

October 13, 2017

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Attention: Mayor and Council

Dear Mayor and Council.

Victoria West Draft Neighbourhood Plan

The Victoria West Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) hosted a community meeting on October 10, 2017 to consider the Draft Neighbourhood Plan that has been presented to Victoria West for commentary and feedback. The meeting was attended by thirty people. Proceedings included a brief power point presentation outlining the highlights of the draft plan by City of Victoria staff, Kristina Bouris and Malcolm McLean, followed by a lengthy question and answer period which was co-moderated by CALUC chair, Sean Dance, and VWCA president, Justine Semmens.

This letter collates feedback gathered by the Victoria West CALUC from community members at the meeting:

General comments:

- The plan does not go far enough in addressing the affordability crisis in the neighbourhood and region, more generally.
- The capacity analysis requires further study and clarification and ought to be considered as part of the draft plan.
- Some residents supported the changes that the draft plan proposes in order to encourage and permit the neighbourhood to move into the future.
- There is a strong desire to maintain the “identity” of the community. One respondent suggested that the draft plan threatens “to destroy our traditional neighbourhood”; it “is a threat to the sense of community we have.”
- The draft plan does not seem to take the OCP into account.
- The draft plan and OCP identify Vic West for increased densification. Amenities to compensate and provide appropriate resources to accommodate forecasted increases to population.
- Several residents commented that later stage consultation and engagement process was insufficient and did not match the engagement process that was initiated last autumn.
- The draft plan does not present a bold enough vision of ecological and environmental planning to address climate change.

- The increased income that the City earns from taxation on the densified neighbourhood does not result in a proportional investment in amenities.
- There seems to insufficient planning for the construction of appropriate school space.

Comments collated vis-à-vis Housing:

- The draft plan promotes necessary densification.
- The draft plan does not clarify the ratio of Single Family Homes targeted for replacement in the next 25 years.
- Some residents commented that large lot densification diminishes predictability of occupancy and maximum number of units per development.
- There was concern about the impact of one- and two-row townhouse complexes on the streetscape and street density of the traditional neighbourhood. Several residents worried that promoting these types of developments would prioritize large-developer rather than small- and owner-occupied construction, which might have a detrimental effect on streetscape character and general affordability.
- Clarity is required on the City's understanding of the impacts that redevelopment may have on affordability.
- Concern for the impacts on sunlight and sky views resulting from three storey complexes proposed for zoning relaxations along Skinner and Wilson Streets.

Comments collated vis-à-vis Traffic and Transportation:

- One respondent intimated that the draft plan requires further clarification on transportation priorities for addressing existing and future traffic load on the Johnson Street and Bay Street bridges.
- With proposed neighbourhood densification and regional population increases, especially in the Western Communities, which transit through the neighbourhood, what is the forecasted aggregate traffic analysis and how does the draft plan aim to tackle increased commuter load?
- Parking is already problematic, how does the draft plan aim to address increased pressure on parking availability?

Comments collated vis-à-vis Parks, green spaces, and urban food production:

- The neighbourhood plan should clarify the placement of future parks and green spaces.
- The draft plan place an overemphasis on private-land food security. Public community gardens should be set aside and identified.
- Promotion of local food systems is not aggressive enough.

The general consensus was a certain level of suspicion toward the plan given the aforementioned need for clarification and further consultation and engagement on the draft neighbourhood plan prior to ratification by Mayor and Council. Of particular concern are proposals made in the draft plan to increase densification within the traditional neighbourhood, which residents felt included areas within

and along the natural boundaries created by Skinner Street, Craigflower Road, and Wilson Street. There was general support, in principal, for measures to increase affordability, the flow of people through and within the neighbourhood, the promotion of local food systems and ecological awareness in urban design and architecture.

Respectfully submitted by,



Justine Semmens
President, VWCA

Sean Dance
Chair, VWCA Land Use Committee