

POLICY REPORT

Governance & Priorities Committee

DATE: December 11, 2009

PREPARED BY: Cameron Scott, Senior Planner, Community Planning

ENDORSED BY: Mark Hornell, Assistant Director, Community Planning
Deb Day, Director of Planning & Development
Gail Stephens, City Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Official Community Plan (OCP) Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a proposed OCP Project Charter and associated Public Engagement Strategy. On August 20, 2009, staff presented Council with a Proposed Terms of Reference for the development of a new OCP. At that meeting Council directed staff to revise the Terms of Reference with the help of a Citizen Advisory Committee and to develop a public engagement strategy (Attachment A).

Staff have developed, in association with the OCP Citizen Advisory Committee, a revised OCP Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy. Key elements of the new OCP planning process include a condensed twelve month timeline, a more intense public engagement phase, more guidance for plan content, and a clearer delineation of project phases, roles and responsibilities.

The other major element of the revised Project Charter is the inclusion of a detailed Public Engagement Strategy. The Strategy builds on the guiding principles of the International Association of Public Participation, which were previously endorsed by Council. The Strategy seeks to align with the Civic Engagement Strategy and use a range of techniques to meaningfully engage the public.

The revised OCP Project Charter lays out a planning process which will enable the development of a draft OCP within one year from Council approval of this process. The compressed timeline has resulted in some concessions with respect to the duration of public engagement and the inclusion of a neighbourhood planning pilot program, but ultimately provides for a process, schedule of work, and engagement strategy to deliver a successful project.

Recommendation

That Council approve the OCP Project Charter and associated OCP Public Engagement Strategy, as laid out in Attachment B.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Scott
Senior Planner, Community Planning

Mark Hornell
Assistant Director, Community Planning

Deb Day
Director, Planning & Development

Gail Stephens
City Manager

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a proposed OCP Project Charter and associated Public Engagement Strategy.

2. Background

On March 9, 2009, staff brought forward for Council's consideration, a Proposed Terms of Reference for the creation of a new OCP and the renewal of the City's Neighbourhood Planning Program. On May 20, 2009, Council held a Town Hall Meeting on the Proposed Terms of Reference. The Town Hall Meeting provided a forum for community members to share their thoughts, ideas and suggestions directly with Council.

Following the Town Hall Meeting, Council passed a motion (June 11, 2009) confirming the City's commitment to the Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation that were established by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Through the motion, Council also directed staff:

- to provide Council with a summary assessment of public input acquired to date
- to comment on how the OCP planning process can be consistent with the Core Values for Public Participation
- to provide options for a robust level of public participation where the community drive the process guided by knowledgeable staff and consultants
- to recommend a strategy to engage a broad cross-section of the community in a meaningful and timely process
- to provide options for the establishment of an OCP Task Force
- to provide a date when the information will be available on the City's Website, as well as options related to the direct notification of all stakeholders.

Public feedback from the Town Hall Meeting and the OCP Terms of Reference were presented to Council on August 27, 2009. At the August 27, 2009, meeting it was moved that Council direct staff to strike a Citizen Advisory Committee with a six month mandate with the following goal:

1. To create Terms of Reference for the Official Community Plan
2. Consider options for a Public Engagement Strategy.

During the August meeting, Council also expressed the need for a timely OCP process that could be completed within 12 months. Subsequent to the meeting, an OCP Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was established to serve as a sounding board throughout the OCP process. The role of the CAC is detailed in Attachment A of this document. As a first task, the CAC is engaged with staff in the development of an OCP Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy.

3. Issues

- The development of a revised OCP Project Charter to fit a twelve month timeline
- The development of a OCP Public Engagement Strategy.

4. Analysis

4.1 Revised OCP Project Charter

The revised Project Charter (Attachment A) is based on the OCP Terms of Reference that was previously presented to Council on August 20, 2009. The new proposed OCP Project Charter reflects the revised twelve month timeline, input from the CAC, and the incorporation of a public engagement strategy. The new OCP planning process is segmented into the following four phases:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation and Background Research (October 2009 - February 2010)
- Phase 2: Community Engagement and Exploration of Concepts (March - June 2010)
- Phase 3: Information Analysis and Plan Drafting (July - October 2010)
- Phase 4: Draft Plan Review and Refinement (October 2010 - January 2011).

Key revisions to the OCP process include:

- Tighter timeline, with concentrated phases
- A condensed, but more intense public engagement phase
- The removal of the neighbourhood planning pilot program
- A more detailed explanation of engagement activities
- Clear definition of roles, responsibilities and resources
- Guidance for the development of plan content, including an emphasis on the need for the plan to have an adaptive management framework.

In total these changes provide a Project Charter that sets out a more focused plan process, more robust engagement events, and a clearer framework for the development of plan content. In addition, the establishment of the CAC provides staff with an excellent community resource to assist in moving the plan through a focused planning process.

4.2 OCP Public Engagement Strategy

When the previous OCP Terms of Reference were presented to Council, direction was given to staff to prepare a Public Engagement Strategy as part of the revised Terms of Reference. The inclusion of an engagement plan was intended to further the directions that were given by Council when they endorsed the IAP2 principles on June 10, 2009. The planning process now includes a variety of engagement strategies and techniques (detailed in Appendix B of Attachment B) that seek to meaningfully involve both a broad cross-section of the population and key stakeholder groups. The strategy uses engagement techniques that are structured to engage different audiences at different levels. The key techniques that will be used in the process are:

- Project Website: Central venue to provide information, exchange ideas, and advertise events.
- Community Survey: Initial activity to raise project awareness and check in on initial themes and priorities of OCP.
- Kick Off Event / Discussion Forum: A large scale event to introduce the project, communicate key challenges facing Victoria, and initiate discussions on OCP directions.
- Stakeholder Meetings: Meeting to raise awareness of the project in different networks and explore key policy areas based on stakeholder interests and expertise
- Community Circles: Exploration of specific OCP topic areas through structured discussions that are held in the community and led by community members

- Options for the Future Forum: A second large scale event that will provide a venue for exchanging ideas developed in community circles and stakeholder meetings, assessing the future sustainable development pattern of the city, and exploring possible plan directions.
- Newsletters: Provide information at key points in the process.
- Draft Plan Feedback: Events will be held in the Fall 2010 to share the draft plan and provide an opportunity to refine and enhance the draft plan.

HB Lanarc has been retained by the City to assist in the development of the engagement strategy, as well as ensuring that engagement activities are consistent with the City's overall engagement strategy. The key engagement periods are in Phase 2 (March - June 2010), where engagement centres on the development of ideas and possible plan directions and Phase 4 (October - December 2010), where engagement focuses on the review of draft plan direction. Overall, the engagement strategy sets a target of involving 4000 residents and 1000 non-residents. An extensive stakeholder list will be compiled and continuously expanded during the project to ensure outreach is conducted to key groups.

4.a. Options

- Approve OCP Project Charter and the associated OCP Public Engagement Strategy, as laid out in Attachment B
- Not approve OCP Project Charter and the associated OCP Public Engagement Strategy and provide staff with further directions.

Option	Pros	Cons
Option 1: Approve Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project initiated immediately ○ Maintains alignment and momentum of project tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ambitious timeline
Option 2: Do not Approve Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time to reflect on and refine Project Charter and Public Engagement Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Timeline and project delivery date extended ○ Constrains public engagement possibilities in Spring 2010

4.b. Resource Impacts

Budget amounts and staffing resources have been included in the 2010 financial plan. A Senior Planner, Planner, and 0.5 FTE Planning Technician are assigned to complete this work, along with staff support required from corporate communications and other departments.

4.c. Conclusions

The revised OCP Project Charter provides a sound planning process which will enable the development of a final draft OCP within one year from Council approval of this process. The compressed timeline has resulted in some concessions with respect to the duration of public engagement and the inclusion of a neighbourhood planning pilot program. However, adequate resources are in place to deliver this project in one year, provided each milestone is delivered on time.

5. Recommendation

That Council approve the OCP Project Charter and associated OCP Public Engagement Strategy, as laid out in Attachment B.

6. List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Citizen Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
- Attachment B: OCP Project Charter with Public Engagement Strategy.