

# **PROJECT CHARTER**

## **For the Development of a New Official Community Plan**

**January 14, 2010**



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Victoria has made progress in the area of urban sustainability by working towards the development of compact, complete communities, promoting multi-modal transportation, and acknowledging the importance of the triple bottom line in decision-making. The next step in building on these successes is to establish a comprehensive, city-wide approach to urban sustainability. Developing a new Official Community Plan (OCP) provides a timely opportunity to create a plan that highlights Victoria as a model of sustainable urbanism.

Other emerging factors signal that this is a strategic time for developing a new plan. These include:

- the development of the Victoria Sustainability Framework (VSF);
- an increased number of jobs and residents in the Downtown core;
- discussions about a regional rapid transportation corridor into the city;
- the development of a city-wide Transportation Master Plan;
- a renewal of the City's neighbourhood planning program;
- the development of a three Utilities Master Plans;
- the creation of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan;
- the need to analyze the City's role in the regional economy;
- the need to review built form and community design policies and guidelines; and,
- increased efforts to address social and community development issues.

In addition, the development of a new OCP takes on greater importance with the looming imperatives of climate change and energy security. Mandated greenhouse gas emission reductions, a new energy reality, and adaptation to the impacts of climate change all constitute critical components of any community plan oriented towards urban sustainability. As part of the Province's climate change strategy, all OCPs are legally required to contain greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, actions and policies.

Creating a new OCP also provides an opportunity to revisit the City's approach to neighbourhood planning, with the intention of strengthening the policy integration between the OCP and neighbourhood plans and identifying mechanisms for formally linking the OCP and neighbourhood plans to the City's capital planning process. Reviewing city-wide planning policies, concurrent with the update of the City's approach to neighbourhood planning, will also help to define the specific role of neighbourhood plans in the City's planning system.

Briefly stated, updating the OCP provides a timely opportunity to develop a comprehensive strategy for achieving urban sustainability, setting greenhouse gas emissions targets and policies, and developing strategies for renewing the City's approach to neighbourhood planning. A new OCP will also provide guidance and direction for both public and private investment.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the OCP is to make sustainable choices about the kind of city Victoria will be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The OCP will look at planning directions that can be achieved over a 25 year time horizon, with adaptive mechanisms to ensure it can respond to changing circumstances in the shorter term. The OCP will be action-oriented and will outline strategies, policies and practical tools for achieving the goals of the VSF. A key part of the OCP planning process will be to develop a more integrated and systematic approach to neighbourhood planning. An Implementation Strategy will accompany the new OCP, outlining courses of action for achieving OCP goals.

Specifically, the OCP will be created with the following purposes:

- Meet legal requirements of *Local Government Act*
- Refine VSF goals related to Community Planning
- Develop strategies, policies, and actions for achieving VSF Goals
- Establish an approach to neighbourhood planning grounded in a citywide context
- Establish a future land use pattern for the city
- Develop courses of action for achieving a sustainable Victoria

## 3.0 BACKGROUND

In 1986 the City adopted its first OCP, which established a series of general city-wide goals and policies for land use, transportation, parks and open space. In 1995, the City's OCP was reviewed and updated. The review resulted in the addition of several new policy directions. These included social planning, preservation of environmental quality and recognition of the role that arts and culture play in the city. In 2005 the OCP was amended to include a Regional Context Statement outlining how the OCP conforms to the *Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)*.

In 2007 the Planning and Development Department initiated a renewal of the City's Neighbourhood Planning Program. As a first step, *Neighbourhood Planning: A Discussion Paper (2008)* was prepared. One key lesson emerging from the research was the need for a systematic and integrated approach to neighbourhood planning in Victoria. Another lesson was the need to strengthen linkages between city-wide planning goals and policies and neighbourhood-level planning. On March 13, 2008 Council directed staff to include development of an integrated neighbourhood planning program as part of the process to create a new OCP.

A draft sustainability framework has been developed to help move the City's corporate and community activities in a more sustainable direction. The framework's vision and sustainability goals will provide important guidance and direction to the development of a new OCP. The vision and goals of the VSF will be reviewed and refined as part off the OCP process, creating a basis for advancing community sustainability directions. Overall, the Victoria Sustainability Framework will articulate what a "sustainable Victoria" is, and the new OCP will outline policies and strategies for achieving the relevant community planning goals.

## 4.0 PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

The new OCP will have to consider the legislative requirements of the *Local Government Act*. As noted in the *Act*, an OCP requires the inclusion of many topics including:

- residential development (location, amount, type and density);
- housing policies with respect to affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing; commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational, and public works land uses –(location, amount and type)
- location and phasing of road, sewer drainage, and water systems;
- location and type of public facilities (i.e. schools, community centres); and,
- targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and policies and actions for achieving the targets.

With respect to public consultation, consideration will also have to be given to when consultation should occur and the various groups who should be consulted during the preparation of an OCP. The OCP will also be required to meet the intent and goals of the RGS of the Capital Regional District.

## 5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will provide guidance and direction to the planning process for developing a new OCP:

1. **Advance the Victoria Sustainability Framework:** To ensure that OCP planning focuses on achieving the community planning goals derived from the Victoria Sustainability Framework.
2. **Active Engagement:** To actively engage community stakeholders in the planning process, by following the Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation endorsed by Council on June 10, 2009, consulting significant stakeholder groups and the general public, and ensuring that public concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.
3. **Informed Decision-Making:** To ensure that Council, before making decisions, is made aware of the range of community opinion, technical information and analysis, and any other necessary information.
4. **Regional Context:** To ensure that the new OCP integrates a regional perspective, as well as informing regional planning.
5. **Integrated Planning:** To ensure that the OCP planning process is coordinated with other City and regional planning initiatives and programs. These include, but are not limited to the Victoria Sustainability Framework, Transportation Master Plan, Parks and Open Space Master Plan, and the Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy.
6. **Timely Completion:** To ensure the development of a new OCP is completed within the approved resources, schedule and budget.

7. **Responsive:** To recognize the impossibility of predicting the future, and to therefore incorporate into every aspect of the process and the product recognized techniques for relating planned actions to expected circumstances, and for monitoring and adapting to changed circumstances on a continuing basis.

## 6.0 SCOPE

The scope of activities to be addressed through the OCP planning process includes:

- Developing policies and conducting consultation activities to meet the legislative requirements of the *Local Government Act*.
- Developing policies and strategies that advance urban sustainability with respect to the four components of VSF: Ecological Integrity, Livability and Social Well-being, Economic Vitality, and Resiliency
- Reviewing and analyzing the City's built form, including heritage preservation and community design.
- Developing climate change strategies and policies, including greenhouse gas emission reduction policies, actions, and targets.
- Renewing the City's Neighbourhood Planning Program with the intent of establishing an integrated approach to developing neighbourhood plans.
- Establishing a future urban sustainability structure that aligns with the updated Regional Growth Strategy and articulates the City's future development pattern.
- Developing an implementation strategy for guiding and monitoring plan implementation and progress.
- Creating an adaptive management framework that will address how the OCP evolves and changes over time.

## 7.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PLAN CONTENT

The following guiding principles articulate the values for plan content:

- **Adaptive/Responsive** - The OCP will be flexible and adaptive, ensuring that mechanisms are in place to deal with changing, unpredictable circumstances
- **Leading Edge** – The OCP will be future focussed and include innovative approaches
- **Shared Responsibility** – The policies, strategies, and actions of the OCP will engage citizens to share in implementation responsibilities
- **Accessible** – The plan will use common language that is easy for people to understand and can be used by non-experts
- **Layered Information** – The OCP will be presented at varying levels of detail, with the ability to easily locate higher level information and also explore more detailed elements

## 8.0 FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING PLAN CONTENT

The OCP planning process will be carried out to engage residents and others interested by helping them to understand the current situation, the range of available actions, and how issues can be monitored and approaches adapted. The Victoria Sustainability Framework provides the starting point for plan content, but it is not specific enough to be the basis of implementation or to facilitate ongoing monitoring of the results.

The development of plan content, including policies, actions, and adaptive responses will need to use a framework that carefully assesses all subject dimensions. The following describes a series of considerations that constitute an analytical framework that will be used to assess topics and guide the development of plan content.

1. **Current Situation** – Where are we now and how did we get here? Strengths and weaknesses of existing realities
2. **Current Response** – What is being done and what has been done related to topic area? Existing and past policies, actions, and strategies
3. **Future Situation** - What do we expect the world to be like in the future? Projections and trends about future conditions
4. **Anticipated Impacts** - How will this affect Victoria? Opportunities and threats of future conditions
5. **Responses** - What is the vision for the City and what are the response(s) we choose to make to achieve the vision? Policy directions, Implementation Strategies (Regulatory changes, public investment, civic leadership and education, etc)
6. **Monitoring** - How will we measure the success/accomplishment of the response? Indicators, Targets, Goals
7. **Reporting** - To whom, in what form and how often will these measures be reported? Reporting mechanisms
8. **Adaptive Management** – How do we respond to not meeting targets or unpredicted events? Strategies for adaptation

## 9.0 PROCESS & SCHEDULE

The OCP planning process consists of four phases:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation and Background Research
- Phase 2: Community Engagement and Exploration of Concepts
- Phase 3: Information Analysis and Plan Drafting
- Phase 4: Draft Plan Review and Refinement

Each phase is outlined and summarized below. Appendix A contains a graphical summary of the project phases and timelines. An explanation of public engagement strategies and techniques is detailed in the Public Engagement Strategy (Appendix B).

### **Phase 1: Project Initiation and Background Research**

*October 2009 – February 2010*

#### **Phase 1 Objectives:**

- Establish a Project Charter
- Establish a Citizen Advisory Committee
- Develop a public engagement strategy
- Establish the legal requirements for an OCP
- Provide information to enable informed discussion of items identified in scope of work
- Establish relationship of OCP to other plans
- Initiate communications activities
- Develop draft neighbourhood planning program goals
- Refine VSF vision and community goals
- Raise project profile and survey initial community priorities through a online survey

Phase 1 has three key components: project initiation, background research, and a community survey. Initial tasks relating to project initiation are to obtain Council approval for the Project Charter, form a Citizen Advisory Committee, and develop a public engagement strategy. The other key element of project initiation is establishing a communications foundation for the project which includes developing a project brand and project website.

The Citizen Advisory Committee will work with staff to provide advice and serve as a sounding board on issues associated with the update of the OCP. As a part of Phase 1, staff will work with the Citizen Advisory Committee to refine the themes and goals of the VSF, ensuring they are an appropriate framework to help guide the OCP project. Additionally, the committee will use background research and public feedback to help staff develop some preliminary goals for the Neighbourhood Planning Program. The program's goals will then be taken to Council for consideration, with public feedback obtained on the goals in Phase 2.

This phase also involves undertaking background research. Research topics will be derived from the VSF, a review of best practices, and a gap analysis of the existing OCP. Background Research will be released to the public at two points: one group of papers in early January and one group of papers near the end of February. Research findings will be used to inform public engagement activities and the development of policies. Topics to be researched during this phase include:

- OCP Legal Considerations
- Analysis of Existing OCP
- Demographic Projections and Population Change
- Employment Projections
- Housing Analysis (demand forecast, affordable, rental)
- Community Inventory
- Economic Analysis

- Heritage Analysis
- Residential Land Inventory and Capacity Analysis
- Regional Analysis (examine the role of the city within the regional economy)
- Heritage Analysis
- Climate Change and Energy Planning Analysis
- Urban Agriculture/Food Security Analysis
- Built form, Public Realm, and Urban Design Analysis

The third component of the first phase is to develop and disseminate a community survey. The short online survey will be designed to raise awareness of the process and highlight the issues that the OCP project will address. Primarily, the survey will be focused on issues and priorities to check that the OCP project has the right themes and foci.

**Key Phase 1 Milestones:**

- Council adoption of Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy
- Confirmation of VSF goals
- Neighbourhood Planning Program goals
- Completed community surveys

**Phase 2: Community Engagement and Exploration of Concepts**

*March 2010 – July 2010*

**Phase 2 Objectives:**

- Explore ways to translate the VSF goals into policies and actions
- Expand upon and develop a deeper understanding of background research through community discussions
- Develop an understanding of how neighbourhoods contribute to the city as a whole and vice versa
- Provide a broad spectrum of engagement opportunities for general public and key stakeholders
- Engage in a dialogue to determine an appropriate neighbourhood planning program approach in Victoria
- Explore the opportunities and implications of different change scenarios
- Obtain Council approval for preliminary plan directions

The focus of Phase 2 will be threefold: engage in public discussion about what can be contained in an OCP to help achieve a sustainable Victoria, explore possibilities for developing a neighbourhood planning program, and investigate alternative approaches for the sustainability scenario for the city. The development of VSF goals and Neighbourhood Planning Program goals in Phase 1 will establish the basis for the development of the OCP. Community engagement will be intense and focused over the four month period, highlighted by two large consultation events, key stakeholder meetings, and citizen led community circles. The two large public events will bookend the Phase 2 engagement activities and contain the following elements:

**Event 1: Kick-off / Discussion Forum (March 2010)**

- Sharing and communication of background research
- Public comment on VSF vision, goals and themes (additions / clarifications)

- Review neighbourhood planning Goals
- Introduce Community Circles
- Public comment on factors influencing future city urban form
- Preliminary community survey results

Event 2: Options for the Future: weighing options and implications (June 2010)

- Community circle debrief
- Future sustainability scenario options
- Neighbourhood Planning Program structure discussion
- How can we make this happen? Ideas for implementation

A key element of Phase 2 will be using background information obtained in Phase 1 to seed discussions and help to illuminate potential implications of different courses of action. Stakeholder meetings will ensure a broad range of interests are engaged, help to raise the profile of project, and provide a venue for focused conversations on specific plan elements. Community circles will be used to enable community members to lead their own discussions regarding specific OCP topic areas or neighbourhood areas. Exercises will be developed by City staff to enable a standardized exploration of issues that can be easily translated into OCP policies or implementation actions. Assistance will be given to interested community members, including orientation sessions for facilitators, but the discussions will largely be organized and held in diverse community venues (including kitchen tables, schools, churches, community centres, etc.)

During this phase, several urban sustainability scenarios illustrating future development pattern alternatives will be prepared. This work will build on the direction from the updated Regional Growth Strategy, the Victoria Sustainability Framework, and the Downtown Plan Update. Scenario development may include, for example, a core focus, urban villages, or a corridor concentration. The scenarios will be analyzed from transportation, infrastructure, land use, climate change, and fiscal impact perspectives.

This phase will culminate in the presentation of preliminary plan directions to Council before proceeding to plan drafting.

**Key Phase 2 Milestones:**

- Council approval of preliminary plan directions
- Draft approach to neighbourhood planning
- Draft future urban sustainability scenario

**Phase 3: Information Analysis and Plan Drafting**

*July 2010 to October 2010*

**Phase 3 Objectives:**

- Synthesize public feedback, background research, and policy reviews into a draft OCP document with:
  - Policies based on the VSF goals and themes
  - A process, structure and approach for conducting neighbourhood planning
  - An updated Regional Context Statement
  - Greenhouse gas reduction targets, policies and actions

- A future sustainability scenario including an overall development pattern for the City of Victoria
- An adaptive management strategy
- A framework for an implementation strategy
- Undertake a technical review by City staff

This phase of work will involve synthesizing the materials, information, and public feedback gathered during Phases 1 and 2 to construct a draft OCP. The research, analysis, and engagement activities carried out in the earlier phases will be structured to enable a clear translation into policy directions and implementation actions.

The first step in this phase will be to summarize all public feedback. This information, in conjunction with the background research and analysis will form the basis for developing policy directions that align with VSF goals and themes. As part of this phase, the renewed Neighbourhood Planning Program approach will also be drafted as a section of the new OCP. The renewed program will establish how neighbourhood planning will be carried out in the City. The draft OCP will also include an adaptive management strategy, which is intended to explain how the plan will change and evolve over time. An implementation framework will also be developed, with details finalized upon plan approval.

**Key Phase 3 Milestones:**

- First Draft OCP

**Phase 4: Draft Plan Review and Refinement**

*November 2010 to January 2011*

**Phase 4 Objectives:**

- Obtain feedback from community on the draft plan
- Obtain feedback from key stakeholders on the draft plan
- Obtain feedback from external organizations (i.e. CRD, neighbouring municipalities, School Board, etc.) on draft plan
- Refine plan based on comments
- Council consideration of draft OCP

The draft plan will be reviewed by community stakeholders. The public review will include open houses and stakeholder meetings, as well as opportunities to provide online and written feedback on the draft plan. The plan will be revised according to community feedback and then taken to Council for consideration.

**Key Phase 4 Milestones:**

- Draft OCP presented for Council consideration

## 10.0 BUDGET AND STAFF RESOURCES

The OCP update has been included in the three year budget Capital Budget. Funding has been approved as follows:

Capital Budget	2009	2010
<b>Totals</b>	\$200,000	\$400,000

Staff Resources have been allocated to the project as follows:

- 1 FTE Senior Planner
- 1 FTE Planner
- 0.5 FTE Planning Technician

## 11.0 DELIVERABLES

The process for updating the OCP will deliver the following outcomes.

### 1. Official Community Plan bylaw

The bylaw will comprise the following:

- A sustainability vision that provides a conceptual framework for the plan.
- Policies that address, but are not limited to, the following areas:
  - overall land use strategy
  - parks and open space
  - transportation
  - housing
  - social planning and community development
  - the natural environment
  - arts, culture, and heritage
  - economic development
  - community and cultural facilities
  - community design
  - climate change.
- An urban sustainability structure which conceptually maps the city's future pattern of development.
- An updated Regional Context Statement that shows how the City is working towards the goals of the RGS.
- A clearly articulated Planning System for Victoria outlining the roles, relationships and alignment between the City's plans, policies, strategies and guidelines.
- A Neighbourhood Planning Program. The program will be integrated in nature and establish criteria for determining priorities, provide guidance on the planning process, ensure consistency between neighbourhood planning and overall City goals and objectives, and establish formal linkages with municipal budgeting and grant processes.

## 2. Background Research for information

All of the technical studies and background research will be compiled under separate cover and made available to the public.

## 3. Implementation Strategy approved by resolution

A proposed Implementation Strategy will be brought forward in conjunction with the OCP with a series of recommendations to implement the plan. This will be achieved through:

- Regulatory and policy implementation strategies, including:
  - Zoning Regulation Bylaw
  - Neighbourhood Planning Program
  - Transportation Master Plan
  - Parks and Open Space Master Plan
  - Corporate Strategic Plan
  - Development Permit Areas
- Integration with Capital Plan and 3-5 Year Financial Plans
- An adaptive management strategy that has formal processes for regularly reviewing and adapting the plan

## 12.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section lays out the roles and responsibilities of various project stakeholders. Figure 1 displays the relationship among project resources.

**City Council:** Council allocates resources to the project, and has final approval authority for the OCP. Council also reviews and approves implementation plans.

**Staff:** Staff are responsible for project management, research and analysis, and producing and recommending options for Council consideration. They will also be responsible for planning and delivering engagement with community and stakeholder groups and integrating the input into the plan.

**Staff Technical Team:** Includes representatives from various City departments, including Engineering, Planning and Development, Parks, Recreation and Culture, and Finance. This group will meet regularly to provide technical advice and advise on feasibility of potential policy and implementation actions.

**Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC):** The CAC reviews information and materials prepared by staff, providing feedback and advice on the preparation of a new OCP and renewal of the Neighbourhood Planning Program.

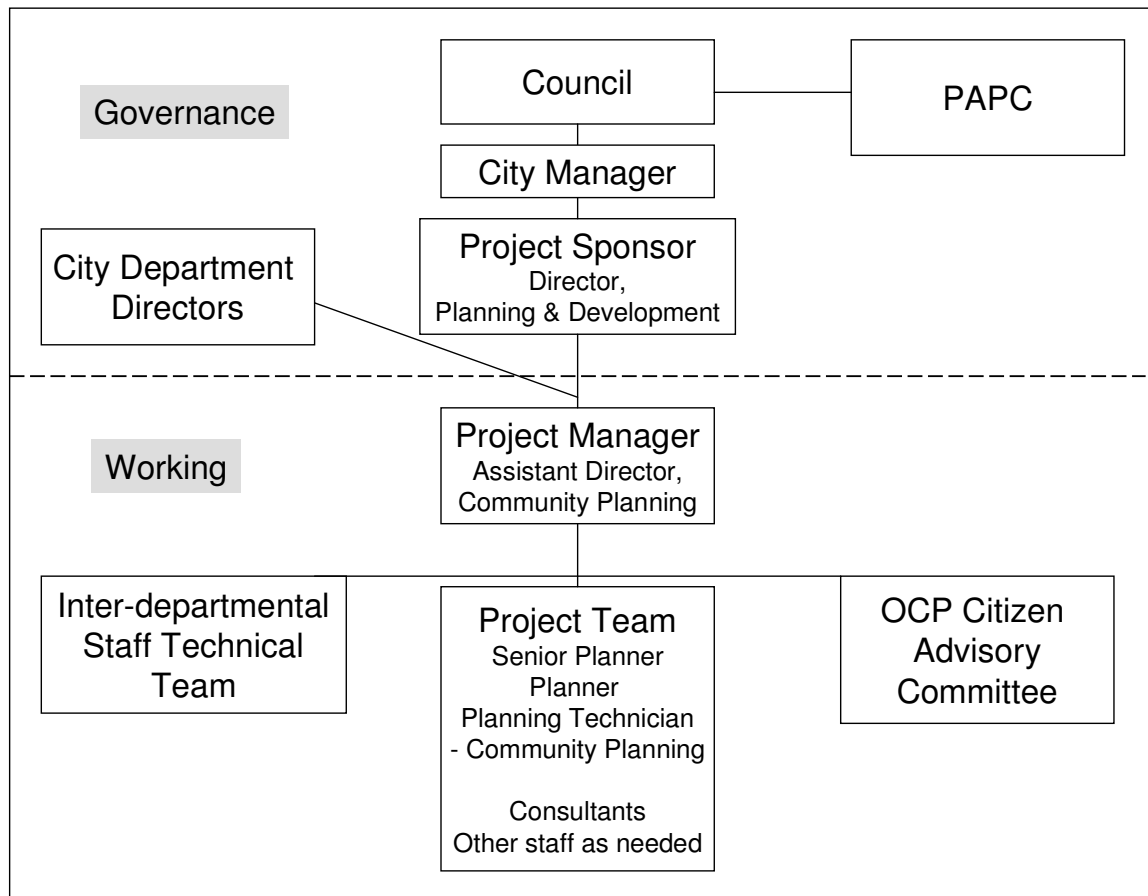
**Community:** All individuals who have an interest in Victoria are invited to participate in the planning process through generating, guiding, and commenting on policy ideas and concepts and implementation strategies.

**Stakeholder Groups:** Stakeholder groups, including community groups, neighbourhood associations, development industry representatives, and non-governmental organizations will contribute in the same way as the broader community, but also be the subject of focused consultation with respect to their particular areas of interest.

**External Agencies:** These agencies will offer a broad perspective and add to the analytical base of information.

**Consultants:** Consultants will be hired on an as-needed basis to assist with research and analysis. For instance, a consultant will be hired to evaluate the urban sustainability scenarios.

**Public Advisory Planning Committee (PAPC):** The PAPC will formally review and provide comment on project content in Phase 2 (initial plan directions) and Phase 4 (draft plan).



**Figure 1: Relationship of Project Resources**

## 13.0 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ONGOING INITIATIVES

The development of a new OCP is being undertaken in concert with a number of other planning initiatives. Many of these initiatives will be aligned with the OCP planning process. In order to ensure coordination and alignment, an inter-departmental integrated planning committee will be established. An overview of the initiatives is provided below:

- **Victoria Sustainability Framework:** The draft goals and themes of the VSF will be used as a framework for the development of community planning policies and strategies.
- **Regional Growth Strategy (RGS):** A RGS outlines an agreement on a regional vision and common social, economic, and environmental priorities for member municipalities. The Capital Regional District RGS was approved in 2003 and is currently undergoing a five year review. The OCP will be developed in alignment with the RGS, with an end result being the development of a Regional Context Statement, stating how Victoria's OCP relates to the RGS.
- **Parks and Open Space Master Plan:** The City of Victoria is currently preparing a parks and open space master plan. The directions, recommendations and strategies emerging from the plan will be coordinated with the OCP planning process.
- **Urban Forest Master Plan:** The City of Victoria is currently preparing a master plan to manage its urban forest. The plan will include a vision and overall management strategy. The directions, recommendations and strategies emerging from the plan will be coordinated with the OCP planning process.
- **Transportation Master Plan:** The City of Victoria will be initiating the preparation of a Transportation Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan will set targets and objectives for improving various modes of transportation with an overall goal of providing all users with a green, economical, safe, and sustainable transportation system.
- **Utilities Master Plans:** The City of Victoria is currently preparing three Utilities Master Plans. The plans outline existing system improvements and recommend a future system serving strategy for each utility infrastructure system - potable water distribution, wastewater collection, and stormwater management systems. The Utilities Master Plans will support and complement the OCP.
- **Downtown Plan Update:** The Downtown Plan for the City is currently being updated. The direction coming from the Downtown Plan Update will be incorporated into the new OCP.
- **Victoria Regional Rapid Transit Study:** BC Transit is undertaking an assessment of Rapid Transit options from the West Shore to Downtown Victoria. The purposes of the project are to reaffirm and define the key corridors into Victoria, and to examine alignment and mode options to service the West Shore and the City of Victoria. The directions emerging from the project will be coordinated with the OCP planning process.
- **Regional Cycling and Pedestrian Master Plan:** The CRD has initiated a process to create a cycling and pedestrian master plan for the region. Initial consultation has been completed, with analysis being undertaken until December. The products of this exercise will serve as an input into the OCP.