

## **Appendix B: OCP Public Engagement Strategy**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to outline the strategies, tasks, and activities that will be used to engage a broad cross-section of people in a meaningful and timely way in a phased process to create a new Official Community Plan (OCP) for the City of Victoria.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

The public engagement strategy for the creation of a new Official Community Plan was developed based on the Proposed OCP Project Charter document. A twelve month project timeline (January 2010 – January 2011), the topics to be covered, and high expectations around engagement require an intense, focused, well-resourced public engagement strategy that optimizes engagement activities and approaches.

### **3. PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The OCP planning process consists of four phases:

Phase 1 involves background research and project initiation activities. Production of a series of discussion papers on key topic areas related to urban sustainability (e.g. climate change) will inform subsequent phases and start the community discussion. Other key initiation activities include the formation of a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), the creation of a project brand and key messages/critical questions, and the development of a project website showing avenues for public and stakeholder input and a clear project timeline. Additionally, an online community survey will raise awareness of the process and inform the project focus.

Phase 2 is the most intensive phase of the project with respect to public engagement. A variety of engagement techniques/formats will be used to raise the profile of this initiative and to involve a diversity of citizens and stakeholders. This greater degree of profile and awareness will support ongoing engagement efforts in all later phases of the project.

The background research developed in Phase 1 will support informed discussions about various topic areas; the Victoria Sustainability Framework goals will be used as a guide to develop initial policies and strategies for discussion. Additionally, citizens will be engaged to help develop a new approach to neighbourhood planning and assess sustainability scenarios for the City's future development pattern.

Phase 3 involves examining and analyzing background research, policy studies, and engagement feedback to develop a draft plan. Engagement activities in this phase will be mostly limited to an internal City staff technical review, and consultation with the CAC. Development of a "preliminary directions" newsletter will end this phase.

Phase 4 involves presenting a draft plan to community and stakeholders for review and revision. Public open houses and web-based reviews will constitute the primary forms of engagement in this phase. After review, a final draft OCP will be presented to Council for consideration.

### 3.1. CORE VALUES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As directed by a motion of City Council (June 11, 2009), the Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation established by the International Association for Public Participation have been used to inform the engagement strategy.

The seven core values informing the strategy are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

There are varying degrees to the level at which the public or interested parties are or can be "engaged" in a particular process. As noted by the International Association for Public Participation, the public participation continuum consists of five levels of engagement. These levels are elaborated on in Figure 1, and run the continuum of simply informing the public of a given course of action (Level 1) to creating a governance structure to delegate decision making (Level 5). The OCP public engagement strategy will use approaches that fall within different stages along the continuum, and will follow the recommendations of the City's new Civic Engagement Strategy.

### 3.2. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The CAC will be an integral part of OCP process, serving as a "community sounding board" throughout the process. The committee, which represents a variety of community viewpoints, will review and comment on staff-developed engagement strategies. They will provide ongoing advice and feedback to ensure public engagement objectives and strategies are effectively carried out, and that the results obtained from the engagement are properly integrated into the plan.

## 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Openness:** Be open, clear and proactive in communicating expectations and impacts of engagement activities and project realities, such as the budget and resource implications of activities
2. **Tell the whole story:** Present all factors holistically
3. **Inclusive:** Develop an understanding of the range of views in the community, and use a diversity of approaches to connect to various segments of the community
4. **Informed discussion:** Provide timely information and analysis to help inform discussions

5. **Innovation:** Use creative engagement approaches, including meeting people where they are, to build interest and address consultation fatigue
6. **Address controversy:** Address issues that are controversial and explore the implications of different choices and trade-offs
7. **Clarity / Candor:** Use plain language to be clear in communication and encourage all parties to say what they really think
8. **Passion:** Encourage participants to share their ideas, feelings and passions for Victoria in engagement activities
9. **Mix methods of engagement:** use both shallow/broad and deep/narrow engagement tools to ensure a diversity of input

## 5. KEY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

**Reach a Broad Range of Stakeholders and Community Members:** Engage a wide range of Victoria residents in this project, as well as individuals who work, shop, recreate, or conduct business in Victoria. Ensure that engagement techniques are structured to engage different audiences at different levels, respecting different levels of interest, availability and knowledge.

**Emphasize Youth Engagement:** The focus on sustainability means we will be discussing changes that must happen over time. The themes and goals of the draft Victoria Sustainability Framework will be taken into the public realm to discuss how the OCP can create urban sustainability. Youth today are seeking change that responds to external forces like climate change, and are open to the necessity for change. To energize the discussions and reach a key demographic, outreach to youth will also be emphasized in this project.

**Use Strongly Engaged Citizens as a Resource:** Recognizing that there is a group of citizens who are well engaged on traditional planning matters and sustainability issues and have a lot of knowledge and skills, engagement with the “informed minority” will be a priority. This will mean connecting early and often with community associations, the development community, and other established stakeholders, challenging them with difficult issues and trade-offs, and asking for their support to raise awareness and participation rates.

**Use Tools and Methods to Connect with “Hard to Reach” Groups:** Ensure that this process connects with people rarely heard from, sometimes known as the “harder to reach” e.g. single parents, new immigrants, renters, co-op housing groups, etc. Tools and methods will be created to reach these and other selected audiences in innovative ways.

**Provide Clear, Accessible, and Exciting Communication Materials:** One of the main challenges of the OCP is that it is new, different, or hard to understand for some audiences. In an effort to address these barriers and the complexity of the issues, materials will be developed that are visually appealing, written in plain language, and follow a consistent visual identity. Materials with selected stakeholder groups will be reviewed to ensure they resonate in a meaningful way.

**Integrate Neighbourhood Planning Engagement:** A key element of the Planning Process is the development of Neighbourhood Planning Program grounded in a citywide context. Part of the engagement effort will therefore centre on relating neighbourhood and citywide contexts, and will examine how neighbourhood planning can be developed to meet citywide goals. A specific strategy for engaging on this will be developed early on in the project.

**Engage Regional Stakeholders:** Many non-residents of Victoria contribute to and participate to the success of Victoria. A target of involving 1000 residents of the CRD in this initiative has been set to provide insights into the larger context for the OCP and will connect the policies and plans to the larger policy and planning context.

**Develop Strategies to Close the Loop:** Engagement strategies will be designed and executed to ensure all public contributions to the project are acknowledged and their impact reflected back to participants.

## 6. MEASURES OF SUCCESS

This section articulates the overall goals of the public engagement process, as well as the metrics that will be used to assess the goals. The overall engagement target for the process is 4000 residents and 1000 non-residents. Table 1 details various sub-groups and associated engagement targets and techniques.

**Table 1: Engagement Groups**

Group	Engagement Target	Primary Engagement Techniques
<b>Overall</b>		
Victoria Residents	4000	Website; Forums; Open Houses; workshops; Community Circles
Non-Residents	1000	Open Houses; Website; Workshops
<b>Targeted groups within totals</b>		
Neighbourhood Organizations	250	Stakeholder Meetings; Community Circles; survey; events, web
Community Organizations	550	Stakeholder Meetings; Community Circles; survey, events, web
Business and Development Community	150	Open Houses; Stakeholder Meetings; survey, events
Youth (under 30)	500	Youth Workshops; Community Circles; survey, events; web
Subject Area Experts	50	Stakeholder Meetings; web
General public	2500	Survey; web discussions

## 7. KEY ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

### 1. Project Website

#### *Timeline:*

Entire duration of the project

#### *Objectives:*

- Launch earned media strategy when website and brand go live
- Provide relevant project information to public
- Serve as a resource library
- Advertise events
- Facilitate discussions
- Solicit feedback and comments in variety of ways

#### *Description:*

The project website will be the central source of information for everyone with an interest or stake in the OCP project. In Phase 1 it will help introduce the project brand, explain the OCP project, highlight the opportunities of the process, and disseminate background information to allow for informed discussions; the website will be key to achieving the participation targets. As part of its development, stakeholder lists will be created and used to raise awareness of the project and its brand; specific tools and formats to engage specific target audiences will also be developed and profiled on the website.

In Phase 2 the website will serve as a central venue for advertising events, coordinating engagement, providing timely background information, providing a forum for people to provide comments on potential plan directions, and documenting input gathered. This will require some innovation in the use of social media to drive interest and seed community conversations that will feed people to the project website.

In Phase 3 the website will be used to communicate preliminary plan directions and to raise interest in the upcoming plan review in Phase 4. A concerted effort will be made to keep interest in the larger community alive by providing regular updates.

In Phase 4 the website will profile plan review events, provide a copy of the draft plan for review, and support comment on potential changes by everyone who has been reached in previous phases. The website and a newsletter will work together to raise awareness, showing initial directions and spurring interest in final events. Tracking and reporting of input received to date will have to be supported on the website as well, to close the loop at the end of the project.

#### *City Outcomes:*

- Communicates project identity, background information, and engagement activities
- Outlines a predictable OCP process and explains all steps therein clearly
- Provide relevant information in a timely fashion
- Links to a variety of engagement streams matched to audiences including social networking, web-based feedback, and community circles (still TBD)

*Public Outcomes:*

- Awareness of project
- Ongoing involvement in the process
- Ability to provide feedback
- Introduction to background research
- Access to consultation events and discussions

## **2. Community Survey on OCP-Related Topics**

*Timeline:*

Late Jan 2010 to early March 2010

*Objectives:*

- Raise profile of the project
- Check in on initial priorities and themes for the OCP work with broadest set of public from earliest days
- Confirm focus for next steps of the project

*Description:*

Short online survey designed to raise awareness of the process and the issues that the OCP project will address; also uses kiosks in community locations to draw in wider audience. Mostly an issues and priorities survey to check that the OCP project has the right themes and foci, as linked to the VSF.

*City Outcome:*

- Raises awareness of the project and its focus
- Drive attendance at upcoming events
- Confirmation or modification of initial themes and questions to ask in further phases

*Public Outcome:*

- Awareness of the project and confidence in its transparent and responsive nature
- Greater interest in further project activities

## **3. Kick-off Event / Discussion Forum**

*Timeline:*

March 2010

*Objectives:*

- Introduce OCP Project to a wide group of interested parties
- Communicate background research in a clear and powerful fashion, creating the frame for the rest of the process
- Use Victoria Sustainability Framework goals and themes to initiate dialogue on community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in specific topic areas
- Public review, comment on, and sign up for Neighbourhood Planning Program goals
- Ensure widest set of stakeholders have been identified and invited from the earliest stages and start the “snowball” recruitment process
- Introduce Community Circles and other engagement tools
- Public comment on factors influencing future city growth pattern

*Description:*

This event will occupy a weekend and will encompass a range of activities that will be designed to satisfy a variety of engagement interests. These activities could include things such as:

- **Interactive Project Display Boards:** Displaying and seeking feedback on background research, Victoria Sustainability Framework goals and themes, neighbourhood planning, and considerations for Victoria's future urban form
- **Workshops:** Hosted by City staff or consultants, using background research to explore various topic areas in depth, and help develop a set of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that can be used to help contribute to the development of OCP policies
- **Expert Speakers / Panel Discussions:** Selected speakers will address key topics related to the creation of an OCP in Victoria. These sessions will be used as key events in the schedule and invite public dialogue.
- **Community Circle Orientation:** Display boards, explanatory materials, background information, workbook modules, and orientation session will be provided to prepare community members to facilitate their own community circles. A permanent physical space will be established, in addition to regularly scheduled orientation sessions.

*City Outcomes:*

- Community awareness of OCP project, engagement activities, and resources
- Community awareness of key issues and challenges facing Victoria in next 25 years
- Exploration of VSF goals and themes as an input to the OCP process
- Refinement and confirmation of Neighbourhood Planning Program goals
- Initial identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats with respect to key OCP topic areas
- Initiation of Community Circle engagement activities

*Public Outcomes:*

- Opportunity to learn about background research and engage in discussions with recognized experts, City staff, and other community members
- Access and notification to further engagement opportunities
- Opportunity to provide input on issues facing Victoria over next 25 years, neighbourhood planning goals, and integration of Victoria Sustainability framework goals into OCP

#### **4. Community Circles**

*Timeline:*

March 2010-June 2010

*Objectives:*

- Facilitate community discussion on key OCP topic areas
- Facilitate community discussion on neighbourhood planning in a citywide context
- Develop material to inform the development of OCP policies and actions

*Description:*

This technique will empower community members to lead and engage in discussions regarding key OCP topic areas, such as climate change, affordable housing or food security. The exact nature and structure in which people will be engaged in the

community circles will be developed based on engagement objectives, stakeholder needs, and plan scope. The overall intention is to provide community members with the information and tools to engage in self-organized conversations on key issues that will feed directly into future directions for Victoria.

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. The circles will be community led, but assistance will be given to interested community members, including orientation sessions for facilitators. The intention with the discussions is that will largely be organized and held in diverse community venues (including kitchen tables, schools, churches, community centres, etc.)

*City Outcomes:*

- Structured community circle output that can be used to inform the development of specific OCP policies and implementation strategies
- Structured community circle output that can be used to help develop a neighbourhood planning program
- Better understanding of community dimensions of topic areas
- Identification of potential community resources for implementation

*Public Outcomes:*

- Opportunity to explore future directions for the City with friends, neighbours and other interested community members
- Completed topic-specific community circle exercises that will be a key input in the development of OCP policies
- Increased understanding and awareness of key OCP issues

## **5. Stakeholder Meetings**

*Timeline:*

March 2010 – June 2010; October 2010 – December 2010

*Objectives:*

- Introduce OCP project and identify any concerns/issues early on
- Expand the list of stakeholders to be consulted on an ongoing basis
- Recruit stakeholders to raise awareness of the OCP project in their networks
- Explore specific elements of topic areas and establish stakeholder priorities
- Develop a sense of possible action items and community implementation resources

*Description:*

These meetings will be organized to build an early awareness of the project and solicit feedback among the widest set of stakeholder and community groups. The meetings will commence early in the process and will ensure a thorough and comprehensive stakeholder list is built over time. Staff will organize and facilitate meetings, using groups as a resource to raise the profile of the project and also provide feedback on key policy areas, based on their interests and expertise.

*City Outcomes:*

- Detailed exploration of OCP topic areas with key interested individuals
- Awareness and promotion of OCP project and engagement events
- Gain buy-in for assistance with implementation
- Expanded list of stakeholders

*Public Outcomes:*

- Focused exploration of OCP topic areas of interest or expertise
- Awareness and understanding of project
- Trust that the project is responding to key stakeholder concerns
- Ability to provide direct input
- Opportunity to make a commitment to work with the City

## 6. Options for the Future Forum

*Timeline:*

June 2010

*Objectives:*

- Provide an opportunity for community circle participants to exchange ideas and debrief on the results of their community discussions
- Present future sustainability scenarios and select a preferred sustainability scenario
- Discuss a Neighbourhood Planning Program structure

*Description:*

Similar to the first event, this event will encompass a weekend and involve a range of activities, including:

- **Community Circle Workshops:** This event will provide an opportunity for participants of community circles to get together and discuss their ideas with other groups who explored the same topic areas. The workshop will serve multiple purposes, including allowing participants to explore potential trade-offs of courses of action and providing a range of stakeholders with the opportunity to listen to the results of community discussions.
- **Exploration and Selection of a Future Sustainability Scenario:** Several sustainability scenarios illustrating future development pattern change alternatives will be prepared for this event. Scenario development will be based on existing policy and information obtained at the kick-off event and 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. Participants will be given a chance to view the options, assess their implications, and cast a vote for their preferred scenario using electronic voting technology. Voting results will be summarized, indicating overall public preference, which will be a key consideration in the selection of a preferred urban sustainability approach.
- **Neighbourhood Planning Discussions:** Sessions will be held that explore the elements of a neighbourhood planning program. Specifically, the working sessions will look to develop a program framework that will 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.

*City Outcomes:*

- Preferred future urban sustainability pattern for the City
- Framework for a Neighbourhood Planning Program
- Results of topic-specific community discussions, including a list of potential OCP directions and implementation actions

*Public Outcomes:*

- Opportunity to exchange and discuss ideas developed in community circle exercises
- Ability to learn about sustainability possibilities
- Ability to express public preference on the future sustainability development approach for the City
- Opportunity to provide feedback on neighbourhood planning program structure

## **7. Newsletters**

*Timeline:*

January 2010, May 2010, September 2010

*Objectives:*

- Raise awareness of the OCP project
- Advertise key events and engagement activities
- Communicate key project milestones and directions

*Description:*

Newsletters will be used at key intervals of the project to introduce key project concepts, advertise events and engagement activities, and share proposed project directions. The newsletter will direct people to the project website and reinforce the plan's identity and key messages at critical points of the process.

*City Outcomes:*

- Increased awareness of the OCP project
- Communication of key project resources, events and activities
- Communication of key project messages and directions

*Public Outcomes:*

- Introduction and explanation of OCP project and timelines
- Notification of plan events and engagement activities
- Notification of project milestones and evolving directions

## **8. Draft Plan Feedback**

### *Timeline:*

October 2010-December 2010

### *Objectives:*

- Present draft plan directions
- Seek feedback and suggestions for revisions on Draft OCP
- Explore potential implementation strategies

### *Description:*

The draft plan review will seek to confirm and refine proposed plan directions. The engagement portion of the review will include open houses presenting key plan directions, stakeholder meetings, and web-based opportunities to provide feedback.

### *Outcomes:*

- Plan revisions based on public comment
- Discussion of implementation strategies

### *Public Outcomes:*

- Opportunity to provide feedback on draft plan content
- Opportunity to suggest implementation ideas and strategies
- Opportunity to learn about sustainability and the City

## **8. PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION**

The following is a preliminary list of stakeholders who have an interest in the development of a new OCP. This list will be reviewed and supplemented throughout the OCP process. The list will serve as a starting point to help inform the development and delivery of engagement activities.

### **1. General Public**

- City of Victoria residents
- Business or property owners
- Individuals who work, shop or recreate in Victoria

### **2. Organized Groups**

#### Neighbourhood Organizations

- Neighbourhood Associations (e.g. Downtown Residents Association)
- Neighbourhood Land Use Groups registered with the City
- Community Associations/Community Centres (e.g. Downtown Blanshard Advisory Committee)

#### Community Organizations

- Community Council
- Youth Council

- Hallmark Society
- Social Agencies (e.g. PEERS, Single Parents' Resource Centre, Cool Aid, Victoria Women's Transition House Society)
- Sports and Recreation groups (e.g. Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club)
- Transit Advocacy groups (e.g. Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition)
- Low Income Advocacy groups
- Housing co-ops
- Non-profit Housing Providers (e.g. Pacifica Housing Association)
- Food System Stakeholders (e.g. LifeCycles, Market Operators)
- Cultural Associations
- Arts groups
- Non-profit sector – arts organizations, service providers
- Environmental groups (e.g. CityGreen, Sierra Club)
- Vancouver Island Strata Owners' Association
- Seniors' Centres (e.g. James Bay New Horizons, Fairfield Activity Centre)

#### Business Community

- Businesses
- Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Victoria Business Association
- Neighbourhood Business Associations
- Urban Development Institute
- Greater Victoria Development Agency
- Rental Owners and Managers Society of BC
- Property owners associations
- Property management companies
- Developers

#### Education Stakeholders

- University of Victoria
- Royal Roads University
- Camosun College
- Student Societies (e.g. UVSS, GSS, CCSS)
- High Schools
- School Parent Advisory Committees

- Children and Youth – through the School District

#### Subject Area Experts

- Planners in the region (Planning Institute of BC)
- Sustainable Development Specialists
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- Engineers, Architects and Designers
- Cascadia Green Building Council

### **3. Governments and Government Agencies**

- Councils of adjacent municipalities (Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt)
- Capital Regional District
- First Nations (Songhees)
- School District 61
- Provincial and Federal Governments and their agencies
- BC Transit
- Vancouver Island Health Authority

Full government agency consultation strategy to be detailed later in the process in accordance with requirements of the *Local Government Act*.

### **4. City of Victoria**

#### Mayor and City Council

#### Advisory Groups

- OCP Citizen Advisory Committee
- Public Advisory Planning Committee

#### City of Victoria Staff

- Project Team
- City of Victoria staff (including Directors)
- Interdepartmental Technical Advisory Committee
- Police Department

### **5. Media**

- Print
- TV
- Radio
- Online