

Future of Fairfield: Neighbourhood Growth & New Housing

Engagement Summary

June 2017

Between April 21 and May 7, 2017, we asked the community to share their feedback on three key aspects about the future of Fairfield: neighbourhood growth, new housing types and heritage areas*. The purpose was to determine how and where Fairfield could accommodate growth and new housing over the next 30 years. We received more than 770 survey responses and more than 100 people attended the info sessions, with similar feedback received in both formats. The following summary provides an overview of what we heard about neighbourhood growth and new housing types. The full survey report and feedback from information sessions can be found at victoria.ca/fairfield.

*Note: The engagement summary for heritage areas will be posted separately as home owners in these areas were provided additional time to provide feedback on proposed heritage conservation areas.

Neighbourhood Growth

To date, we heard from Fairfield neighbours that it is important to maintain the low-rise feel of older parts of the neighbourhood while improving housing affordability and helping local businesses thrive by adding new residents close to businesses. Three different growth models were developed based on earlier feedback and presented as different options to achieve this growth. These three options were:

1. Growth in Cook Street Village
2. Growth in the Northwestern portion of Fairfield
3. Growth around Cook Street Village and some growth in Northwestern portion of Fairfield

The feedback we heard online and face-to-face for all three options was that growth should be sensitive to the ambience and character of the neighbourhood and should help make home ownership more affordable, allow older people to age in place and allow younger people to move into the area.

The strongest support was for Option 3 which directs modest future housing growth to Cook Street Village in the form of four storey mixed use buildings in the village and low-rise (3 – 4 storey) apartment buildings and townhouses on surrounding blocks. Some growth is redistributed to the northwestern portion of Fairfield.

Survey Results:

46% chose Option 3 as their first choice and an additional 35% chose it as their second choice. We heard that Option 3 is most likely to achieve the community's objectives of maintaining the unique character of Cook Street Village, support for businesses, creating an open feel on the streets while inviting new residents to the neighbourhood. While quite a few people expressed concern about any change to Cook Street Village and the surrounding area, including concerns about parking, traffic and altering the ambience, many respondents felt that Option 3 struck the best balance for the neighbourhood.

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Option 1: Growth in Cook Street Village	28.55%	25.46%	45.99%
Option 2: Growth in the northwestern portion of Fairfield	27.80%	37.48%	34.72%
Option 3: Growth around Cook Street Village and some growth in the northwestern portion of Fairfield	46.37%	34.74%	18.88%

Info Session Results

Approximately 100 people attended two information sessions that were held at different times and locations. Most participants had already, or were intending to complete the online survey. For neighbourhood growth, Option 3 received the most first place votes with 23, Option 2 received 14 and Option 1 received 12. View the full info session notes at victoria.ca/fairfield.

Housing Types

People were asked to provide feedback on six different types of housing and how appropriate these were for Fairfield. Support for these new housing types was even higher for those who attended the information session than the following survey results:

There was strong support to allow for a **house with a secondary suite and garden suite** as 43% of survey respondents felt it was very appropriate and 27% somewhat appropriate. Many respondents commented on how this could help make home ownership more affordable and increase the house stock in the neighbourhood for renters. Some commented on how this type of housing was preferable to large developments and helps maintain the character of the neighbourhood. A few people noted that it would create more housing that is accessible. Some people expressed concern it would cause additional parking challenges and may eliminate privacy for neighbours.

Support was also strong for a **house with two secondary suites** as 39% of survey respondents felt it was very appropriate and 26% felt it was somewhat appropriate. Many saw this as a way to improve affordability and add housing stock. Some noted this is an environmentally sensitive way to add density, while others saw this option as a way to preserve heritage houses and green spaces. The main concerns related to increased parking challenges, which many already see as a problem in Fairfield. Some respondents are also concerned about the loss of character with additional rental stock.

Support for a **duplex with a secondary suite** had moderate support as 33% of survey respondents felt that it was very appropriate and 28% felt it was somewhat appropriate. (Support was strong at the information sessions with 75% of the 20 votes in support.) Many respondents commented that this type of housing is an efficient use of older homes and maintains the character of the neighbourhood while improving housing affordability. Several people commented that this type of housing already exists. Concerns about this type of housing included parking congestion, loss of character of the quiet Fairfield streets, and new duplexes dwarfing neighbouring properties. Some felt that the neighbours ought to have input into the design and require a rezoning process.

The survey and information sessions also demonstrated a high level of support for a **small lot house with a secondary suite** in Fairfield as 36% of survey respondents feel it is very appropriate and 26% somewhat appropriate. The reasons for supporting it were similar to the other housing types: adding more housing, increasing affordability, maintaining character. Along with parking issues, respondents were concerned about loss of green space and a reduction in privacy.

Support for **side-by-side townhouses** was strong as 36% of survey respondents felt that it is very appropriate and 28% somewhat appropriate. Many respondents felt that townhouses are a good solution to increasing affordability and adding housing for families and singles within the neighbourhood. The same concerns about parking and green space were raised. Some respondents commented that they should be designed in a way that maintains the character of the older family houses.

52% of survey respondents felt that side-by-side townhouses should only be located in certain areas of the neighbourhood (28% felt they could go everywhere and 20% felt they shouldn't be in Fairfield). There was strong support for this type of housing along major roads (65%), on blocks around Cook Street Village (52%). Support for locating them on large lots was mixed at 49% and lower on corner lots (30%).

The highest level of support was for **row houses** as 46% of survey respondents felt it is very appropriate and 26% somewhat appropriate. Many respondents expressed that it provided suitable housing for the neighbourhood, added density and allowed for pride of ownership. This model also improved the parking situation with each row house supplying off street parking. Concerns included making the neighbourhood “too crowded” and loss of green space and trees.

When it comes to where to locate row houses, 37% supported them going anywhere, 48% felt they should only go in certain areas. Of those who felt they should be limited in locations, 65% felt this was appropriate on major roads, 61% felt it was appropriate on large lots, 60% felt it was appropriate on blocks around Cook Street Village, and 43% on corner lots.