



Governance and Priorities Committee Report For the Meeting of July 24, 2014

Date: July 17, 2014

From: Robert Batallas, Senior Planner
Community Planning Division

Subject: Harbour Vitality Principles

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* (Attachment 1) which include Site-Specific Guiding Principles for three strategic sites at Belleville Terminal, Ship Point and Lower Wharf Street, as well as Overarching Guiding Principles that apply to these three strategic sites and the lands connecting the three sites. This report also seeks Council's direction to seek feedback on the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* prior to reporting back to Council no later than September 2014. The draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* have been developed to reflect and align with the key themes and ideas that were identified by the public through the Harbour Dialogue public engagement process. The draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* provide a strengthened policy framework to support the ongoing revitalization of Victoria's Inner Harbour and will also be used in conjunction with other related Council-approved policies and regulations to consider and evaluate future public realm enhancements and potential development proposals. The draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* provide a renewed vision and strategic direction that will help to better position the City of Victoria and other Inner Harbour landowners for potential capital funding, grants and development opportunities that may arise.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. Direct staff to seek public feedback on the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*
2. Direct staff to report back to Council with the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* and a summary of additional public engagement comments no later than September 2014
3. Following Council's approval of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*, direct staff to collaborate and liaise with key Inner Harbour landowners to prepare an Implementation Strategy and report back to Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Batallas
Senior Planner
Community Development Division

Deb Day, Director
Sustainable Planning and
Community Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Jason Johnson

RB:aw/lw/ljm

Date:

July 17, 2014

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* (Attachment 1) which include Site-Specific Guiding Principles for three strategic sites at Belleville Terminal, Ship Point and Lower Wharf Street, as well as Overarching Guiding Principles that apply to these three strategic sites and the lands connecting the three sites. This report also seeks Council's direction to undertake additional focused public engagement prior to reporting back to Council no later than September 2014. The draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* have been developed to reflect and align with the key themes and ideas that were identified by the public through the Harbour Dialogue public engagement process. The draft *Harbour Principles* provide a strengthened policy framework to support the ongoing revitalization of Victoria's Inner Harbour and will also be used in conjunction with other related Council-approved policies and regulations to consider and evaluate future public realm enhancements and potential development proposals. The draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* provide a renewed vision and strategic direction that will help to better position the City of Victoria and other Inner Harbour landowners for potential capital funding, grants and development opportunities that may arise.

2.0 Background

Maintaining the Inner Harbour as a vibrant and thriving environment has been a long-standing objective for the public and Council that has been confirmed through various Council-approved policy plans, including the *Victoria Strategic Plan* (2013), *Official Community Plan* (2012), *Downtown Core Area Plan* (2011), *Victoria Economic Development Strategy* (2011), *Victoria Harbour Pathway Plan* (2008), *Victoria Harbour Plan* (2001) and the *James Bay Neighbourhood Plan* (1993). These various policy plans all share several common objectives aimed at improving the overall vitality of the Inner Harbour through:

- supporting Waterfront and Harbour revitalization
- enhancing tourism
- ensuring sensitivity to the surrounding historic and waterfront context
- maintaining a working Harbour
- completing the Harbour Pathway (David Foster Way)
- maintaining and enhancing the Harbour's important role for transportation and as a gateway to the City, region and Vancouver Island
- providing well-designed and appropriate public realm improvements.

To advance these policy-based objectives, City staff prepared a Project Charter (Attachment 2) which outlined the scope, schedule, milestones, deliverables and resources for this project. The Project Charter was approved by Council on February 13, 2014 and served as the basis for initiating the Harbour Dialogue public engagement process which included multiple opportunities for broad community dialogue through an Open House, Ideas Forum, public survey and social media, all aimed at seeking the public's ideas related to potential revitalization and enhancement opportunities for the Inner Harbour with a specific focus on three strategic sites at Belleville Terminal, Ship Point and Lower Wharf Street. These comments were then used to inform the subsequent Technical Workshop where local experts participated in a two-day, intensive charrette-style process to explore and illustrate potential development and enhancement opportunities for the three sites.

The outcomes from the Technical Workshop and the public comments were then used to develop the resulting Guiding Principles contained in the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* (Attachment 1) along with conceptual illustrations of various revitalization opportunities. The

draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* identify detailed approaches to enhance the function, appearance, vitality and overall resiliency of the Inner Harbour, the Downtown Core Area, the city and the region. A complete summary of the public engagement process is included as an appendix of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*, while a summary of the Ideas Forum process and public feedback is included in Attachment 3 and the results from the Public Survey are included in Attachment 4.

3.0 Issues and Analysis

3.1 Approval of Draft Harbour Vitality Plan as Policy Guidance

In the related Project Charter, Council confirmed the preparation of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* as the key deliverable. This means that if Council approves the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*, Council and staff will be able to use the Guiding Principles in conjunction with other related policies and regulations to consider and evaluate future public realm enhancements and potential development proposals for their ability to support the revitalization of the Inner Harbour. The implementation of the *Harbour Vitality Principles* under this approach is predicated on public or private initiatives being brought forward to the City for consideration on an opportunity basis over time.

3.2 Implementation Strategy

The desire to advance and realize tangible enhancements and improvements within the Inner Harbour is a key message that emerged and resonated throughout the Harbour Dialogue public engagement process. In recognition of this, staff propose to continue the positive collaboration with key Inner Harbour landowners to develop an Implementation Strategy following Council's approval of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*. The subsequent Implementation Strategy may provide a list of short-term (one to five years) and medium-term (five to ten years) potential projects and actions that could be explored and pursued by key stakeholders such as the City of Victoria, other levels of government, private landowners, businesses and organizations, subject to the availability of funding and resources. In addition, the collaborative approach to developing an Implementation Strategy will also serve as a way to close the loop between the City and the Inner Harbour landowners as the Implementation Strategy will provide a common understanding and recognition of the potential projects and actions that may be considered by all key stakeholders going forward.

3.3 Further Public Engagement

The draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* have been developed to reflect and align with the key themes and ideas that were identified by the public through the Harbour Dialogue public engagement process which included the Open House, Ideas Forum, Technical Workshop, public survey and social media which together served to engage approximately 700 people. However, in order to provide public confirmation of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*, Council may consider the following additional public engagement approaches:

Approach 1: Use of Online Engagement Portal

Under this approach staff would use the City of Victoria's Online Portal (www.haveyoursayvictoria.com) to share the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* with the public and to solicit comments and feedback. This online-based approach allows the public to review the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* and provide comments in a convenient and efficient manner. Hard copies of the draft would also be made available at City Hall if requested. Staff would promote this opportunity to comment on the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* to the broader public as well as send a direct invitation to those who participated in the Harbour Dialogue

engagement process. This approach allows individuals who initially participated in the engagement process to see how their input has been captured and incorporated into the Guiding Principles. Following this additional public engagement opportunity, a summary of the additional public comments along with the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* will be presented to Council for their consideration no later than September 2014.

Approach 2: Special Council Meeting

Council has the ability to convene a Special Meeting to consider the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* as well as to provide an opportunity for the public to provide their comments directly to Council. Under this approach, the Special Meeting will be publicly advertised and communicated to ensure that the general public is aware of this opportunity to address Council. This approach requires Council to identify and confirm a specific date and time for the meeting as well as to allow sufficient time for staff to communicate and advertise the meeting.

4.0 Options and Impacts

4.1 Option 1 (Recommended)

1. Direct staff to seek public feedback on the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* through the City of Victoria's Online Engagement Portal
2. Direct staff to report back with the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* and a summary of additional public engagement comments no later than September 2014
3. Following Council's approval of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*, direct staff to collaborate and liaise with key Inner Harbour landowners to prepare an Implementation Strategy and report back to Council.

Impact

Option 1 will allow staff to undertake a focused public engagement process to receive additional public comments on the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*. This approach will also allow Council to receive a summary of these additional comments as part of their consideration of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*.

4.2 Option 2

Approve the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* including the Overarching and Site-Specific Guiding Principles.

Impact

Option 2 is premised on the approval of the *Harbour Vitality Principles* as a City of Victoria policy plan without undertaking further public engagement based on the initial Harbour Dialogue public engagement process. This option would allow the *Harbour Vitality Principles* to be used by staff and Council following its approval.

4.3 Option 3

Convene a Special Meeting of Council to receive public comments and to consider the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*.

Impact

Option 3 will potentially delay Council's consideration of the draft *Harbour Vitality Plan* to allow

for a Special Meeting of Council to be organized, advertised and communicated.

5.0 Recommendations

That Council:

1. Direct staff to seek public feedback on the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*
2. Direct staff to report back to Council with the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles* and a summary of additional public engagement comments no later than September 2014
3. Following Council's approval of the draft *Harbour Vitality Principles*, direct staff to collaborate and liaise with key Inner Harbour landowners to prepare an Implementation Strategy and report back to Council.

6.0 Attachments

- Attachment 1: *(Draft) Harbour Vitality Principles*
- Attachment 2: Project Charter - Inner Harbour Revitalization Opportunities Project
- Attachment 3: *Harbour Dialogue - Ideas Forum Summary*
- Attachment 4: *Harbour Dialogue Survey Results*