood-specific goals and a vision for each neighbourhood. Opportunities for input included an on-line survey (354 responses), community workshop (100 participants), pop-ups at community events, sounding boards (1190 ideas) and citizen-led meetings (3).

Phase 3: Co-Create (October 2016 – September 2017)

A series of 10 workshops were held in late fall of 2016 to further explore key planning issues and identify early direction for the neighbourhood plan for topics including urban villages, infill housing, parks, transportation and heritage. Approximately 275 people participated.

To seek broader participation and more clarity on community preferences for neighbourhood housing growth, infill housing and heritage conservation areas, two additional opportunities for input were added to the planning process in April-May 2017 which included:

- on-line survey (770 responses)
- two information sessions (100 people).

Building on the results of the on-line survey and earlier feedback, a two-day design workshop (charrette) was held in June 2017 to develop guiding principles and design concepts for five different sub-areas in Fairfield.

- Design workshop (33 participants)
- Public “pin-up” open house to review draft design concepts (70 people).

On September 21, 2017, Council approved Emerging Directions for the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan as a basis for preparing the draft plan. The directions were based on the results of community engagement, the design workshop, technical analysis and other inputs over the previous year, and included a recommended growth model for Fairfield.

Phase 4: Draft Plan (September 2017 – present)

The community was invited to provide feedback on the draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan from November 10, 2017 to mid-January, 2018. The intent of engagement was to receive feedback on the content of the draft plan and determine whether the plan reflects the community’s vision for the future.

The engagement process for the draft plan was designed with input from the Neighbourhood Working Group. In response to concerns about engaging near winter holidays, the period was extended to 10 weeks with events designed to take advantage of the season. An on-line survey and themed events were designed to include hard to reach groups including renters, families and seniors.

The plan was advertised through a mail-out to Fairfield homes and businesses (8,200 addresses), email (600 person distribution list), signs in prominent locations, posters, social media, community networks and a community launch breakfast with neighbourhood leaders (46 participants).

Staff used a variety of formats, venues and techniques to communicate the contents of the plan and engage with the neighbourhood:

- an on-line survey (320 responses)
- three open houses (204 participants)
- a pop-up for families with children at Fairfield Community Place daycare (20 participants)
- afternoon tea at Cook Street Activity Centre (20 participants)
- renters forum (20 participants)
- a pop-up at Ross Bay pub (60 participants)
- four “Pizza and a Planner” living room meetings hosted by community members (65 participants) and Sir James Douglas School Parent Advisory Council (20 participants)

- Cook Street Village Business Association meeting (15 participants)
- presentation to the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association (150 participants)
- small meetings upon request.

The community was also invited to submit feedback by email. Over 100 submissions were received.

There has also been significant community-led engagement on the plan, most notably through the new Cook Street Village Residents Association.

Key Directions of the Draft Plan

The key directions in the *Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, November 2018* (Attachment A) were based on the Emerging Directions approved by Council in September 2017. They are described in a brochure mailed to all residences and businesses (Attachment C), and include:

- accommodate more future housing in the northwest
- mixed-use development up to four storeys in Cook Street Village, with a diversity of housing on surrounding blocks
- design guidelines for Cook Street Village and direction for future streetscape improvements
- if Fairfield Plaza redevelops, encouraging a walkable village hub with shops, services and 3-4 storey mixed-use buildings and townhouses
- mixed-use buildings and improved public spaces in small urban villages
- encourage the retention, investment and retrofits of older rental apartment buildings
- allow more options for secondary suites, including in duplexes and small lot houses, and some townhouses
- add more family-sized housing with townhouses or rowhouses on lots of sufficient size near Cook Street Village, north of Fairfield Plaza, along Fairfield Road and on larger corner lots
- completing neighbourhood pedestrian and cycling routes
- guidance for future park and waterfront planning.

The draft plan also includes a proposed action plan (Chapter 14) to inform future work plan priorities and capital budget processes.

Draft *Design Guidelines for Cook Street Village* (Attachment D) were developed based on community input and available for community review along with the draft plan. Additional development permit areas and proposed guidelines (with Fairfield-specific content) will be identified and proposed for Council's consideration prior to engagement on the revised draft plan.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Community Feedback: Draft Plan Content

Results from the survey and open house suggest moderate to good support for many directions in the draft plan, along with specific concerns and different perspectives on several issues. Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents and 81% of open house participants were very, or somewhat, supportive of the overall draft plan. Quantitative results indicate over 50% support in the on-line survey and at open houses for most of the plan's directions. Qualitative results from survey comments, meetings, conversations at events and email submissions helped to elaborate and provide deeper understanding of community concerns.

Generally, there was stronger support for directions related to new design guidelines, urban forest, and planning for the waterfront. Support was milder, or mixed, for other infill housing types in

traditional residential areas, design of large urban village areas, heritage conservation areas, Ross Bay Urban Village, rental housing retention and cycling facilities.

A summary of feedback on the draft plan is provided in Attachment E, and detailed synthesis of all feedback by theme is provided in Attachment F. Raw feedback is included in Attachment G.

Key Policy Issues and Potential Revisions

In order to proceed with more detailed analysis and proposed revisions, staff are seeking direction from Council on 12 key issues where community sentiment is substantially divided and where Council input into future policy directions will be required.

These key issues are presented in a matrix in Attachment B for Council's consideration as the basis of this workshop. The 12 issues do not represent a complete list of feedback received, nor potential revisions to be made to the draft plan. Staff will review feedback in detail and consider the full suite of revisions following the Council workshop. For the next round of engagement, staff will prepare a detailed synthesis of what was heard on the draft plan and how this feedback was considered in revisions to the draft plan.

Table 1. Twelve Key Policy Issues Identified through Community Feedback on the Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (see Attachment B for more detailed version of table, with explanation and considerations)

Key Issues from Community Feedback	Recommended Next Steps/ Revisions
1. Infill housing menu for traditional residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remove option for double-row townhouses in housing sub-area 4 (near Ross Bay Village). b. Retain other options for infill housing in draft plan c. Staff review and consideration of additional parking and open space requirements (e.g. additional parking space required if more than one unit on a lot) d. Incorporate open space guidelines into development of additional design guidelines for infill housing (2018-2020).
2. Townhouses near Ross Bay Village ("sub-area 4")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remove "sub-area 4" as a distinct area; would become part of sub-area 1 (General Area). b. As per sub-area 1, remove option for townhouses in more than one row. Support other infill housing options indicated for sub-area 1. Single-row townhouses would be considered on suitably-sized lots adjacent to villages and larger corner lots (same as sub-area 1). c. Re-instate option for small lot house development in this area.
3. Urban place designation west of Cook Street Village (Cook Street to Heywood Street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support "gentle density" approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. re-instate OCP designations for traditional residential areas but expand option for larger houseplexes (4+ units), emphasize adaptation of heritage properties, ground-oriented housing up to three storeys, and creative housing on laneways in this area ii. retain option for single or double-row townhouses in area iii. add new policy to consider other new and innovative housing types that meet plan objectives iv. consider reduced parking requirements for houseplexes with more than 3 units in this area.

Key Issues from Community Feedback	Recommended Next Steps/ Revisions
4. Infill housing east of Cook Street Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support “gentle density” approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. East Village sub-area (Cook Street to Chester Street): expand option for larger houseplexes (4+ units), emphasize adaptation of heritage properties, ground-oriented housing up to three storeys, and creative housing on laneways in this area. Retain option for single or double-row townhouses; review site requirements to consider feedback ii. Sub-area 3: expand option for larger houseplexes (4+ units), emphasize adaptation of heritage properties, ground-oriented housing up to 2.5 storeys, and creative housing on laneways in this area. Retain option for single or double-row townhouses; review site requirements to consider feedback iii. add new policy to consider other creative, innovative housing types that meet plan objectives iv. consider reduced parking requirements for houseplexes with more than 3 units in this area.
5. Accommodate larger share of Fairfield’s growth through “gentle density”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage more gentle density in traditional residential areas around Cook Street Village and along Fairfield Road (sub-area 2), option for larger houseplexes (4+ units), emphasizing adaptation of heritage properties and creative laneway housing b. Continue to support other housing types as proposed in the plan; review site requirements, open space and parking policies to consider feedback.
6. Design of Cook Street Village built form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Detailed review of plan policies and guidelines by staff to consider additional adjustments/revisions based on feedback (e.g. character, setbacks, massing, street wall, shading, impacts to street trees, transitions) through additional urban design analysis. To be incorporated in next version of plan.
7. Design of Cook Street Village streetscape and cycling infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand design principles in plan based on community feedback (e.g. recognize Lekwungen history, shading, character, lighting, community gathering, slowing traffic, artistic elements) b. Broaden scope of AAA cycling route design to an Integrated Streetscape Plan for Cook Street Village, pending budget approval, to include sidewalks, boulevards, street trees, on-street parking, loading, public spaces and connections to neighbourhood destinations (2021 design; 2022 implementation). c. Parking management strategy for Cook Street Village area identified as short-term action.
8. Effectiveness of rental retention area policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct additional analysis of policies related to density bonus (8.1.3.) through development of City-wide inclusionary housing policy b. Consider if neighbourhood specific policies are needed following Market Rental Revitalization Strategy and development of inclusionary housing policy (2018).
9. Northwest corner and Fort Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain direction in plan, with staff review for potential refinements for location of heights, commercial uses in certain locations, and public space impacts.

Key Issues from Community Feedback	Recommended Next Steps/ Revisions
10. Design concept for Ross Bay Urban Village (Fairfield Plaza)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain direction in plan, with revisions to land use and design policies to address concerns regarding transition and parking b. Develop site-specific design guidelines, with focus on transition to surrounding properties c. Remove images, to avoid concept being misconstrued as a development application.
11. Identification of potential heritage conservation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remove reference to specific street names/areas in plan policies (10.2.3). b. Reword to reinforce citizen-initiated efforts to establish heritage conservation areas.
12. Topics outside scope of neighbourhood plan	<p>[Desire for plan to provide more detailed policies for topics that either fall outside the scope of a neighbourhood plan or are being addressed through other City-wide initiatives (e.g. parking standards, urban forest, climate change, green buildings, stormwater management, affordable housing, all ages and abilities cycling routes, community amenity contributions, development process).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue approach where neighbourhood plan provides general direction for these topics, with more detail provided by other initiatives b. Continue to share community feedback with relevant staff. Continue to make reference to concurrent and upcoming City-wide initiatives in neighbourhood plan.

Community Feedback on Engagement Process

A significant amount of feedback was received regarding the engagement process for the neighbourhood plan. Key issues include:

- desire for more time, information, demographic/housing data, and more opportunities for draft plan engagement, particularly for area around Ross Bay Village (housing sub-area 4)
- desire for more detailed information on proposed housing types for different areas to be included in engagement materials
- some frustration with engagement techniques used to date (some want town hall meetings; others want more collaborative discussions)
- confusion about status of neighbourhood plan; many understand it to be a City-initiated rezoning or similar to a development application.

Engagement techniques were targeted to reach a broad audience, including harder to reach groups such as renters, families with children and seniors. While detailed demographic information is not collected at engagement events, the survey provides a snapshot of participation in the draft plan review:

- 83% from Fairfield, 11% from Gonzales
- 84% homeowners, 16% renters
- 11% Fairfield business owners

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Plan Process Next Steps

The Fairfield neighbourhood plan process was launched in 2016. Community engagement has been central to this process, with various opportunities and substantial feedback received at all stages. During the draft plan stage, some expressed a desire for more time, information and opportunities for engagement through the neighbourhood plan process.

To address these concerns, and the needs of other forthcoming neighbourhood plans, staff have identified two options for Council's consideration. The engagement approach for all options will focus on providing better information about the purpose of the plan and simplifying complex land use concepts. Engagement in next round would focus on confirming whether the revised plan meets the residents' vision for the future.

Option 1:

Direct staff to prepare a revised plan based on feedback from the community and Council, and provide expanded engagement opportunities for the next version of the plan and proposed OCP amendments, in spring. Engagement opportunities are recommended to include open houses with presentations, an online survey and dialogue-based area-specific events, including opportunity for community-organized events. **(Recommended)**

Pros:

This option acknowledges the considerable amount of feedback and community participation on the draft plan to date, and allows revisions to be made based on this feedback before undertaking additional engagement. Engagement techniques would be broadened to include additional events (in addition to the open house and online surveys originally envisioned). The next neighbourhoods to have their neighbourhood plans updated are North Park, Fernwood, Jubilee and Rockland, including the Fort Street and Oak Bay Avenue corridors. Under this option, these neighbourhood plans would be launched in spring 2018.

Cons:

This option may not address concerns that the process is moving too quickly. There will need to be limits on the amount of dialogue-based events so that staff can commence upcoming neighbourhood plans. While detailed planning work is still underway, staff anticipate completing "pre-planning", and other early phases where issues and opportunities are identified, for the next neighbourhoods by July 2018. More robust engagement for the Fairfield plan may defer some engagement activities for the next four plans until September, following summer holidays.

Option 2:

Pause the Fairfield neighbourhood planning process, proceed with the next scheduled neighbourhoods, and resume Fairfield planning when other neighbourhood plans are completed.

Fairfield's large size, distinct sub-areas and mix of community perspectives may make it suitable to an extended process; however, extending the project timeline for Fairfield would impact other neighbourhoods waiting to initiate their plans. Under this option, planning for Fairfield would be paused and resumed after the remaining seven neighbourhood plans are complete (approximately 2021). Staff would work with the Fairfield community at that point to identify what existing content should be retained or revisited.

Pros:

This approach would provide additional, unconstrained time for the planning process, and could be re-oriented to a community development-based approach best-suited to a longer process. Additionally, it would allow detailed design for the Cook Street Village streetscape and an all ages and abilities network to be undertaken as part of the neighbourhood plan. City-wide initiatives for housing, urban forest, waterfront and climate change would be complete prior to neighbourhood planning, and allow development of more focused Fairfield-specific policies for these issues. Development applications would continue to be evaluated using the Official Community Plan (OCP), the Humboldt Valley Precinct Plan and the Cathedral Hill Precinct Plan. The next four neighbourhoods scheduled to receive neighbourhood plan updates can commence in spring 2018, with completion of the Issues and Opportunities phase by July 2018.

Cons:

Substantial work has already been completed, and the status and validity of this work would be unclear after a several years' pause. This approach may impact community relationships as members of the community may be frustrated if the plan is paused given the time and energy they have given to participating in the process to date. This option delays refinements to the OCP and clarity on future land use issues sought by the community.

Accessibility Impact Statement

The neighbourhood plan contains a number of policies that will make public spaces more accessible for people of all abilities, including improving pedestrian crossings, sidewalks and trails.

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

This milestone in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process supports Strategic Plan, Objective 3: Strive for Excellence in Planning and Land Use, which contains actions and outcomes to undertake local area planning focused on urban villages and transportation corridors.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Impacts to the Financial Plan will be outlined for Council when the proposed Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, including the final Action Plan, are presented to Council for consideration.

Adding additional engagement events to the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan process (as noted in Option 1) will have an impact to the Financial Plan as additional budget estimated in an amount up to \$11,000 to cover engagement-related costs would be needed. Pausing neighbourhood planning in Fairfield and resuming in future years (as noted in Option 2) would require additional budget to be considered in future budget processes and may require as much as \$75,000 if a completely new process is initiated.


Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Preparation of a new Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan is consistent with the OCP, which provides planning direction for ground-oriented housing, small urban villages, a transportation network, heritage, and other policy areas. Some policies may require amendments to the OCP to align the two plans, such as land-use designations and new development permit areas. Proposed OCP amendments will be brought forward to Council prior to consultation on the proposed final Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

The draft Fairfield neighbourhood plan represents an important milestone. Throughout the process there has been shared community agreement and vision on many issues, as well as different perspectives on others. The draft plan builds on this earlier feedback and Council direction to propose policies related to housing, urban villages, waterfront, transportation and other topics. Engagement results show moderate to good support for most of the draft plan's directions, with concerns or different opinions on certain issues. Some have called for an extension to the project timeline and undertake additional community engagement on the draft plan. Following Council's direction, staff will proceed with preparing a revised plan and undertaking additional engagement.

Respectfully submitted,


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Alt.

Jonathan Tinney, Director
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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Feb 15, 2018

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, November 2017
- Attachment B: Workshop Matrix: Key issues and proposed revisions/next steps
- Attachment C: Fairfield Key Directions brochure, November 2017
- Attachment D: Draft Design Guidelines for Cook Street Village, November 2017
- Attachment E: Engagement summary of feedback on draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
- Attachment F: Synthesis of feedback on the draft plan, by theme
- Attachment G: Raw feedback on draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan