



**Governance and Priorities Committee Report
For the Meeting of November 19, 2015**

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** November 6, 2015
From: Katie Hamilton, Director Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning
Subject: Great Neighbourhoods

RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to provide routine updates on the new neighbourhood model within Quarterly Operational Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victoria has a population of just over 80,000 residents who reside in 13 neighbourhoods, all with their own distinct identity and features. In 2015, City Council directed staff through the strategic plan to "Create a 'great neighbourhoods initiative' based on Edmonton's model; amend to fit our local circumstances." The new model provides an opportunity to take a more holistic approach to supporting neighbourhoods and for improving internal coordination within the City's operations, increased communication across City departments and externally, and providing overall better service to citizens.

Over the past few months, staff have researched best practices, identified issues and opportunities for how the City can establish stronger relationships, and better support neighbourhoods in the coming years. Based on research and extensive input from across all neighbourhoods and staff in departments throughout the City, a new model for neighbourhood engagement is being established. The new approach implements dedicated staff for neighbourhood support, providing technical advice and customer service at neighbourhood level, removing red tape for lower risk, citizen-led activities, and creating opportunities to build capacity and engagement within and across Victoria neighbourhoods.

In meeting with neighborhood associations, reviewing best practices and historical City practices, there is tremendous opportunity to shift from project and problem based neighbourhood engagement to focussing on place-based opportunities at a neighbourhood level. Greater ability exists to harness community potential, energy and ideas to draw on the community's strengths, and increase the City's responsiveness to enquiries, concerns and opportunities. The model provides a new participatory budgeting methods, placemaking and animation of public spaces, and a greater focus on engaging youth and 'neighbours with neighbours'.

A neighbourhood model which supports community vitality by bringing neighbours together and facilitates community-initiated projects can see similar successes to models in other cities like Edmonton, Ottawa and Seattle where innovative and fun ways such as neighbourhood toolkits and workshops and instructions on how to build little libraries and lemonade stands, can bring people together in positive ways. Programs such as public space and placemaking grants for small-scale community projects and participatory budgeting can empower the community to direct investment in neighbourhoods based on community priorities and support neighbourhood character.

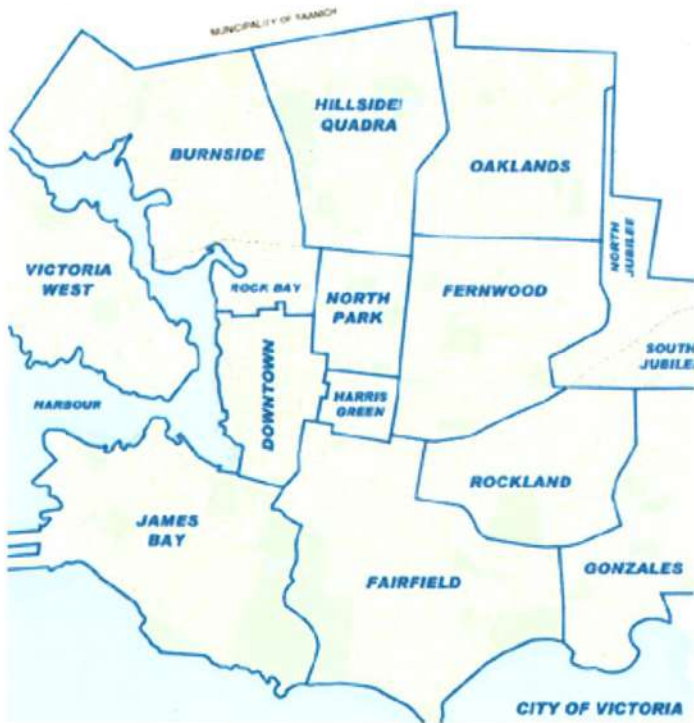
Residents are experts in their neighbourhoods, and greater integration between the City and community-led actions, can add vibrancy and sense of community in each neighbourhood. Supporting relationship and community capacity-building amongst residents and with community organizations, can enable the City to shift from a historically regulatory and somewhat reactive focus, to a more proactive and engaged facilitation role. This alignment can potentially empower neighbours with greater ability to influence the design and investment within their communities, improve customer service and trust, as well as engage new voices and increase ownership within the community as a whole.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline a model for how the City can better support neighbourhoods. It has been developed based on community input, best practices research and a review of the current and historical approach.

BACKGROUND

The City of Victoria consists of 13 neighbourhoods, each with their own distinct physical and social features that make up their unique identity.



- 1. Burnside
- 2. Downtown
- 3. Harris Green
- 4. Fairfield
- 5. Fernwood
- 6. Gonzales
- 7. James Bay
- 8. Jubilee
- 9. North Park
- 10. Oaklands
- 11. Hillside-Quadra
- 12. Rockland
- 13. Victoria West

Twelve support

- 1.
- 2. (Downtown and Harris Green)
- 3. Fairfield-Gonzales Community Association
- 4. Fernwood Community Association
- 5. James Bay Neighbourhood Association
- 6. North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association
- 7. North Park Neighbourhood Association
- 8. Oaklands Community Association
- 9. Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Association
- 10. Rockland Neighbourhood Association
- 11. South Jubilee Neighbourhood Association

neighbourhood and community associations neighbourhoods.
Burnside-Gorge Community Association
Downtown Residents Association

12. Victoria West Community Association

Fairfield is Victoria's largest geographical neighbourhood and also its most densely populated, with 15,825 residents (15% of the city's total population). James Bay houses the second highest number of citizens with 11,240 residents (14% of the city's population). Harris Green has the smallest geographical footprint and community with its 1,870 residents making up 2% of the population.

In terms of population growth, Downtown has seen the greatest increase in residents (up 65%) between 1991 – 2011. Conversely, Rockland has seen a 4% drop in population during the same time period. Overall, the city has grown 12.5% in the same 20 year time-span, which equates to approximately 0.6% increase per year.

When looking at who lives where in Victoria, Gonzales has the highest percentage of children (15%) followed by the Oaklands neighbourhood (13%) and then Hillside-Quadra (13%). The two neighbourhoods with the highest percentage of adults are Harris Green (73%) and Downtown (72%) while James Bay has the highest percentage of residents over the age of 65 (29%). Fernwood has the youngest median age at 34.1 years. Understanding neighbourhood composition can better inform how to direct City spending in each neighbourhood and how to engage with residents.

Of the 13 neighbourhoods, eight have City-owned or operated community, recreation and seniors facilities. Every neighbourhood, with the exception of North Park and Rockland have schools (either public or private) within their boundaries.

With a growing population and a diverse composition come varying community needs and expectations of municipal government, and a multitude of different ways residents want to get information and engage with their City.

In 2015, City Council directed staff through the strategic plan to "Create a 'great neighbourhoods initiative' based on Edmonton's model; amend to fit our local circumstances." This new approach will provide opportunities to take a more holistic approach to neighbourhoods by improving internal coordination within the Operational Plan, better communication across City departments and externally, and provide overall better service to citizens.

In May, three staff with a high public interface in varying capacities with neighbourhoods were brought together within the Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning Department. The staff has spent the past few months, researching best practices, identifying issues and opportunities, and how the City can establish stronger relationships, and better support neighbourhoods in the coming years.

Staff throughout the organization have also been engaged in identifying opportunities for a proposed model through both sharing their experiences in working with communities through a workshop as well as participating in discussions on what a neighbourhoods model could look like.

Jim Diers, who was instrumental in the development of Seattle's neighbourhood movement which built an international reputation for its new approach to planning and outreach, met with City staff and Councillors to share Seattle's experience as well as others around the globe. Diers was the first Director of Seattle's Department of Neighbourhoods and was able to provide staff with insight on how to develop and maintain a strong relationship with diverse neighbourhoods.



Staff also had the opportunity to learn more about placemaking and other neighbourhood initiated projects through an interactive workshop with the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network.

To understand the strong, established relationships the City has with neighbourhood and community associations, the City attended meetings with each of the associations over the past three months to explore the opportunities and challenges facing each community and identify ways the City can better support residents.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

In examining how the City can best shift focus to a neighbourhood level, several considerations have been identified as barriers to better supporting communities. Understanding these barriers, has helped identify where gaps and opportunities exist.

Department based approach to planning and outreach: The City is moving towards a more coordinated 'One City' approach to planning through increased involvement from all departments on City projects and through the development of a more interdisciplinary approach to support City initiatives. However, capital program planning such as road work and replacing underground infrastructure is often done in isolation of coordination with other City departments, and with little notification to the broader community. This can result in compounded impacts of traffic, noise, aesthetic of construction sites, or access to public spaces. More information being shared earlier internally in the planning process would result in better integration and coordination, and most importantly, less impacts on residents and businesses. Where impacts cannot be avoided, earlier notification could be provided, allowing people time to adapt or mitigate impacts. It would also demonstrate more value for tax dollars, instead of just impacts.

Increasingly, there are community-initiated ideas and projects such as painted crosswalks, notice boards, benches, gardens and parklets. Projects are often unique to each community and help shape the identity of the neighbourhood, however because they often require input from multiple departments due to public space considerations (e.g. utilities, green space, property ownership) and are outside of the City's annual work plans, they tend to get delayed, or lose momentum while under review.

The lack of one point of contact has caused uncertainty for residents and organizations in how to address incoming requests along with much confusion and delay for the community in implementing their neighbourhood projects. Establishing central points of contact for the City, is a common area highlighted for improvement.

Limited information sharing of neighbourhood related projects: There is enormous potential for improved information sharing from a geographic or place-based perspective, amongst City staff. The focus on departmental priorities and work plans, has created an information gap amongst staff about what others are doing in the same area, and how they can work together for increased value and return on investment. Staff

have strong knowledge of their specific areas of interest or mandate but often lack awareness of other City activities in each neighbourhood.

The community views each staff member as a representative of the City and not just a representative of a specific department which can exasperate the community when they are not equipped with more knowledge of neighbourhood issues and plans. For example, when staff attend neighbourhood association meetings, they could be more equipped with general knowledge of all plans and initiatives for that specific community. This would be of benefit to Council as a whole, and Councillor Liaisons on existing and upcoming neighbourhood projects and current neighbourhood issues.

Risk aversion: Some staff identified the culture at City Hall as overly regulatory. Establishing greater ownership internally for coordinating and supporting neighbourhoods, can help shift focus from primarily a regulator to a facilitator. This will enable staff to work through new or more complex community requests, ultimately improving customer service for residents and hopefully delivering results faster.

Feedback from the Community and Neighbourhood Associations

Through meetings with each of the neighbourhood and community associations earlier this year, several opportunities for how the City can best support neighbourhoods were identified.

All neighbourhoods are unique with varying composition, areas of interest / concern and unique neighbourhood attributes. Some neighbourhoods conveyed a strong sense of identity, whereas others felt neighbourhood identity was lacking and they hoped to see it established in future.

Many of the concerns shared with the City were neighbourhood specific, but commonly related to parking and transportation, park space, and operational items that could be addressed through consistent and responsive customer service. Land-use was a predominant topic of discussion, often at a property specific level. Associations also often shared common issues that straddled neighbourhood borders. The topic of neighbourhood boundaries was raised at several meetings.

There were some commonalities around issues expressed. The predominant challenges heard were the community demands placed on the Councillor Liaison and the challenges for residents navigating City Hall.

Many community and neighbourhood associations mentioned how valued and appreciated their Councillor Liaisons is to their community, helping navigate City Hall, sharing information on City projects and advancing community concerns and issues. For the Councillor Liaison, the relationships have resulted in them becoming the main point of contact for the City. This has placed the onus on the Councillor to find answers to a growing number of enquiries in addition to their elected officer roles. Currently, there is limited staff support to Council for these enquiries.

Apart from the City Councillor, the community expressed limited relationships with City staff and uncertainty as to where to go for information. Staff turnover is often also seen as a challenge as building strong relationships takes time and effort. Aside from development services staff and in some cases, bylaw enforcement, City staff is not place-based or neighbourhood focussed, so often residents have to deal with multiple staff on the same topic.

Aside from development planners, staff participation at neighbourhood meetings is generally issue or project specific and irregular, preventing strong relationships from developing. Many staff presentations and discussions are problem-oriented versus opportunity-focused. This is compounded by out-dated neighbourhood or local area plans, as the needs of the community may not be reflected in the work plans guiding community investment. Community interests and needs change over time, and it seems in some areas, like transportation, the investment or priority setting occurring annually would benefit from future dialogue and improved information sharing.

The majority of neighbourhoods expressed a strong desire to update their local area plans to better inform community investment and development based on neighbourhood character, needs and desires.

A lack of awareness around neighbourhood composition and City impacts on neighbourhoods both at the City and among residents was mentioned. Residents and staff greatly learned from one another through the meetings yet several gaps were identified around understanding demographics, neighbourhood issues and impacts of City related work in the community.

Residents mentioned that they are not always aware of City projects in their neighbourhood until improvements or changes in their community have been introduced.

Community members shared a desire to see more staff out in their neighbourhood, experiencing their concerns firsthand. It was felt that more focus could be placed on staff learning about neighbourhoods from the in-house experts - residents.

In terms of customer service, enquiries sent to the City can be lost due to lack of systems tracking or knowing who best to contact. Community concerns can sometimes lack an immediate response and in some instances any response at all. This can often result in missed opportunities around community development and poor customer service.

There is a sense of consultation fatigue among associations due the high number of issues and agencies seeking input. As volunteers, their time is highly valued but can be limited as they face competing interests such as careers and families. With the myriad of input opportunities over the last few months alone from sheltering solutions, sewage, to local area planning a more coordinated approach and improved communications channels with associations should be considered.

Several associations perceived a discrepancy in staff support given to neighbourhood associations with community centres. Some associations without facilities expressed concern that centres had more access and opportunity for funding and support. Upon review, and with the recent alignment of recreation and facilities, this is an area that will benefit from greater discussion about staff operations, and how best to align program areas to ensure no real or perceived advantage to one neighbourhood over another.

Many associations expressed a shared challenge in regards to the difficulty in reaching and engaging renters in their communities. With over 59% of renters throughout the city, they make up an important group for which more outreach channels need to be explored.

Most neighbourhood and community associations expressed they are not representative of the entire community and would like to attract new members to their organizations. A better understanding of demographics and diversity in each neighbourhood was felt to be of benefit to inform the recruitment process and add capacity to the associations.

Best practices

Many cities throughout North America have developed a coordinated City approach to planning, outreach and work on a neighbourhood level. In Canada, the Tamarack Institute has created a community of practice for municipalities taking a neighbourhood approach to community development. The City became a member of the community of practice this summer. At this time there are 14 cities with this focus including Edmonton, Hamilton, Kitchener, Calgary, Ottawa and St. Albert. (Appendix A: Best Practices)

Edmonton (pop 878,000) – Office of Great Neighbourhoods

The City of Edmonton's Great Neighbourhoods corporate initiative is administered through the Office of Great Neighbourhoods. Office of Great Neighbourhood staff works with City of Edmonton staff across the corporation to:

- Increase the City's responsiveness to critical, time sensitive issues and opportunities in neighbourhoods.
- Facilitate harmonized delivery of municipal services, programs and planning in neighbourhoods.
- Foster innovative approaches to creating and sustaining great neighbourhoods.
- Enhance two-way communication between the City, residents and other neighbourhood stakeholders.
- Deliver programs and services related to neighbourhood revitalization, litter and graffiti reduction and neighbourhood empowerment.

Neighbourhood District Coordinators work with neighbourhoods, City departments and community stakeholders to help coordinate actions and responses to neighbourhood issues.

Seattle (pop 652,000) - Department of Neighbourhoods

Seattle has the longest existing Department of Neighbourhoods of all the municipalities studied in North America. Introduced in 1988, the Department of Neighbourhoods includes Planning, Economic Development, Housing and Neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood coordinators act as a liaison between the community and the City. Nine coordinators support 13 districts. Coordinators lead interdepartmental teams which meet regularly to share information, streamline work plans and reduce duplication of efforts. Coordinators also provide strategic advice to departments and support community engagement.

The department's focus is on community development which includes programs like the People's Academy for Community Engagement that provides hands-on engagement and empowerment skills to emerging leaders. Seattle's focus is also on empowering the community through grants such as neighbourhood matching grants which provide neighbourhood groups (not necessarily affiliated with any organization) with City resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their own neighbourhoods. Every award is matched by neighbourhood resources of volunteer labor, donated materials, donated professional services or cash.

The structure of the department is based on how citizens organize themselves by community, enabling the City to decentralize and coordinate City services, cultivate community and nurture neighbourhood character.

Calgary (pop 1.2 million) - Department of Community and Neighbourhood Services

The department supports 14 wards with 10 neighbourhood associations in each ward. The focus of the department is to foster strong neighbourhoods by providing services and programs that connect, involve and empower residents. Staff act as community liaisons and support social / recreational / youth development and special events. Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators assist neighbourhood associations with organizational development, grants, facilities, interaction with other city departments, and project planning & support. Community social workers support neighbourhood associations with advocacy, assessment, mobilization and program development.

Ottawa (pop 883,000) - Neighbourhood Connection Office

Located in the Community and Social Services Department, the Neighbourhood Connection Office helps residents and community groups work together on small-scale projects that make their neighbourhood more livable, vibrant and healthy. It could be things like making streets more walkable, revitalizing a park or artistic initiatives such as street painting. Whatever kinds of projects the neighbourhood wants to do, the Office is about connecting them with the information and tools they need.

The Office has a number of different grant programs for the community to access including environmental projects, heritage, civic events, Awesome Ottawa, and community gardens.

Portland (pop 600,000) - Office of Neighbourhood Involvement

Portland has created a two-tiered approach to supporting their 95 neighbourhood associations spread across seven districts. Seven district offices have a total of 35-40 coordinators. Each district office delivers their own community development and training programs. Seven staff in the Office of Neighbourhood involvement support the district offices. There is a high level of focus on empowering neighbourhoods through capacity building of skills, relationships and partnerships. The Neighbourhood Small Grants programs is designed to strengthen

neighbourhood and community capacity, build community leadership, relationships and partnerships, and increase neighbourhood impact on public decisions and community life. These grants are available to neighbourhood and community organizations.

Chattanooga (pop 175,000) - Neighbourhood Services Department

The Department resides in the Office of Economic and Community Development and is responsible for enforcing City codes and working with neighbourhood associations to make neighbourhoods a better place to live, work and play.

Neighbourhood Relations Specialists act as liaisons between community leaders and City government, assisting with the formation of neighbourhood associations and neighbourhood improvement. They coordinate interdepartmental efforts to address neighbourhood problems, assist neighbourhood organizations in addressing community priorities and needs by helping set clear and attainable goals, and mapping a plan to achieve those goals. They also promote involvement and foster leadership among concerned citizens through training and development.

Neighbourhood Leadership Roundtables are held monthly and open to all members of the public and often have guest speakers. The meetings provide an opportunity for community members to share programs and initiatives that they have underway.

Hamilton (pop 520,000) - Neighbourhood Action Strategy Office

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy Office was developed as one of the results of engagement with the community in 2010. The objective of the Office is to better integrate staff and financial resources across all departments for the efficient delivery of services at a neighbourhood level and assist the City to create strong relationships with the community at a neighbourhood level.

The office has six Community Development Workers assigned to specific neighbourhoods. There are 50 neighbourhood associations with overlapping boundaries. The City is working with community partners, neighbourhood groups and residents to develop action plans to build healthier communities. The core elements of this work are:

- **Enhancing community development work:** Through partnerships with community organizations, Community Development Workers work together to support the residents in 11 Hamilton neighbourhoods.
- **Developing resident-led Neighbourhood Plans:** The City facilitates the neighbourhood planning process and helps build effective solutions that focus on areas/ actions residents and key stakeholders feel are necessary.
- **Increasing investments in neighbourhoods:** Once neighbourhood plans are developed, new investments are required to support the improvements that residents have identified. City Council has earmarked \$2 million in neighbourhood funding to help leverage additional investments from private, public and philanthropic sources.
- **Building new partnerships to support healthy neighbourhoods:** Working with businesses, Provincial and Federal governments and non-profit organizations, work will begin to align existing resources and find new investments that can support neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood matching grants support place-based grassroots initiatives to change neighbourhood spaces and build community and capacity.

Vancouver (pop 610,000) - VIVA Vancouver

VIVA Vancouver is a program that transforms road spaces into vibrant pedestrian spaces. Four staff in the Engineering Department facilitate these initiatives. In collaboration with community groups, local businesses, and regional partners, VIVA facilitates short-term street closures throughout the year, creating public spaces for walking, lounging, and lunching. Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams were created in 1994 to provide more

user-friendly city services, improve access to information, coordinate city responses at the neighbourhood level and improve public participation and collaborative problem-solving. They have community services grants, social innovation grants and a neighbourhood matching fund. Parklets, multicoloured picnic tables, weekly farmers markets and pedestrian plazas are examples of the kinds of projects that have come out of the program.

Kitchener (pop 219,000) - Community Services Department, Neighbourhood Strategy Project TeamThe Neighbourhood Strategy Project Team resides in the Community Services Department. Kitchener is in the early stages of developing their neighbourhood strategy which will provide a framework to guide and support citizens to create individual Neighbourhood Action Plans. Each plan will have a statement about the unique identity of the neighbourhood, a list of priority actions that could be taken to strengthen the neighbourhood and implementation of some quick-win, citizen-led placemaking initiatives. The overall outcomes of the plans include safe and thriving neighbourhoods that are vibrant and walkable, full of active and well used gathering places (parks, trails, community centres, libraries), connected communities (physically, personally) and build on the priorities of engaged citizens.

Benefits of a Neighbourhood Model

Developing a coordinated City approach to neighbourhood planning and engagement has seen success in other municipalities that can be brought to Victoria. For community members, the benefits to be gained through a more neighbourhood's focused approach within the City include:

- Simplified process
- Innovative, more human, and meaningful ways to engage with the City
- Annual involvement in reviewing draft City budget
- Increased notification of projects and impacts
- Direct investment in neighbourhoods based on community priorities
- City projects that are more reflective of community needs and desires
- Greater alignment of City and community efforts
- Enhanced sense of community through connecting neighbours with each other
- Quicker response time to service requests

For the municipality, benefits could be:

- Greater internal efficiency through more coordinated planning and implementation of City projects
- Quicker response to community requests through better tracking of enquiries
- Engaging new voices in City planning
- Fully informed staff on neighbourhood issues, regardless of departmental responsibility
- Councillor Liaisons who feel fully supported in their role
- Stronger community partnerships and new relationships with residents
- New opportunities for residents who are not affiliated with an organization to apply for grants for neighbourhood projects
- Increased participation in neighbourhood events and City planning

Improving As We Go

Several actions have been implemented while hearing from neighbourhoods, about how to better support information sharing with the community:

- Relationships with neighbourhood and communication associations have been strengthened by bringing more staff to meetings to meet community members.
- The Director of Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning and the Director of Sustainable Planning and Community Development attended neighbourhood and community association meetings this summer to learn more about each community. This was the first time Directors have attended association meetings in many years.

- Neighbourhood associations were added to the media release distribution list to keep them informed of City announcements including major construction, new programs and public input opportunities. This aims to overcome the challenge of associations reacting to City news, when published in news media.
- The Operational Plan can be re-organized by neighbourhood to highlight City investment in each community.
- All 2016 capital investments will now be mapped by neighbourhood (Appendix B: Draft Neighbourhood Profile) and will be provided to neighbourhoods annually.
- 2011 Census data informed the development of neighbourhood profiles (Appendix B: e.g. draft James Bay Neighbourhood Profile).
- Introduction of a new City electronic newsletter.
- Updated neighbourhood contact lists to streamline communications with association representatives.
- Updating of City webpages for all neighbourhoods is underway, including contact information for corresponding associations.
- Waived fee for the print version of the Official Community Plan. Was \$35.
- Ability to view rezoning applications in neighbourhoods through the online development tracker.
- Council and Planning and Land Use reports indicate the neighbourhood that a proposed development is located.
- 2016 financial plan will also indicate investments by neighbourhood.
- Jim Diers was brought in to work with staff on how to measure success around community engagement and how to develop neighbourhood plans together with the community. Diers also provided a public, capacity building session on developing community where he shared tools, tips and international stories with over 200 people.

Key Functions of the New Model

Based on what has worked well in other municipalities and the issues and opportunities identified by staff and the community, there are several key functions of a great neighbourhood model for Victoria:

Build community: Create opportunities for neighbours to meet neighbours

Innovative approaches and opportunities for neighbours to meet each other and connect with their neighbourhood can be supported by the City. Information will be provided on how to host neighbourhood events and ideas how to bring neighbours together similar to what Ottawa provides through their neighbourhood toolkits. Tips on how to host block parties, and workshops to support neighbourhood revitalization and connectedness such as how to build a little library, or lemonade stand, will be hosted by the City to bring neighbours together.

Increased support to Councillor Liaisons

Several new measures will be taken to provide greater support to Council in their role as liaisons to the community. A staff person will routinely attend community meetings to provide operational support and support to Councillor Liaisons. A briefing note will be prepared for the Councillor Liaison prior to each monthly meeting, to outline current and upcoming activities in the neighbourhood, as well as new items, questions or opportunities that have arisen. These can also be prepared on an as needed basis for specific issues. Staff can also assist in finding out information for the Councillor Liaison on neighbourhood matters. Staff will be a resource for information and capacity to assist with responding and tracking customer or resident enquiries, and to support relationships in the respective neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Staff Coordinators

Neighbourhood Coordinators will be geographically identified to support opportunities in various geographic areas. Coordinators will have an important internal role in creating internal systems for neighbourhood information sharing and establishing a direct system for capturing community questions and ideas to increase the City's responsiveness to issues and opportunities in neighbourhoods. These roles will also be resources for navigating grant programs, engagement processes, youth engagement and placemaking.

Placemaking: Establish simple processes, grants and contacts for supporting citizen-led ideas and improvements

Toolkits and guidance will be created to help residents implement community initiated projects such as message boards, parklets and painted crosswalks. Neighbourhood Coordinators will assist in supporting placemaking efforts, through grants or advice.

Clear information outlining how to submit a request for a community-initiated project will be provided to community members. Feasibility checklists outlining considerations such as the design, impacted community members, traffic, bylaws and public infrastructure can make it easier to identify what neighbours need to advance projects for their neighbourhood. Clear guidelines will be created to outline the approval process, timelines and resources to help make small-scale, community initiated projects come to life.

Neighbourhood matching opportunities will be considered to leverage community support and ownership for projects. Exploring opportunities for neighbours to access small grants without requiring organization or association affiliation can engage and empower more people in their own community.

Generate greater awareness around neighbourhood composition

Profiles will be developed for each neighbourhood and shared broadly with Councillor Liaisons, staff and the community. The profiles will identify neighbourhood demographics, community centres, parks, grants, city owned properties, geographically based staff and current City projects in each neighbourhood. Neighbourhood profiles can help foster identity and raise awareness around neighbourhood composition and change. This will also help guide neighbourhood engagement efforts to identify who and how to better engage the demographics of each neighbourhood.

Celebrate Neighbourhoods Online

Several tools can be implemented to better share information with residents, highlight the unique features of each neighbourhood and support community identity and connectedness. A greater web presence will be dedicated for each neighbourhood to share neighbourhood profiles, a map of the neighbourhood, existing projects along with status updates and pictures on progress, information on upcoming neighbourhood projects and contact information for high interest areas. The webpages and perhaps mobile apps in the future, can also be used to promote each neighbourhood and highlight the unique features of the area.

Empower Neighbourhood Investment: Provide opportunities for participatory budgeting

A participatory budgeting pilot will be introduced in 2016 to engage neighbours in identifying how best to direct investment in their communities.

Deconstruct Silos: Coordinate place-based information sharing about City services

An integrated approach to City planning can facilitate the coordinated delivery of construction projects to reduce disruption to residents. By providing opportunities for staff to routinely share information and work plans with each other, it can allow for projects to be planned across departments and for changes in the neighbourhoods to be rolled out simultaneously such as road work with underground utility improvements. The more information staff have about neighbourhood issues and opportunities, the more anticipatory and proactive the City can be to the needs of the community.

Increase youth participation in City planning and neighbourhood development

A youth strategy will be developed for July 2016. The strategy will identify ways to engage youth in their city through innovative techniques to make providing feedback to the City fun and meaningful. More support is also planned for the City of Victoria's Youth Council. Greater support will be provided for space at City Hall, developing and issuing media releases and status updates on the Youth Council's projects will be regularly shared with Council and staff. Greater understanding of neighbourhood composition – in terms of age and family composition, will also help to guide efforts.

Plan by Doing: Short-term Neighbourhood Action Plans aligned with Local Area Plans

A strong relationship exists between the local area planning process and the great neighbourhoods initiative. Staff throughout the organization can be more involved in the neighbourhood planning process to better understand the vision for the neighbourhood, community concerns and opportunities. As part of local area

planning, the City will work with communities to identify short term priorities for implementation for up to three years. These actions could include requests for benches to increase public gathering spaces to examining the need for a pedestrian crossing to providing more garbage cans and collection of garbage during the spring / summer in neighbourhoods with high tourist traffic.

Capacity building: Give the community more tools to engage and grow

Community workshops and information sessions are a great way to engage residents with staff, build relationships and share knowledge. City workshops will be promoted more widely and formalized into a City learning program that could provide residents with a different way to engage with the City. Many talented staff hold immense knowledge on various topic areas that can be shared with residents and neighbourhood associations.

A "Planning 101" series for Community Association Land Use Committees, and the general public, will be developed for residents to provide a better understanding of Victoria's policies, land-use procedures and development application processes. Simplified information can be introduced to better support the community around City plans and processes including plain language descriptions of bylaw changes and providing more context to why the changes are being considered.

Support for engaging neighbourhoods in neighbourhood planning and projects can also be facilitated and supported by the City. Both in terms of advice and communication support. The City is well-positioned to help promote association events and the works of the associations to help drive neighbourhood organizations. Several associations requested assistance and support for helping to reach residents, and in particular those in multi-unit buildings and renters.

Pop-up City Hall

As a means of making City Hall more accessible to the community, pop-up City Halls will be piloted in spring / summer 2016. Modelled after Vancouver's Pop-Up City Hall, the mobile information booth will be in each neighbourhood for one day to share information on City services, programs, neighbourhood plans, job opportunities, recreational programs and upcoming public engagement opportunities as well as answer any questions the community may have. Victoria's active summer market scene could be a potential opportunity for meeting neighbours where neighbours are. An Open Gov Coffee Shop with seating on street corners to host community discussions, is also being explored. A modified-food truck option, could be pursued as well, but may have costs associated. Research will be completed.

Timeline

The functions of the neighbourhood model would be fully implemented by Q3 2016. Below is a proposed implementation timeline:

Q4 2015

- Staff attendance at neighbourhood meetings to support Council Liaison
- Draft budget to neighbourhoods as preliminary outreach for financial plan
- Develop profiles for each neighbourhood
- Develop guidelines for community-initiated placemaking and public space grants
- Provide increased support to City of Victoria Youth Council
- Identify City workshops for 2016

Q1 2016

- Develop dedicated neighbourhood web presence
- Create framework for public space and placemaking grants
- Develop neighbourhood toolkits for community-initiated projects
- Introduce 'Planning 101' series

Q1 to Q2 2016

- Develop Youth Engagement Strategy
- Begin work on first Neighbourhood Action Plans to align with the Local Area Planning Process

Q2 2016

- Pilot Pop-up City Hall
- Host workshop to support neighbourhood revitalization

OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

2015-2018 Strategic Plan

Introducing a neighbourhood model for City planning and outreach will present more opportunities to empower the community. Initiatives such as participatory budgeting, workshops on neighbourhood revitalization and developing stronger relationships with residents will engage the community in new, innovative and meaningful ways which is consistent with the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan objective to “Engage and Empower the Community.”

Developing a clear procedure around how to advance incoming requests for community-initiated projects such as painted crosswalks and parklets as well as providing funds through grants for community members to advance community projects will increase the emphasis on placemaking in City planning and support 2015-2018 Strategic Plan objective to “Strive for Excellence in Planning and Land Use.”

Impacts to 2015-2018 Financial Plan

Staff resources are already in place to carry out the functions within the proposed neighbourhood model. Allocation of funds to support participatory budgeting, placemaking, and public space grants are considered within the proposed 2016 financial plan.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Taking a neighbourhood focus to planning and outreach is consistent with the Goal C as outlined in Section 15 of the Official Community Plan “Victorians know their neighbours, are connected to communities of interest and have diverse opportunities for social interaction.”

Options for a Neighbourhood Model

Building on how the City currently engages with neighbourhoods, feedback from the community on opportunities to better support neighbourhoods and best practices from other cities, two neighbourhood models were considered for Victoria.

Option 1: Office of Great Neighbourhoods: A Neighbourhood Coordination Unit, supported by internal teams and improved dialogue (Recommended)

This model would include a key point of contact for each neighbourhood who could navigate City Hall on behalf of residents and act as a neighbourhood ambassador / liaison. The community liaison would have an important role in creating internal systems for neighbourhood information sharing as well as providing better information to the community through neighbourhood profiles, developing neighbourhood toolkits, attending meetings with the Councillor Liaison and following up with community requests.

Interdisciplinary neighbourhood teams consisting of staff from Sustainable Planning and Community Development, Transportation, Facilities, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Bylaw, and Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning would meet regularly to discuss City plans on a neighbourhood level and current neighbourhood concerns. The objective of this approach is to share information regarding current work and plans for each neighbourhood to better integrate resources across all departments for the efficient delivery of services at a neighbourhood level.

Regular walking tours and attendance at events in neighbourhoods would occur to ensure intimate street-level understanding of issues.

The unit would provide services related to placemaking and public space grant programs, youth engagement, capacity building and neighbourhood engagement support, and routine support to associations and respective Councillor Liaisons.

Option 2: Restructure the Organization to Create an Office of Great Neighbourhoods

To focus planning and outreach on a neighbourhood level, the organization could be restructured into geographic areas. All staff within departments that have a high interface with the community (Parks, Recreation and Facilities, Transportation, Sustainable Planning and Community Development and Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning) could be structured to align with specific quadrants of the City. Staff from various departments would be situated together, to work closely as a group addressing all aspects that affect the specific neighbourhoods within their quadrant.

Option 2 is considered unfeasible within current resourcing, and would potentially harm other work plan items, due to the significance of the restructuring required. The risk outweighed potential at this time.

Evaluation: Measuring Progress

Evaluation baselines and metrics to measure success of the new model will be developed with input from the community and Council. Routine updates will be provided within the Quarterly Operational Plan Updates.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to:

1. Provide routine updates on the new neighbourhood model within Quarterly Operational Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie Hamilton, Director
Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning



Julie Potter, Manager
Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


November 13, 2015

List of Attachments

- Appendix A: Best Practices**
- Appendix B: Draft Neighbourhood Profile**
- Appendix C: Draft Neighbourhood Capital investment map**



Councillor Liaison

Margaret Lucas

Geographically-based Staff

Local area planner	Jim Handy
Building Inspector	Ray Berkely
	Amy Scovill
Electrical Inspector	Philip Corby
Plumbing Inspector	Roy Kellington

Community Centres

James Bay Community Centre

Darcy Topinka

E childcare@jamesbaycentre.ca
jamesbaycentre.ca

James Bay New Horizons Centre

Kim Dixon

E executivejb.nh@shawbiz.ca
jamesbaynewhorizons.com

Neighbourhood Association

President: Marg Gardiner

E jbna@vcn.bc.ca

Land Use Chair: Tim Van Alstine

E timothyvanalstine@gmail.com

Meets second Wednesday of month,
 7 p.m., James Bay New Horizons Centre

Newsletter: James Bay Beacon

<http://jamesbaybeacon.ca/>

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILE

James Bay

James Bay is Victoria's second largest neighbourhood in both size and population. It is approximately 239 hectares (590 acres). In 2011, the population was approximately 11,240, which is 14% of Victoria's total population. Located in the southwest portion of the City, James Bay is a peninsula with water on three sides. It is bounded by Dallas Rd, Belleville and Beacon Hill Park (split down the middle). There is industrial land along the west shoreline, and significant tourist traffic traverses the neighbourhood due to the Ogden Point cruise ship facility and ferry terminal located in the Inner Harbour. The neighbourhood is also home to the B.C. Legislature Buildings and Royal British Columbia Museum. It has the highest percentage of seniors (29%) and the oldest median age (52.2) in the city.

People

Total Population				
2011	2006	2001	1991	
11,240	10,760	10,545	11,120	120 new residents (1% growth) in 20 years

(STATS CANADA, 2011 CENSUS)

Age Breakdown by Neighbourhood 2011		
Children (<15)	800	7%
Youth (15–24)	840	7%
Adult (25–64)	6,365	57%
Seniors (65+)	3,235	29%
Median age	52.2	
% pop 15+	93%	

Private Household Breakdown 2011

Total number of private households	6,695
Total number of persons in private households	10,660
Average number of persons in private households	1.6
Single-detached house or semi-detached house	10%
Multiple family dwellings (Apartment, row house, duplex)	90%
Density	high
People per hectare	47
Tenure	31% owned; 69% rented

(STATS CANADA, 2011 CENSUS)

Economy

- Village centre – James Bay Village
- Business licences – 773

Parks

The parkland in James Bay is extensive based on population and area calculations. The neighbourhood contains a large portion of Beacon Hill Park. Other parks include Holland Point Park along Dallas Road, waterfront parkland in the Laurel Point area, MacDonald Park, Fisherman's Wharf Park, neighbourhood parks (e.g., Irving Park which is located beside the seniors complex) and several other open spaces owned and managed by other levels of government. Total park space is 68.4 hectares.

Avalon Green	Avalon and Government
BC Legislature Buildings	
Beacon Hill Park	Cook, Dallas and Douglas
Belleville St Green	Belleville and Oswego
Centennial Park	200 Belleville St.
Charles Redfern Green	100 Quebec
Confederation Plaza	Menzies and Belleville
Elliot Square	
Fishermans Wharf Park	300 St. Lawrence St.
Helmcken House	
Heritage Court	
Holland Point Park	561 Dallas Road
Irving Park	240 Menzies
James Bay Community Garden	Montreal and Dobison
James Bay Community School	
Laurel Point Park	Quebec Street
Lewis Park	32 Lewis St.
MacDonald Park	212 Niagara St.
Quadra Park	Belleville and Oswego
Royal British Columbia Museum	
South Park	677 Michigan
Thunderbird Park	Douglas and Belleville
Todd Park	100 Montreal St.
Todd Park Tennis Court	100 Montreal St.

Total signed bike paths 4097m

Food Gardens and Orchards

- Two community allotment gardens – James Bay Allotment Garden and Michigan Street Community Garden.
- James Bay market on Sat from 9–3 at the corner of Menzies and Superior (May–Sept)

Schools

James Bay Community School, South Park Elementary

Shelters and Meals

- There are no shelters in James Bay.
- James Bay New Horizons offers meals to the seniors community in the neighbourhood.
- The James Bay Community Centre offers family meals and seniors meals.

2015 Grants

James Bay Neighbourhood Association – \$3,500 base grant

James Bay Beacon – \$3,657.34 base grant (communications)

James Bay Community School

- \$1,200 base grant (celebrations)
- \$50,000 core operating grant
- \$8,063 youth grant

James Bay New Horizons

- \$50,000 core operating grant
- \$5,000 for seniors isolation project, Strategic Plan Grant
- \$3,498 for Phase 2 Beehive project, Strategic Plan Grant

City Owned Properties

860 Academy Close	677 Michigan St
601 Avalon Rd	687 Michigan St
220 Belleville St	697 Michigan St
250 Belleville St	650 Michigan St
300 Belleville St	185 Montreal St
350 Belleville St	175 Montreal St
407 Belleville St	165 Montreal St
730 Belleville St	155 Montreal St
100 Cook St	115 Montreal St
645 Dallas Rd	135 Montreal St
561 Dallas Rd	125 Montreal St
210 Dobinson St	100 Montreal St
713 Douglas St	212 Niagara St
508 Douglas St	190 Niagara St
32 Lewis St	180 Niagara St
250 Menzies St	200 Quebec St
234 Menzies St	300 St Lawrence St
491 Michigan St	670 Toronto St
455 Michigan St	660 Toronto St
461 Michigan St	650 Toronto St
475 Michigan St	640 Toronto St
481 Michigan St	630 Toronto St
657 Michigan St	
667 Michigan St	

2015 Operating Plan

Action	Lead Dept.	Comments	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
McDonald Park field and irrigation improvements	Parks and Rec			August start	September completion	
Explore Michigan Street garden relocation	Parks and Rec				Report to Council September	Relocation complete December
Beacon Hill Park parking lot and lighting, moss maiden and picnic area improvements	Parks and Rec	Ongoing		Moss Maiden installed	Picnic areas	Moss Maiden complete Parking lot and lighting
Dallas Road seawall rehabilitation project	Eng/PW	Multi-year project. Ongoing				
Traffic Signal New Work: Government at Superior	Eng/PW	Start Citizen Engagement Jan 1, Engineering Design Drawings.	Start January			Complete October
Pedestrian Master Plan Implementation: Montreal – Niagara to Dallas	Eng/PW	Start Citizen Engagement May 1, Engineering Design Drawings, Start Construction August		Start May		Complete October
Major Streets Rehabilitation: Government – Belleville to south	Eng/PW	Citizen Engagement May 1, Engineering Design Drawings, Start Construction June.		Start May	Complete August	
Dallas Road	Parks and Rec			June		
David Foster Harbour Pathway – Design and consultation for Heron Cove and Raymur Point bridges	Parks and Rec / CESP					Design complete
David Foster Harbour Pathway – Directional signage	Parks and Rec / CESP	Interrelated to wayfinding				Design
James Bay Library branch	LRS/ Finance	Evaluate and respond to proposal from Capital Park in consultation with GVPL		Start April		Complete December

