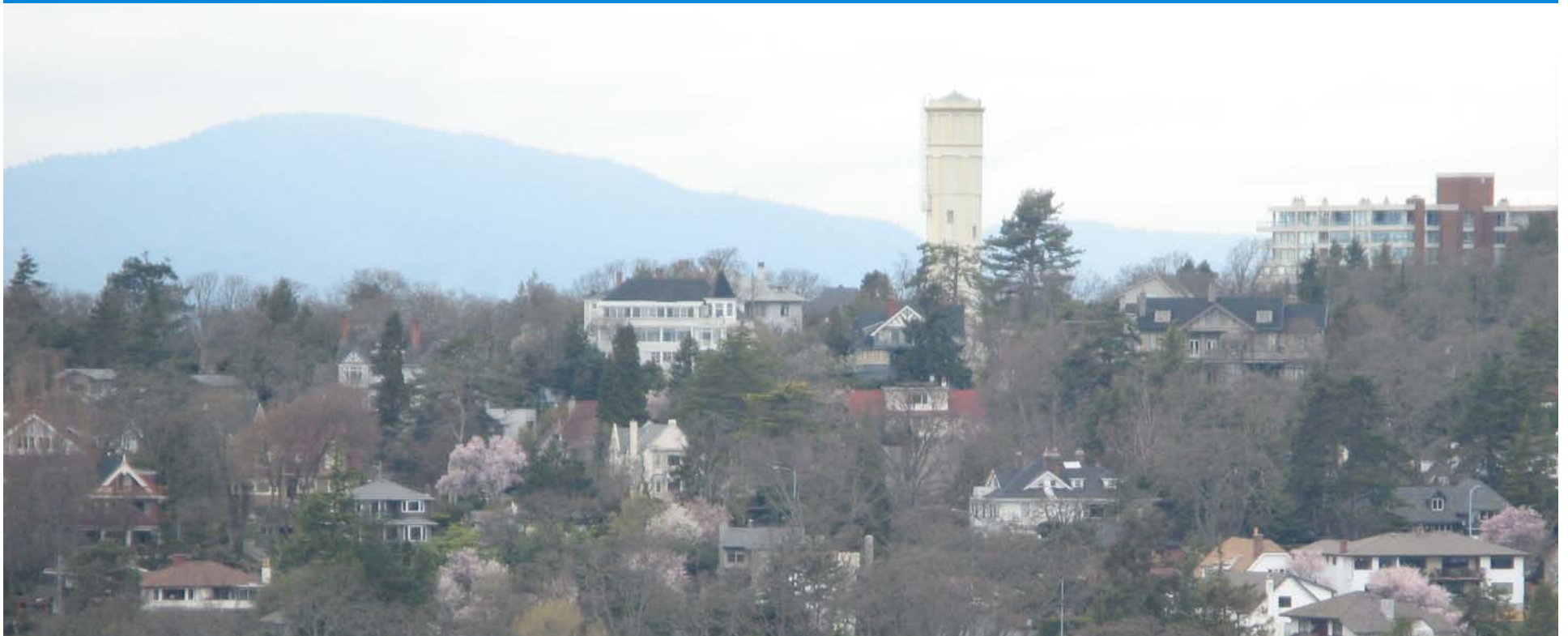




Neighbourhood Planning: A Discussion Paper

Planning & Development Department

February 2008



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discussion paper provides a synthesis of the issues, opportunities and challenges associated with neighbourhood planning in Victoria. This is achieved by reviewing how the City has historically undertaken neighbourhood planning; identifying the community's and other stakeholders' issues with the City's current approach to neighbourhood planning; examining how the cities of Vancouver, Winnipeg, Seattle and Lethbridge approach neighbourhood planning; and, by developing a list of lessons learned and accompanying considerations that can provide guidance and direction to a review and update of the City's neighbourhood planning program.

The considerations have been grouped under five headings and are summarized below.

Program Design

- From the perspectives of effectiveness and efficiency consideration should be given to developing a planning program with process, format, content and other requirements common to all neighbourhoods. This would help to ensure that neighbourhood-level planning is delivered in a more efficient and effective manner.
- Consideration should be given to establishing a clear and consistent purpose and rationale for the neighbourhood planning program. This will help to ensure consistency in terms of the program's content, as well as provide focus to what neighbourhood issues the program addresses and what issues it does not address.
- If a single neighbourhood planning program that is common to all city neighbourhoods is developed consideration should be given to testing the strengths and weaknesses of the program through a pilot project.
- Consideration should be given to developing a standard format for neighbourhood planning documents.
- Strengthening the approach for prioritizing neighbourhood planning initiatives would allow neighbourhoods to know where they stand in terms of timing, as well as provide City departments with an opportunity to allocate appropriate resources (i.e., financial and staff).
- When designing a neighbourhood planning program consideration should be given to how to effectively involve external agencies in the neighbourhood planning process.

Program Structure

- A program common to all neighbourhood would ensure a consistent and clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Consideration should be given to having clearly articulated program goals and terms of reference. This will ensure that everyone knows the parameters of the program as well as their roles and responsibilities, which will help to ensure that neighbourhood planning initiatives, are delivered in a timely manner to all neighbourhoods requiring planning.
- If a neighbourhood planning process is led by neighbourhood residents it must be highly organized and structured with strong involvement of City staff.

Communication and Public Involvement

- Consideration should be given to developing a communication/public outreach strategy that provides a variety of opportunities for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide input. The strategy should build on past successes and could be verified and further strengthened through a pilot project.
- Community involvement will be central to the success of any neighbourhood planning program, so consideration should be given to designing a program that is inclusive.
- Consideration should be given to actively involving all necessary City departments in the planning process. Though, the type and degree of involvement would have to take into account the existing workloads of the departments.

City Wide Policy Planning

- Considerations should be given to the establishment of city-wide planning goals. This includes clearly articulating the policy and regulatory linkages between the various levels of planning (i.e., city-wide, neighbourhood and regulatory measures).
- Administratively, it may be more efficient and effective to address neighbourhood planning issues, where feasible, from a city-wide perspective rather than neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood.
- Consideration should be given to first addressing neighbourhood planning issues common to the majority of neighbourhoods. That will help to ensure that planning services of the appropriate type are equitably delivered to all neighbourhoods.

- During the review and update of the neighbourhood planning program consideration will have to be given on how best to achieve “certainty.” The first step may be to ensure that city-wide policies and goals provide clear direction to neighbourhood-level planning.

Implementation and Financial Management

- Consideration should be given to ensuring better linkages between the recommendations coming out of neighbourhood planning processes and the City’s budgeting and grant administration approval processes.
- Consideration should be given to formally linking existing neighbourhood grant programs to the implementation plans coming out of future neighbourhood planning exercises.

Conclusion

A key objective of the review and update of the City’s neighbourhood planning program should be to design and develop a program that can effectively, efficiently and equitably deliver neighbourhood planning services of the appropriate type to all of the city’s neighbourhoods. The next steps would involve developing program goals and principles.

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1	Purpose.....	1
1.2	Data Sources and Study Process.....	1
1.3	What is a Neighbourhood Planning Program	2
1.4	Organization of the Discussion Paper.....	2

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1	Introduction.....	4
2.2	Historical Overview.....	4
2.3	Existing Neighbourhood Plans.....	5
2.4	Purpose – Neighbourhood Plans.....	8
2.5	Neighbourhood Plan Elements.....	9
2.6	Approaches to Neighbourhood Planning.....	13
2.7	Neighbourhood Planning Processes.....	16
2.8	Linkages with the Official Community Plan.....	19
2.9	Prioritizing Neighbourhood Planning Initiatives.....	19
2.10	Funding Neighbourhood Planning.....	20

3.0 ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

3.1	Introduction.....	22
3.2	Issues Identification Meetings.....	22
3.3	Interviews.....	23
3.4	Issues – An Overview.....	23
3.5	Key Themes.....	24

4.0 CASE STUDIES

4.1	Introduction.....	27
4.2	Selection of Case Study Communities.....	27
4.3	Vancouver.....	28
4.4	Winnipeg.....	34
4.5	Seattle.....	38
4.6	Lethbridge.....	44

5.0 COMPARABLES ANALYSIS

5.1	Introduction.....	49
-----	-------------------	----

6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

6.1	Introduction.....	55
6.2	Conclusion.....	62

MAPS

Map 1 – Neighbourhood Planning Areas.....	6
---	---

TABLES

Table 1 Existing Neighbourhood Plans.....	7
Table 2 Purpose Statement - Neighbourhood Plans.....	9
Table 3 Neighbourhood Plan Elements.....	10
Table 4 Approaches to Neighbourhood Planning.....	14
Table 5 Characteristics of Municipalities.....	49
Table 6 Rationale and Program Structure.....	50
Table 7 Neighbourhood Planning Process.....	51
Table 8 Neighbourhood Prioritization.....	52
Table 9 Program Administration and Implementation.....	53
Table 10 Program Outcomes.....	54

GLOSSARY

APPENDICES

Appendix A	References
Appendix B	Community Groups Contacted for Issues Identification Meetings
Appendix C	Participants - Issues Identification Meetings
Appendix D	Issues Identified
Appendix E	Selecting Case Study Communities – Public Feedback

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This discussion paper has two purposes: to initiate a dialogue about the future of neighbourhood planning in Victoria; and to provide guidance and direction to a review and update of the City of Victoria's Neighbourhood Planning Program.

This discussion paper has four objectives:

- to develop a contextual understanding of the City of Victoria's current approach to neighbourhood planning;
- to identify, from various perspectives, issues with the City's current approach to neighbourhood planning;
- to examine how other municipalities approach planning at the neighbourhood level; and,
- to identify opportunities for improving the City's approach to neighbourhood planning.

1.2 Data Sources and Study Process

The information presented in this discussion paper came from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Research methods included: interviews with staff from the City of Victoria, as well as issues identification meetings with community members and development industry representatives. Secondary data were obtained from the City of Victoria's planning and policy documents, City Council minutes, and internal department meeting minutes. Data were also drawn from a review of planning and policy documents acquired from a variety of municipal jurisdictions. Referenced materials are provided in **Appendix A**.

The study process involved a detailed review of the City's historical approaches to neighbourhood planning. This was followed by a series of interviews with staff from various City departments. Two issues identification meetings also formed part of the process. The issues identification meetings were intended to provide a forum for

community members and development industry representatives to share their thoughts about neighbourhood planning in Victoria. A review of how other municipalities approach neighbourhood planning was then conducted.

Through this process this discussion paper provides a synthesis of the issues, opportunities and challenges with respect to the future of neighbourhood planning in Victoria.

1.3 What is a Neighbourhood Planning Program?

Throughout this discussion paper the term “neighbourhood planning program” is used. The term denotes a municipality’s approach to neighbourhood-level planning. This encompasses how neighbourhood planning is administratively structured, sanctioned and delivered. This includes the planning process and community involvement techniques that form part of the program, as well as the program’s scope of work. A neighbourhood planning program can be prepared either for a single neighbourhood, or for multiple neighbourhoods.

1.4 Organization of the Discussion Paper

The remaining sections of this discussion paper are organized as follows:

Section 2 – Situational Analysis of the City’s current approach to neighbourhood planning. This section provides an overview of previous neighbourhood planning programs and processes and examines existing neighbourhood plans.

Section 3 – Issues Identification provides an overview of the findings of issues identification meetings and interviews. The issues have been classified under key themes. Aspects of the key themes should be considered in the review and update of the City’s neighbourhood planning program.

Section 4 – Case Studies provides a review of neighbourhood planning programs from selected case study communities. This includes an analysis of the planning model used by the community, how neighbourhood

planning initiatives are prioritized, how neighbourhood planning is administered, and the process used for undertaking neighbourhood planning.

Section 5 – Comparables Analysis provides tabular summaries of the elements and aspects of the case study neighbourhood planning programs. This includes identifying the similarities and differences between the examined programs.

Section 6 – Lessons Learned summarizes lessons learned from the preceding sections. This final section also includes a list of neighbourhood planning considerations that are intended to provide direction and guidance to the review and update of the City’s approach to neighbourhood planning.

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the City's previous approaches to neighbourhood planning. The section begins with an historical overview of planning in Victoria. This is followed by an examination of the elements contained in each of the City's existing neighbourhood plans. Previous neighbourhood planning processes are also examined, as are the policy linkages between the City's Official Community Plan and neighbourhood plans. This section concludes with a discussion of how neighbourhood planning activities have been prioritized and of the financing mechanisms associated with neighbourhood planning.

2.2 Historical Overview

The City of Victoria has a long history of managing its physical development. The first zoning bylaw was adopted in 1927. A Town Planning Commission was established in 1945, and the Department of Community Development was established in 1966.

In 1965 the Capital Regional Planning Board prepared a city-wide plan entitled *Overall Plan for Victoria*. The plan examined the city's role within the region as well as analyzed the roles of individual neighbourhoods within the city. In the early 1970's, under the federal government's Neighbourhood Improvement Program, neighbourhood planning was undertaken for Victoria West, James Bay and Spring Ridge (in Fernwood). Through the mid-1970's a series of studies analyzed neighbourhood issues at a city sector level for the central city, inner-city and suburban neighbourhoods.

In 1986 the City adopted an Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP established a series of general city-wide goals and policies for land use, transportation, parks and open space. The OCP also contained a suggested priority list for updating neighbourhood plans. In 1995, the City's OCP was reviewed and updated. The review saw the addition of several new policy directions. These included, for example, social planning, the preservation of

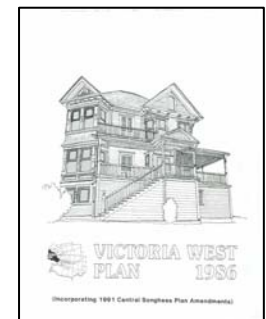
environmental quality and the recognition of the role arts and culture play in the city. In 2005 the OCP was amended to include a Regional Context Statement outlining how the OCP conforms to the Capital Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy.

In the mid-1980's the *Victoria West Plan* was updated and a plan was prepared for the Rockland neighbourhood. Through the early- to mid-1990's a concerted effort was made by the City to undertake neighbourhood planning for nine neighbourhoods. The last neighbourhood plan to be prepared was for the Gonzales neighbourhood. The plan was approved by City Council in 2002.

2.3 Existing Neighbourhood Plans

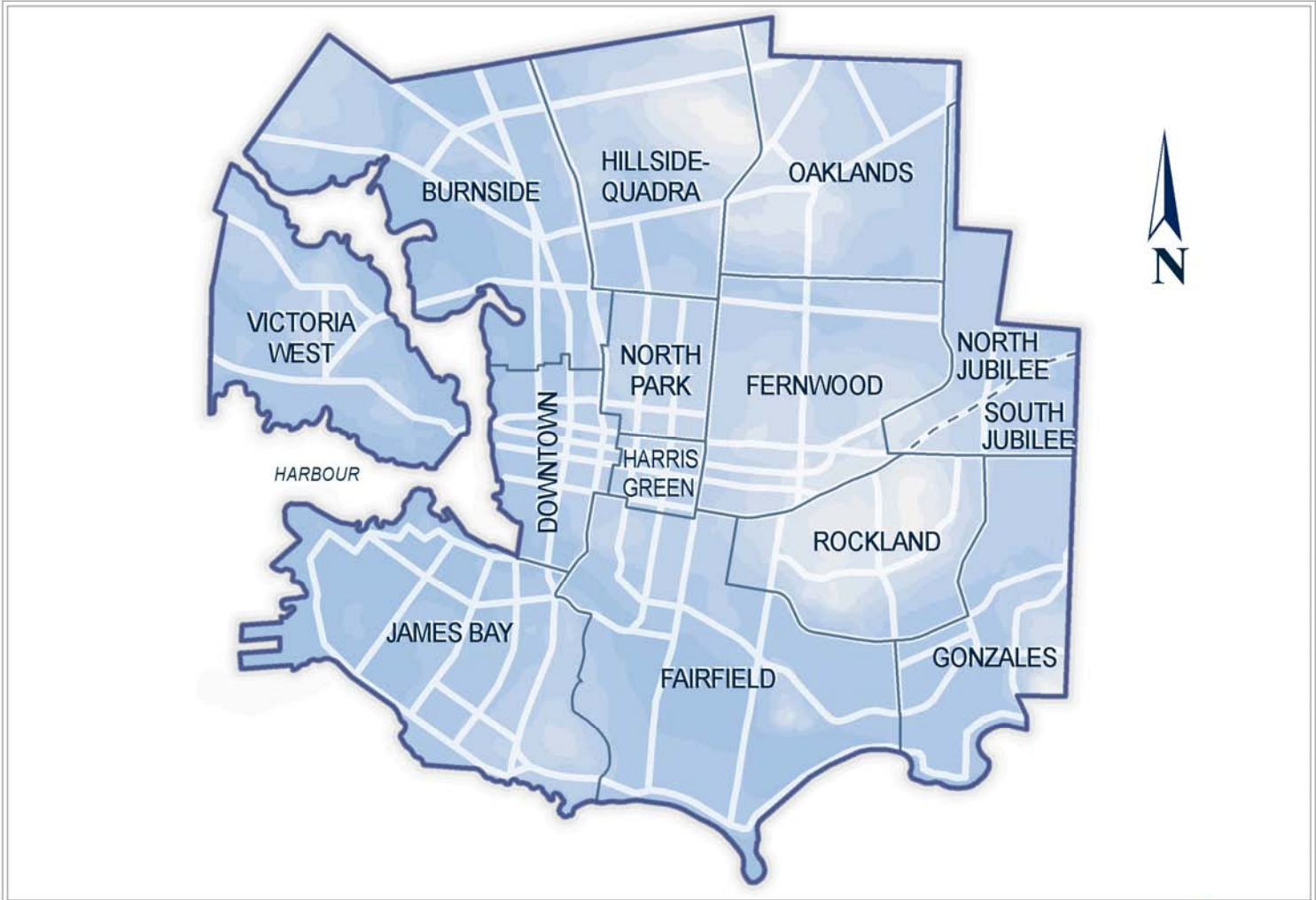
In the City of Victoria 12 neighbourhood plans have currently been approved by City Council by resolution. The planning area for each neighbourhood plan is identified on **Map 1**. **Table 1** highlights the existing neighbourhood plans, the year each plan was approved, the approximate time it took to prepare the plan, and any existing precinct plans that apply to sub-areas within a neighbourhood. It should be noted that the only neighbourhood without a plan overseeing the entire area is Fairfield.¹ As a result, planning documents for sub-areas areas within the neighbourhood have only been shown on **Table 1**. Though it does not apply to a specific neighbourhood, the *Victoria Harbour Plan* has been included as part of the list, as the policy direction coming from the plan has implications for neighbourhoods abutting the harbour.

As shown on **Table 1** the majority of the existing neighbourhood plans were prepared during the early- to mid-1990's. On average, it took over a year and a half to prepare a single plan. In addition, following the completion of a neighbourhood plan sub-area planning often occurred, whether through the preparation of a precinct plan or urban design guidelines.²



¹ Existing neighbourhood policies for Fairfield have been consolidated into a single document.

² For neighbourhood design guidelines see Table C in the *Official Community Plan*.



Neighbourhood Planning Areas, Map 1



**Table 1
Existing Neighbourhood Plans**

Neighbourhood Plan	Year Approved	Preparation Timelines (approximate)	Precinct Plans
Victoria West Plan	1986	N/A	
Rockland Neighbourhood Plan	1987	6 months	
Downtown Victoria Plan	1990	1.5 years	
Burnside Neighbourhood Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1992 (Plan Revised 1995) 	1 year	
James Bay Neighbourhood Plan	1993	2.5 years*	
Oaklands Neighbourhood Plan	1993	2.5 years	
Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan	1994	2.5 years	
Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan	1995	2 years	
Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan	1996	2 years	
Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan	1996	1.5 years	
North Park Local Plan	1996	3 years	
Victoria Harbour Plan	2001	N/A	
Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan	2002	3 years	
Fairfield Neighbourhood (Consolidated policies available)	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathedral Hill Precinct Plan (2004) Humboldt Valley Precinct Plan (2005)

*After completion of draft plan

2.4 Purpose – Neighbourhood Plans

A neighbourhood plan’s “Purpose Statement” articulates the rationale for preparing the plan. The purpose statements contained in Victoria’s neighbourhood plans can be found under a variety of headings, including the following: “Purpose,” “Background,” “Introduction,” “Why Neighbourhood Planning Now?,” and “Plan Goals.” In the case of two neighbourhood plans the purpose for preparing the plans is not stated in the plans. Rather, it is stated in a letter from the Chairman of Planning that accompanies each of the plans (*Victoria West Plan* and the *Rockland Neighbourhood Plan*).

Table 2 highlights the purpose, or rationale for each neighbourhood plan, as stated in the plan. As shown on the table, the main purpose of all of the neighbourhood plans is to guide land use change, or to review existing neighbourhood policies. Following this, the rationale for undertaking neighbourhood planning varies between plans. For instance, additional reasons for preparing a neighbourhood plan may be to implement city-wide policies, address inter-municipal planning issues, or provide direction to public investment and capital planning.

**Table 2
Purpose Statement - Neighbourhood Plans**

Neighbourhood Plan	Year Approved	Guide Land Use Change/Redevelopment	Reviewing Neighbourhood Policies	Support Businesses	Inter-municipal Planning	Direct Public Investment	Address Social Objectives	Development Activities	Direct Marine Conflicts	Keep Downtown Compact	Name the neighbourhood	Define Neighbourhood Boundaries	Advise Public Agencies	Address Concerns of Residents	Improve Public Access to Gorge Waterway	Preserve Old Town
Victoria West Plan	1986		X													
Rockland Neighbourhood Plan	1987	X														
Downtown Victoria Plan	1990	X		X												X
Burnside Neighbourhood Plan	1992				X	X	X									X
James Bay Neighbourhood Plan	1993	X				X									x	
Oaklands Neighbourhood Plan	1993	X					X									
Femwood Neighbourhood Plan	1994	X						X				X	X			
Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan	1995	X									X					
Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan	1996	X					X									
Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan	1996		X													
North Park Local Plan	1996	X				X					X					
Victoria Harbour Plan	2001	X						X	X							
Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan	2002	X					X							X	X	

2.5 Neighbourhood Plan Elements

Victoria’s neighbourhood plans contain a variety of elements, some common to all, others that are plan-specific. This section presents an analysis of Victoria’s existing neighbourhood plans. The purposes of the analysis are to draw out the common elements and basic features contained in the plans, and to identify any topic areas that may be unique to a particular plan. **Table 3** summarizes the elements of each neighbourhood plan.

**Table 3
Neighbourhood Plan Elements**

Neighbourhood Plan	Year Approved	Residential Land Use	Commercial Land Use	Industrial Land Use	Institutional Land Use	Parks/Open Space	Waterfront/Harbour	Private Open Space	Heritage	Urban Design	Public Works	Specific Sites	Contaminated Sites	Transportation	Social Planning	Education (Schools)	Social & Community Facilities	Environment	Employment/Economy	Tourism	Emergency Preparedness	Implementation	
Victoria West Plan	1986	X	X	X		X	X		X	X				X			X						X
Rockland Neighbourhood Plan	1987	X				X			X					X									X
Downtown Victoria Plan	1990	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X		X					X	X			X
Burnside Neighbourhood Plan	1992	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X		X	X			X
James Bay Neighbourhood Plan	1993	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X		X			X		X				
Oaklands Neighbourhood Plan	1993	X	X			X	X		X	X				X			X						X
Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan	1994	X	X			X			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan	1995	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X							X
Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan	1996	X	X			X			X	X				X	X		X						X
Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan	1996	X	X			X	X		X	X				X			X						X
North Park Local Plan	1996	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X							X
Victoria Harbour Plan	2001			X		X	X		X				X	X					X				X
Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan	2002	X	X			X	X		X		X			X			X					X	X

The general categories listed below provide an overview of the elements contained in the City’s existing neighbourhood plans. For additional detail the appropriate plan should be referenced.

Land Use – An element on residential development is one of the most common features of the neighbourhood plans. Policy direction in the plans ranges from identifying sites for intensification to recommendations to preserve the single family character of a neighbourhood. Commercial development elements are also common in the plans. Policy direction often focuses on the need to improve commercial opportunities within a neighbourhood (e.g., *Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan*). About half the plans include a section on industrial development. Policy direction ranges from transitional policies for redeveloping industrial sites as residential-mixed use sites

(e.g., *Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan*) to promoting a specific type of industry (e.g., marine-related industries in James Bay). A few of the plans address institutional elements (i.e., schools and community facilities). Some plans contain recommendations for improving an institutional site (e.g., *Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan*), but more often the institutional sections of the plans simply describe the current situation (e.g., *Oaklands Neighbourhood Plan*). A few of the plans take a fine-grained approach to institutional policies by providing separate sections specifically dedicated to community and educational facilities (e.g., *Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan*). Finally, several of the plans provide land use policy direction for the redevelopment of specific sites (e.g., *Burnside Neighbourhood Plan*).

Parks and Open Space – The provision of parks and open space is an element common to all neighbourhood plans. Policy direction ranges from the protection and enhancement of existing parks to identifying future park needs (e.g., *Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan*). Occasionally, the need to preserve natural open space is identified in a plan (e.g., *James Bay Neighbourhood Plan*). Several plans address issues around the use of private open space. These plans provide policy direction for the provision of private green space (e.g., *Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan*).

Heritage – All plans have a heritage element. Policy direction in the plans ranges from ensuring that the architectural character of new development is compatible with adjacent heritage sites (e.g., *Victoria West Plan*), to outlining goals for the preservation of neighbourhood landmarks (e.g., *North Park Local Plan*). A number of the plans contain maps identifying heritage or character sites and properties within the neighbourhood (e.g., *Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan*).

Transportation – All plans contain a transportation element, including a pedestrian element. Policy direction ranges from the provision of additional pathways (e.g., *James Bay Neighbourhood Plan*) to widening sidewalks (e.g., *Rockland Neighbourhood Plan*). A map identifying the classification of neighbourhood roads is provided in many of the plans (e.g., *Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan*). A number of plans contain a parking element; however, the policy direction provided in the plans varies from expanding those areas designated for residential only parking (e.g., *Jubilee Plan*) to the phasing out of surfacing parking in particular areas (e.g., *James Bay Neighbourhood Plan*). Policy direction for bicycle mobility is also provided in a number of the plans (e.g., *Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan*). Transit, however, is only mentioned in a couple of the plans. Transit policy direction ranges from reducing the impacts that tour buses have on a neighbourhood, such as in the *Rockland Neighbourhood Plan*, to investigating opportunities for a “fare free” transit zone (*Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan*). One plan even goes to an operational level of detail by providing a cross section for the redesign of a major roadway (e.g., *Victoria West Plan*).

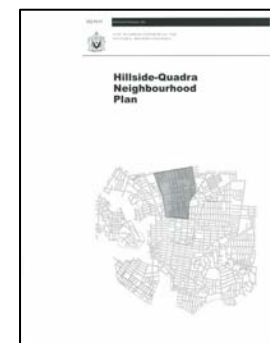
Social Planning – A few plans contain social planning elements, where policy direction ranges from strengthening existing community organizations to improving neighbourhood safety through the provision of additional street lighting (*Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan*). One plan provides recommendations on the type of programming that the local community centre should pursue (*Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan*).

Tourism and Employment– Several of the plans address tourism, primarily by providing policy direction that either encourages or restricts tourist-oriented land uses in certain locations (e.g., *Burnside Neighbourhood Plan*). The *Downtown Victoria Plan* speaks to the role of the downtown as a major employment centre.

Waterfront and Harbour –The plans for neighbourhoods abutting the harbour contain specific elements addressing waterfront and harbour issues. The policy direction of the *Victoria Harbour Plan* supersedes the waterfront and harbour policies of the applicable neighbourhood plans. The *Victoria Harbour Plan* proposes zoning changes and contains strategies for sites throughout the harbour.

Emergency Preparedness – The most recently approved neighbourhood plan, the *Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan*, is the only plan with an emergency preparedness element. This section of the plan provides information about the organizations involved in emergency preparedness initiatives, and search and rescue activities.

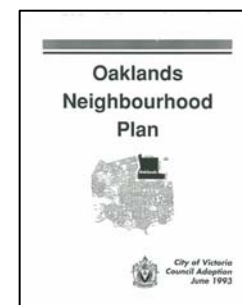
Implementation and Public Works – All but one of the neighbourhood plans include an implementation/action element. Often these sections are entitled “Putting this plan to work.” The format of the implementation sections vary between plans. Some plans have an implementation section presented as a matrix outlining actions, implementation mechanisms, responsibilities and timelines (e.g., *Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan*). Other plans simply have a list of tasks that, if implemented, would help to achieve the overall goals of the plan (e.g., *Oakland Neighbourhood Plan*). Actions outlined in the implementation section of plans include proposed zoning changes, proposed amendments to the OCP, public works projects, special studies, street tree planting programs, and park upgrades. It should be noted that the implementation sections of the plans are not consistently updated to reflect the completion of action items.



2.6 Approaches to Neighbourhood Planning

The City of Victoria has not used a standard approach for undertaking neighbourhood planning. Historically, a neighbourhood planning process was specifically designed for each neighbourhood planning exercise. This included setting out the topic areas to be addressed in the plan and the types of community involvement techniques to be used. The philosophy towards neighbourhood planning has been that the approach to neighbourhood planning needs to vary between neighbourhoods because the needs, desires and issues that face individual neighbourhoods differ.

The majority of the neighbourhood planning processes have been led by planning staff, apart from four instances where consultants were used. Neighbourhood plans that were prepared by consultants are identified on **Table 3**. The table also shows the variety of planning methods and community involvement techniques that were used in the preparation of the existing neighbourhood plans.



**Table 4
Neighbourhood Planning Methods**

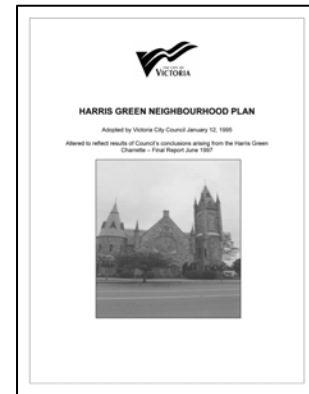
Neighbourhood Plan	Year Approved	Prepared by Consultants	Council Appointed Advisory / Steering Committee	Formal Neighbourhood Group Involvement	Summary / Plan Mailout	Open House(s)	Walkabout	Public Workshop	Charette	Questionnaire	Review by Advisory Planning Commission	Public Review of Draft Plan	Youth Involvement	Web Site
Victoria West Plan	1986			X	X	X				X	X	X		
Rockland Neighbourhood Plan	1987			X	X	X		X		X	X	X		
Downtown Victoria Plan	1990				X	X				X	X	X		
Burnside Neighbourhood Plan	1992	X	X	X		X		X				X		
James Bay Neighbourhood Plan	1993			X	X	X		X			X	X		
Oaklands Neighbourhood Plan	1993	X	X	X		X					X	X		
Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan	1994	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X		
Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan	1995		X				X	X	X	X				
Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan	1996	X	X			X					X	X		
Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan	1996		X			X		X					X	
North Park Local Plan	1996		X				X	X		X	X			
Victoria Harbour Plan	2001		X	X		X				X	X	X		
Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan	2002		X		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X

As shown on **Table 3** one of the more common approaches to neighbourhood planning has been the use of a City Council appointed steering committee. The role of a citizen-based steering committee varies between neighbourhood plans. For example, in preparing the *Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan* the steering committee were involved in writing the planning document. During the preparation of the *Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan*, steering committee members were involved in the drafting of the terms of reference for the neighbourhood planning program and in the selection of a consultant.

Though not shown on **Table 3**, the use of technical committees of staff from various City departments has often paralleled the use of citizen-based steering committees. The technical committees were used primarily as a means of exchanging information between departments regarding the planning process. The only instances where staff technical committees were not used were for plans prepared by consultants. During these processes, City departments were notified that a neighbourhood planning process was being initiated and advised that the consultant would seek assistance during the process. In these cases, consultants served as an information clearing house between staff and steering committee members. It should be noted that staff technical committees have not historically interacted with steering committees or neighbourhood residents.

In recent years, the focus of neighbourhood planning has been on sub-areas (or precincts) within neighbourhoods experiencing development pressure. This has resulted in the creation of precinct plans for Cathedral Hill (2004) and the Humboldt Valley (2005). The planning process for these precinct plans involved the establishment of a City Council appointed focus group comprising residents, local business owners, property owners and local community association representation. The focus group was given the task of developing a vision and planning principles for the neighbourhood sub-area. In addition, a technical committee comprising City staff paralleled the focus group process. Topic areas addressed in the precinct plans include land use, density, housing, heritage, transportation, parks and open space, urban design and emergency preparedness.

To facilitate dialogue on land use change, in 2005, City Council approved Terms of Reference for the Community Association Land Use Committees (CALUC). With respect to neighbourhood planning, the Terms of Reference states that “(w)hen a neighbourhood planning exercise is about to begin, the CALUC as well as other stakeholder groups, should be consulted about the process which will be used before the planning process is finalized.”



2.7 Neighbourhood Planning Processes

As previously noted, planning processes were designed specifically for each neighbourhood planning exercise. Over the years, the planning processes have varied from approaches where planning staff have prepared draft plans for presentation to the public for review and comment, to approaches which have involved, for instance, community groups conducting neighbourhood surveys.

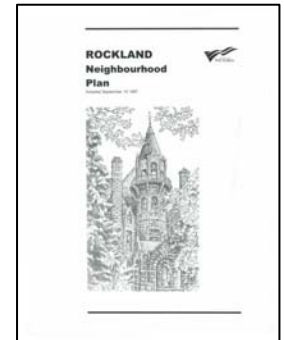
To illustrate the variety of approaches used to undertake neighbourhood planning, an overview of the planning processes for Rockland, Downtown and Gonzales are provided below.

2.7.1 Rockland Neighbourhood Plan

Approved by City Council September 10, 1987

Planning Process:

- No formal City Council resolution defined the planning process. In meetings with the neighbourhood as well as with the Chairman of Planning and other Councilors, it was agreed that the plan would be reviewed by the neighbourhood residents before City Council endorsed the plan.
- The process involved a neighbourhood survey conducted by the Rockland Area Association and a neighbourhood planning workshop conducted by the Planning Department in collaboration with the Rockland Area Association.
- The process began with an introductory workshop which highlighted neighbourhood features, solicited residents' concerns and sought volunteers to work on the neighbourhood survey.
- A draft plan was then prepared by the Planning Department.
- After the neighbourhood planning workshop and review of the draft plan by the APC and Council, a meeting was held to present the plan to the neighbourhood and obtain further feedback. Council then approved the plan by resolution.
- Before the implementation of the land use designation changes proposed in the plan another meeting was held with neighbourhood residents (part of the Annual General Meeting of the Rockland Area Association), to review the plan and inform residents of the upcoming zoning changes.

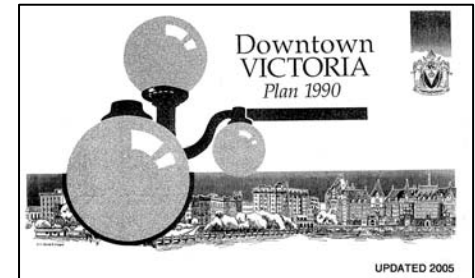


2.7.2 Downtown Victoria Plan

Approved by City Council April 12, 1990

Planning Process:

- The plan was drafted by staff. The APC then reviewed the draft plan *In Camera* and made recommendations to City Council.
- City Council passed a resolution (August 25, 1988) directing planning staff to undertake a public review/consultation process which involved:
 - The Chairman of Planning writing to all civic and related organizations involved with the downtown inviting their input and comment.
 - Staff preparing and distributing a “spread sheet” summary of the draft plan to interested members of the community.
 - Preparing and circulating a questionnaire with copies of the summary spread sheet, inviting comments on the plan.
 - Making available at City Hall copies of the complete draft plan.
 - Planning staff hosting an open house/store front display in order to receive further feedback on the draft plan
 - Planning staff preparing a report summarizing all comments received regarding the draft plan. The report would be sent to the Advisory Planning Commission and City Council for review.
 - A town hall meeting was held to discuss the findings of the report noted above.
- City Council approved the plan by resolution.

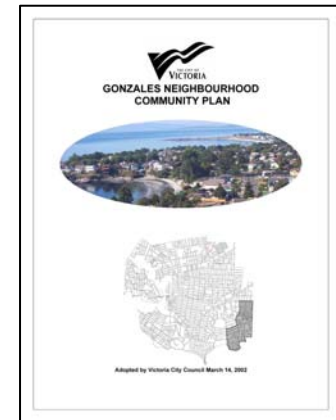


2.7.3 Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan

Approved by City Council March 14, 2002

Planning Process:

- The neighbourhood planning process was approved by City Council by resolution.
- All neighbourhood residents were informed by mail that a neighbourhood planning process was underway and invited to an “Issues and Opportunities Workshop.”
- City staff held an “Issues and Opportunities Workshop” at Margaret Jenkins School.
- A summary report of the key findings of the workshop was prepared and made available to neighbourhood residents.
- City Council appointed an 11 member resident steering committee. The steering committee held 30 meetings and led four “walk-about” through the course of the planning process.
- Two youth mapping sessions were held in collaboration with the Common Ground Community Mapping Project.
- Steering committee representatives met with Oak Bay Avenue business owners to discuss the future of the avenue.
- A Web site was established to provide information on the planning process and the activities of the steering committee.
- City staff prepared a draft plan in collaboration with steering committee members.
- The draft plan was presented by the steering committee chair to neighbourhood residents at a public meeting. Residents provided feedback through a questionnaire.
- For review and feedback, the draft plan was presented to the following committees: Advisory Planning Commission, Advisory Transportation Commission, Cycling Advisory Committee, Environment and Shoreline Advisory Committee, Heritage Advisory Committee, Parks, Recreation and community Services Advisory Committee and Social Planning and Housing Advisory Committee.
- Based on public and committee feedback changes were made to the draft plan by the steering committee and City staff.
- City Council approved the plan by resolution.



2.8 Linkages with the Official Community Plan

According to Section 875 (1) of the Local Government Act, an official community plan (OCP) is a general statement of a municipality's city-wide policies relating to planning and land use management. The City of Victoria's first official community plan was adopted by City Council in 1986. The plan was subsequently reviewed and updated in 1995. In 2005, the plan was amended to include a Regional Context Statement, which explains how the OCP is consistent with the Capital Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy.

The City of Victoria's OCP articulates a commitment to strong neighbourhoods by identifying neighbourhoods as building blocks to a healthy and vibrant city. In fact, through the OCP, Victoria is envisioned as a "city of neighbourhoods." However, the City's current neighbourhood plans do not explain how they relate to, or are in compliance with the policies and goals of the OCP.

An analysis of the City's neighbourhood plans reveals that the vast majority of OCP's policies and goals are not explicitly articulated in the plans. The general exception to this is the park supply standard policy of the OCP, which is referenced in the majority of neighbourhood plans. Many of the implementation sections of the neighbourhood plans, however, propose amendments to the OCP. The amendments focus primarily on the creation of, or changes to, development permit and heritage conservation areas.



2.9 Prioritizing Neighbourhood Planning Initiatives

Two mechanisms have been used to prioritize neighbourhood planning initiatives. The first is the OCP approved by City Council in 1995. Section 10 (H) in the OCP identifies a list of "suggested" neighbourhood planning projects. This list, however, provides no priority weighting to a given initiative. The second mechanism used to prioritize neighbourhood planning initiatives is the Planning and Development Department's work programs.

2.10 FUNDING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

2.10.1 Planning and Development Department's Budget

For the Planning and Development Department work plan budgets are prepared annually. The work plan budgets set priorities and are approved by City Council. Historically, the Planning and Development Department was structured such that planners handled development enquiries, rezoning and development permit applications, while simultaneously trying to prepare or update neighbourhood and city-wide planning policies, bylaws and guidelines. To increase the capacity to undertake policy work, in 2006, a Community Planning Division was created and staffed by a Community Planning Manager, 2 Senior Planners, 1 Senior Urban Design Planner, a Planner and a Planning Technologist. The mandate of the division is to undertake broad range policy planning.

2.10.2 Capital Planning

Twenty-year Capital Plans are prepared to help the City plan for physical improvements. Budgeting includes capital investments, life cycle and operating costs for the City's infrastructure. The implementation sections of a number of the existing neighbourhood plans identify public and capital works projects; however, currently, there is no formal mechanism to link the implementation sections of plans to the City's Capital budgeting process.

2.10.3 City Grant Programs

Neighbourhood Enhancement Matching Grant – the purpose of this grant is to provide opportunities for neighbourhood and community associations to undertake improvement projects. To qualify applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project provides an overall benefit to the neighbourhood, and that the project promotes community development and strengthens neighbourhood connections. Enhancement Matching Grants can be applied to neighbourhood improvements, school partnership projects, programming, capital equipment acquisition, and neighbourhood planning projects.

With respect to neighbourhood planning projects, the grant program was not initially designed to tie into the City's neighbourhood planning program; therefore, there is currently no requirement for coordination between the implementation sections of the neighbourhood plans and this grant program.

Special Project Grants – this grant program is designed to assist community-based organizations with special events, and with the creation and implementation of innovative and unique neighbourhood projects. Applicants apply for either one-time only seed funding or for one-to-three year demonstration funding. Special Project Grants have been used to fund neighbourhood planning initiatives (i.e., community building and place making); however, the grant program was not designed to be directly linked to the City’s neighbourhood planning program; therefore, there is currently no requirement for coordination between the implementation sections of neighbourhood plans and the grant program.

3.0 ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

3.1 Introduction

The information that constitutes this section was derived from public meetings and through interviews with staff from City departments. The purpose of the interviews and meetings was to identify, from various stakeholder perspectives, issues with the City of Victoria's current approach to neighbourhood planning.

3.2 Issues Identification Meetings

Two issues identification meetings were held in the Council Antechamber of City Hall. The first meeting was an evening meeting on June 6, 2007, and the second meeting was an afternoon meeting on June 13, 2007.

Letters of invitation were sent to representatives of the city's neighbourhood associations and other community groups (see **Appendix B**). An advertisement notifying the general public of the meetings ran in the May 25, 2007 edition of the *Times Colonist*. The meetings were also advertised on the City of Victoria's Web site and the Vibrant Victoria Web site. In addition, the Victoria Chapter of the Urban Development Institute circulated, on behalf of the City of Victoria, an email letter of invitation to development industry representatives.

Each meeting brought together some 30 participants to share their thoughts about the City's current approach to neighbourhood planning. A list of meeting participants along with their affiliations is provided in **Appendix C**.

At both meetings, participants were provided with a short presentation explaining the purpose of the meetings and how the information derived from the sessions would be used. This was followed by a facilitated discussion about neighbourhood planning in Victoria.

In order to ensure that all participants had an opportunity to share their thoughts, a take-away comment form was also provided. In total, 14 comment forms were returned.



For each meeting, the issues were documented and posted on the City of Victoria's Web site. Those meeting participants that provided City staff with an email address were notified that the issues were available for review and comment. Through the notification, meeting participants were asked to contact City staff if they felt the issues were not documented accurately. City staff received no responses requesting corrections or additions.

3.3 Interviews

Staff from the following City departments participated in issues identification interviews:

- Legislative Services
- Parks, Recreation and Community Development
- Engineering
- Fire
- Emergency Management Agency
- Planning and Development

The purpose of the interviews was to identify, from a departmental perspective, issues with the City's current approach to neighbourhood planning. Interview questions along with an agenda were circulated in advance of the interviews. The interviews were conducted between June and July 2007.

3.4 Issues – An Overview

The issues identified reflect a variety of perspectives and points of view regarding neighbourhood planning in Victoria. The issues identification process was not intended to produce consensus on the issues facing neighbourhood planning in Victoria. Rather, the process was intended to initiate a dialogue about the future of neighbourhood planning in the city. Such a dialogue can only be enhanced by gaining an understanding of the various perspectives that exist regarding neighbourhood planning.

Through the process, an extensive list of issues was raised, of which the complete list is presented in **Appendix D**. Readers are encouraged to review the entire list to gain an understanding of the issues.

The issues raised have been classified according to key themes, grouped under 10 broad headings.³ It is acknowledged that the list of key themes has been generated by City staff and there will undoubtedly be other interpretations and points of view. The key themes are simply intended to provide a framework for organizing and classifying the information gathered through the issues identification process. The themes are presented below, in no particular order.

3.5 Key Themes

Certainty – A number of stakeholders felt that neighbourhood plans should provide a degree of certainty on how change will be managed in a neighbourhood. Many stakeholders expressed that certainty is achieved by prescriptively following the direction of the plans, and that this is currently not occurring. Many felt that providing the plans with “bylaw status” would give more certainty.

Community Involvement - There were several perspectives raised regarding the role that neighbourhood associations should play in the planning process. It was consistently noted though that any approach to community outreach should attempt to engage a broad cross-section of neighbourhood stakeholders. In addition, many felt that community-driven initiatives need to be integrated into future neighbourhood planning processes, and that community members should play a central role in the planning of their neighbourhoods. It was also noted that Web-based technology could be used to better share information.

External Agencies - The need to involve external agencies in neighbourhood planning was a consistent theme throughout the issues identification process (e.g., Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Capital Regional District, Federal Government, BC Transit, Vancouver Island Health Authority, and Greater Victoria School District No. 61). Specific reference was made for the need to better involve School District No. 61 in the neighbourhood planning process.

³ A first iteration of the key themes was presented to the Advisory Planning Commission at a July 10, 2007 meeting. Input from commission members and further analysis has resulted in revisions to the key themes presented in this discussion paper.

Comprehensive Planning - The need to undertake a comprehensive approach to neighbourhood planning was identified as a key theme. Many felt that neighbourhood planning needs to be connected to an overall vision for the city, which would best be articulated through the OCP. Some felt that it was too late to prioritize neighbourhoods, and that another approach to neighbourhood planning may be needed. For example, this could involve gaining an understanding of the “big picture” planning issues through a review of the OCP, and then using this information to take a more strategic approach to neighbourhood planning issues.

Integrated Planning - Many stakeholders expressed the view that the various levels of planning need to be better integrated. For instance, there needs to be a stronger link between the OCP, neighbourhood plans and zoning. A lack of consistency between these various levels of planning was noted by some. Integrated inter-departmental planning teams that would be involved in plan preparation and plan implementation were also identified.

Scope of Work - Numerous comments were received regarding the need to take a more holistic approach to neighbourhood planning. This would involve taking neighbourhood planning beyond a land use focus and addressing social, economic and environmental issues, including affordable housing policy and emergency planning. It was also expressed that the scope of work and topic areas addressed by individual neighbourhood plans should be consistent.

Process Planning - A variety of issues were raised regarding the process used for undertaking neighbourhood planning. Process issues ranged from techniques for involving the community in the planning process to reconsidering the very notion of neighbourhood planning.

Timelines - The length of time that it takes to prepare a single plan was also raised as an issue. Some felt that the process was too lengthy, which caused residents to lose interest. Others felt that a lengthy process allowed for more input. In addition, it was noted that timelines for updating neighbourhood plans do not respond to business cycles, which are directly linked to the amount and type of development activity that will occur.

Clarity of Planning Documents - There were a number of points raised about the clarity and user-friendliness of planning documents, including points regarding inconsistent formatting of plans, policy statements being lost in text, and the production quality of existing neighbourhood plans.

Implementation - Many stakeholders felt that neighbourhood planning should be action-oriented, with a stronger focus on implementation. Some stakeholders felt that there should be a direct link between the recommendations coming out of neighbourhood planning exercises and capital budgeting.

Resource Allocation - Some stakeholders raised concerns that although additional planning staff have been hired there are still may not be enough City staff to update all neighbourhood plans in a timely manner. It was also noted that there would be staffing implications for other City departments as well, especially if an integrated team approach was taken.

4.0 CASE STUDIES

4.1 Introduction

This section provides a detailed analysis of the approach to neighbourhood planning in four municipalities. The case study communities include Vancouver, Winnipeg, Seattle and Lethbridge. The description of each case study community includes an overview of its neighbourhood planning program; a description of how the program is structured; the planning process used to guide neighbourhood planning, the criteria for prioritizing neighbourhoods; and, reflections on the successes and challenges associated with administering the program.

This discussion paper promotes no single case study as the model most applicable to Victoria. Rather, the case studies are presented to generate discussion on how different municipalities approach neighbourhood planning, and research on various program elements that could be considered for use in Victoria.

4.2 Selection of Case Study Communities

The selection of case study communities involved a two step process. The first step involved an internet scan and literature review of approaches to neighbourhood planning taken by cities in Canada, the United States and internationally. The second step involved asking participants of the issues identification meetings (see Section 3) to suggest neighbourhood planning programs they think should be reviewed as part of this discussion paper (see **Appendix E**).

The most frequent city mentioned by meeting participants was Seattle. Participants at the meetings also suggested that examples from Europe and elsewhere be investigated. This latter suggestion posed several challenges: for example, language barriers, challenges in obtaining detailed and accurate information about the neighbourhood planning program, and time constraints to thoroughly investigate a given neighbourhood planning program.

Although frequently mentioned, the Portland model was not selected as a case study community. In researching the program it became apparent that, over the last decade, only a couple of neighbourhood plans have been produced (League of Women Voters 2006), and the program currently is being completely reconstructed. Winnipeg's approach was selected to replace the Portland model, as it too takes a community-driven approach to neighbourhood planning.

Meeting participants also suggested that City staff identify and research alternative approaches to neighbourhood planning. The City of Lethbridge was chosen as it takes a non-traditional approach to neighbourhood-level planning. Instead of using the typical area-based neighbourhood plan model, Lethbridge's program takes a strategic issues approach to neighbourhood planning. Finally, the City of Vancouver's Community Visioning Program was also chosen as a case study, as it too takes a unique approach to neighbourhood-level planning.

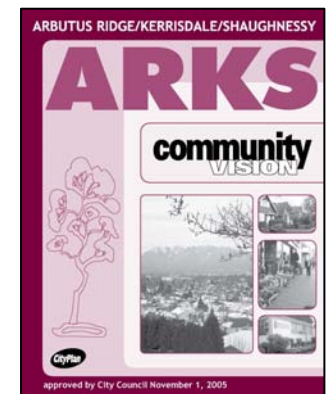
Each of the four case studies is elaborated on below.

4.3 Vancouver

The City of Vancouver uses a number of planning programs to initiate and prioritize planning activities at the neighbourhood level. These, for example, include the Local Area Plans Program, the Community Visions Program and the Neighbourhood Centres Planning Program.

The Local Area Plans Program emerged from the need to harmonize the city-wide policies of *CityPlan* with seven local area plans, each of which are 20 or more years old. Through the Local Area Plans Program, the update of neighbourhood plans address land use, traffic and social issues at a detailed level. The City of Vancouver's Planning Department estimates that it will take some 30 months to update each local area plan, due to the variety of issues addressed through the planning process and the level of detail contained in the plans (City of Vancouver Administrative Report June 9, 2006).

Instead of the neighbourhood plan model used in the Local Area Plans Program, Vancouver's Community Visions Program takes a broad "one-size-fits-all" approach to neighbourhood planning. This involves the creation of long-range visions for the neighbourhoods involved in the program.



Community visions are implemented through the Neighbourhood Centres Planning Program. The focus of the Neighbourhood Centres Program is on shopping area improvements and increased housing choice through additional density in single family neighbourhoods. The products of the Neighbourhood Centres Planning Program are public realm and housing area plans for each neighbourhood centre identified through the community visioning process. The planning of a single neighbourhood centre takes about 18 months.

The Community Visions Program is the most commonly referenced and discussed planning-related program in Vancouver and will be the focus of the case study in this discussion paper.

4.3.1 Program Overview

In 1995, Vancouver's City Council adopted *CityPlan*, a broad, long range policy document similar to an OCP that addresses such topic areas as increasing housing variety, establishing neighbourhood centres, mobility and land use. To assist with implementing *CityPlan*, the Community Visions Program was initiated in 1996. The program establishes a framework for bringing city-wide goals and objectives contained in *CityPlan* to some of Vancouver's neighbourhoods. The vision prepared for a neighbourhood describes how the policy direction of *CityPlan* will be implemented over several decades in a way that suits each individual neighbourhood.

4.3.2 Program Structure

The Community Visions Program ran from 1996 to 2007. Through the program, 13 predominantly single-family neighbourhoods that had received no previous planning were consolidated into nine community vision areas. To date, 8 neighbourhoods have completed and are currently implementing a community vision. The final vision, West Point Grey, is reaching completion. It was anticipated that each vision would take six months to complete; however, in practice the timeline for completion is closer to 18 months. It has taken just over ten years to complete nine community visions.

For all nine neighbourhoods to develop a vision within an 18 month timeframe, the visions do not reach the level of detail typical of Victoria's neighbourhood plans. For example, a Community Vision does neither propose new

zoning regulations, nor includes design specifications for boulevards or greenways, or operational programs. A vision simply sets broad direction for a neighbourhood and identifies priorities for further work.

The program is led and implemented by the Planning Department although it is intended that neighbourhood residents take ownership of their vision. Each vision is approved by City Council by resolution. A Community Liaison Group is formed for each neighbourhood undertaking the visioning process. The group is made up of volunteers from the neighbourhood and includes a range of ages, backgrounds and interests. Its main role is to provide continuity throughout the process and to serve as a “watch dog,” ensuring that community input plays a central role in the creation of the vision; however, City Council does not formally appoint members to the group. The Community Liaison Group does not have any decision-making responsibilities; its role is to provide advice to planning staff.

A City Perspectives Panel also oversees the visioning process. The mandate of the perspectives panel is to provide commentary on how well the options and directions of the vision being created by each neighbourhood meet city-wide planning goals. Members of the City Perspectives Panel are appointed by City Council and membership is made up of those that do not reside in a neighbourhood that is currently undergoing the visioning process.

Full-time planning staff are dedicated to the Community Visions Program. The overall program is managed by a senior planner and is implemented by two community-planning teams. Each includes a planner, a planning analyst and a community resource person. Liaison staff from other City departments, such as engineering, parks, housing and communications are involved, as required.

4.3.3 Neighbourhood Planning Process

The process for developing a vision provides a variety of ways to involve neighbourhood residents in creating the particular vision for their neighbourhood. Community outreach methods, for example, include: meetings, workshops, discussion groups, festivals, brochures and surveys. A communication and outreach strategy is also developed for each neighbourhood. As previously noted, planning staff organize and facilitate the visioning process.

The process for preparing a vision is standardized and, therefore, is consistent between each vision neighbourhood. The process includes the following four steps:

Step 1: Getting in Touch

- A newsletter introducing the visioning process is sent to all households and businesses.
- Planners meet with all organizations in the community in order to introduce the process and to identify community issues.
- Members for the Community Liaison Group are recruited.
- A communication/outreach strategy is prepared in consultation with the Community Liaison Group.
- Additional background information is identified.

Step 2: Share Ideas

- Generate interest and ideas for the visioning process through a “Vision Festival.” The festival may include guest speakers, neighbourhood tours and activities, interactive displays, community group and youth participation, and a community forum.
- Provide additional opportunities for residents and business to share their thoughts regarding needs, values, ideas, and opportunities.
- Sign people up to "interested people" mailing list.
- Work out details regarding workshop scheduling and outreach with the Community Liaison Group.
- Hold a series of topic-focused workshops, where neighbourhood residents create the ideas and possibilities for the future that will be used to develop vision options and directions. The issues, ideas and information identified in Step 1, as well as the information contained in *CityPlan* are used to develop vision options and directions.
- Produce a variety of vision alternatives which follow the direction of *CityPlan*. This involves generating maps, photos, drawings, and words to summarize discussions.
- Hold "mini" workshops for multi-cultural residents (and other “hard-to-reach” groups).
- Workshop results are used to draft vision options and directions, which are then distributed to workshop attendees and the Community Liaison Group.

Step 3: Choosing Directions

- Develop a “Choices Survey” containing vision options and directions that were derived from the workshop in Step 2.
- The Community Liaison Group reviews the Choices Survey in order to ensure that it reflects the direction of the workshop in Step 2.
- The City Perspectives Panel reviews the Choices Survey in order to ensure that the visions options and directions contained in the survey include a broad city-wide perspective and align with the directions of *CityPlan*.
- The Choices Survey is delivered to all households and businesses in the neighbourhood. This is followed by a random mail out survey which is intended to ensure the validity of the results of the Choices Survey sent to all household and businesses.
- To support the "Choices Survey" and encourage response, an outreach program is undertaken. This includes ads, newspaper/media coverage, and traveling displays.

Step 4: Finalizing the Vision

- Survey responses are reviewed and analyzed to determine community preferences and identify uncertain or ambiguous results, or geographically divergent opinions.
- The Community Liaison Group and City Perspectives Panel review survey results.
- A final vision summary is drafted and distributed to all households and businesses.
- The final vision is presented to City Council for endorsement by resolution.

4.3.4 Prioritizing Neighbourhoods

The process for identifying priority neighbourhoods involved two steps. The first step involved undertaking two pilot projects. The following guidelines were used to help select the neighbourhoods to be included in the pilot projects:

- the neighbourhoods had not received any prior neighbourhood planning;
- neighbourhood residents had to express an interest in creating a Community Vision;

- one neighbourhood would be chosen from the eastern sector of the city and the other from the western sector of the city; and,
- one pilot neighbourhood would be “affluent” and the other neighbourhood would be “low income.”

Using these guidelines the City undertook a public consultation process where community stakeholders were invited to participate in a public forum to identify and rank criteria for prioritizing pilot neighbourhoods. Criteria identified by stakeholders included:

- development pressure (e.g., population change, number of rezoning applications and house demolitions)
- transportation pressure (e.g., traffic volumes and truck volumes)
- diversity issues (e.g., income diversity, number of new immigrants), and
- deficiencies in community amenities and services (e.g., park space shortage, child care facilities shortage, affordable housing issues, crime rates)

Through this two step process two pilot neighbourhoods were chosen. Following the completion of the pilot projects, city staff used the same criteria to rank neighbourhoods. This rank order was adjusted to take advantage of opportunities for simultaneously undertaking visioning in two adjacent neighbourhoods, or the need to undertake planning for a new transit station in a vision-designated neighbourhood.

4.3.5 Reflecting on the Vancouver Experience

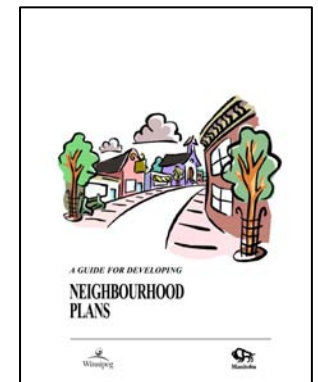
In looking back on the successes and challenges associated with the Community Visions Program, City of Vancouver representatives noted the following (Dillon 2005):

- The Community Visions Program was a “made-in-Vancouver” program, designed to meet the specific needs of the city and its neighbourhoods.
- The pilot project helped to identify the strengths and weakness of the planning process. The Planning Department noted that the visioning process was successful in neighbourhoods that had very little neighbourhood planning and less successful in areas which already had some degree of local planning.
- A structured and formalized “one-size-fits-all” planning process can still ensure that the uniqueness of a neighbourhood is captured and result in neighbourhood-specific actions.

- It is important to have a clearly defined scope of work and terms of reference for the program. This will help to ensure that visions are completed on-time and on-budget. Also, community stakeholders will have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- It is important to ensure that community visions follow the direction of the city-wide plan, because it is difficult to implement plans at the neighbourhood level that do not align with the municipal agenda.
- The Community Visions have helped other City departments develop strategic plans for the vision neighbourhoods (e.g., parks, transportation, and public works).
- The visioning process provided an opportunity for non-planning departments to connect with the neighbourhoods involved in the visioning program.

4.4 Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg’s planning system is made up of a “family of plans” for developing and established neighbourhoods. The overarching plan for Winnipeg is Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision. The plan, adopted in 2001, is City Council’s long range policy plan and establishes, at a city-wide level, broad physical, social, economic and environmental policies for the city. Plan Winnipeg is used by City Council as a guide to set priorities and make decisions. In addition, all City documents, such as budgets, public works initiatives and programs must be consistent with this plan. Other plans used in Winnipeg include area redevelopment plans, which are intended to guide the redevelopment of the inner-city; and, area structure plans which are prepared for new and developing communities. The final member of the “family of plans” is the neighbourhood plan. These plans are the focus of the case study review of Winnipeg’s neighbourhood planning system. It should be noted that the vast majority of neighbourhoods participating in the program are considered neighbourhoods that require reinvestment.



4.4.1 Program Overview

The neighbourhood planning program focuses on older residential neighbourhoods beginning to experience decline. The preparation of a plan for these neighbourhoods is initiated by residents or a community organization. In terms of roles and responsibilities, community associations or a group of neighbourhood residents take direct responsibility for preparing the plans, whereas City staff serve as observers, participants, or facilitators, with their

involvement varying between neighbourhoods. When completed, neighbourhood plans are formally approved by the City's Community Committee. The plans are primarily used as a guide to neighbourhood reinvestment.

4.4.2 Program Structure

The community group initiating the planning process applies for government funding under a variety of programs. The role of City staff includes serving as the approval agent for community associations' applications for funding. In order to be approved, the City of Winnipeg requires that neighbourhood plans have three essential components. First, the plans must provide a vision of what residents would like their neighbourhood to look like. Second, the plans lay out clear goals for achieving the vision; and, finally, an action plan must be prepared which outlines how the goals will be achieved as well as budget implications.

The overall structure of the program is quite flexible: it is up to neighbourhood groups to design their planning process, as long as this is done within the guidelines noted above. In terms of public consultation, the community association or neighbourhood group preparing the plan would take the lead in community engagement. The group is given the flexibility of choosing from a variety of approaches to reach members of the broader neighbourhood (e.g., open houses, sub-committees, surveys and workshops). This flexibility is seen as important to community empowerment.

4.4.3 Neighbourhood Planning Process

Although the planning process is quite flexible it must follow a general framework. To assist neighbourhoods in designing their neighbourhood planning process the Province of Manitoba and City of Winnipeg have prepared a document entitled *A Guide for Developing Neighbourhood Plans* (2002). The guide outlines the following five step process:

Step 1: Team Building

- A Neighbourhood Planning Team comprising residents, landlords, business owners, community organizations, local agencies and other neighbourhood stakeholders is established.

Step 2: Analysis

- A neighbourhood assessment, including community consultation was undertaken by the Neighbourhood Planning Team. The assessment would involve analyzing the neighbourhood's strengths and weaknesses and identifying opportunities and neighbourhood assets.
- The findings of the neighbourhood assessment are then be used to draft a vision statement.
- The draft vision statement needs to be confirmed by all neighbourhood stakeholders.

Step 3: Vision

- Once the vision is confirmed an action plan is developed. The action plan includes goals, objectives, actions statements, measurable indicators and project descriptions and accompanying budgets.
- The plan is then vetted by neighbourhood stakeholders through open houses, workshops, meetings, or a questionnaire.
- If neighbourhood stakeholders approve of the plan it would be sent to the City's Community Committee for formal approval.

Step 4: Implement

- The plan would then be implemented through the soliciting of funding for projects.

Step 5: Evaluate

- As the plan undergoes implementation it is evaluated using the measurable indicators developed as part of Step 3. Questions that guide the evaluation include:
 - What did we do well?
 - What have we learned?
 - Where do we go from here?
- Through the evaluation adjustments are made to the plan, if required.

4.4.4 Prioritizing Neighbourhoods

In 2000, a *Neighbourhood Designation* study was undertaken which used civic data to develop a mathematical formula for prioritizing neighbourhoods based on their need for reinvestment. A result of the study was the identification of 14 Major Improvement Areas. Housing Improvement Zones were then identified in five of the Major Improvement Areas. Another result of the study was that 193 neighbourhoods in Winnipeg were identified as either rehabilitation areas, conservation areas, or emerging areas.

A working group was given the mandate to determine the indicators that would be used to designate areas (Dillon (2005)). The working group had representation from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the University of Winnipeg's Institute of Urban Studies and the Department of Economics. Representatives from City departments also formed part of the working group, including Police Services, Corporate Services, Property Assessment, Planning, Property and Development Services and Community Services.

Through the working group four indicator categories were identified, which included housing, crime and safety, economic conditions, and social health and welling being. For each category a list of primary and secondary indicators were then developed. Seven primary indicators, noted below, became the basis for a Housing Policy Neighbourhood Designation Index (HPNDI):

$HPNDI = aM + bH + cL + dR + eA + fC + gU$, where

M - Median Selling Price

H - Housing Condition Indicator

L - Low Income Cut-off Indicator

R - % of Rental Dwellings

A - Average Effective Age of Dwelling Indicator

C - % of total Crimes Indicator, and

U - Unemployment Rate Indicator

A panel determined the weighting of each primary indicator, and assigned coefficients for the equation noted above. The panel included representatives for the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation, the Institute of Urban Studies (University of Winnipeg), the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation

Corporation, and the Winnipeg Real Estate Board. The equation was used to develop a rank order for neighbourhoods involved in the planning program.

4.4.5 Reflecting on the Winnipeg Experience

As part of a review of best practices in neighbourhood planning, consultants from Dillon Consulting Ltd. interviewed representatives from the City of Winnipeg about the issues and challenges associated with their approach to neighbourhood planning. City staff noted the following (Dillon 2005):

- Funding is crucial for the successful development and implementation of a neighbourhood plan.
- If residents feel empowered they will take ownership over the end product.
- The lack of a formalized public consultation process resulted in cases where the neighbourhood group undertaking the planning did not include “marginalized” groups in process.
- Local government does not have to drive the neighbourhood planning process, but for a process to be successful local government must provide resources, both technical and financial.

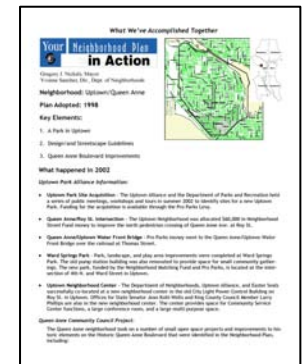
4.5 Seattle

The City of Seattle has a long history of planning at the neighbourhood level. In the 1960s the Federal Government’s Model Cities Program played a role in revitalizing many of Seattle’s distressed neighbourhoods. Throughout the 1970s, the City collaborated with citizens in setting goals and priorities to neighbourhood improvement projects. In the 1980s, at the recommendation of the Seattle Planning Commission, the Department of Neighbourhoods was established along with a Neighbourhood Matching Fund, and the creation of a City Neighbourhood Council.

In the early 1990s, the City of Seattle adopted a city-wide Comprehensive Plan. The adoption of the city-wide plan was the catalyst for the creation of a Neighbourhood Planning Program, which was established in the mid-1990s as a four year program. This program is the focus of this case study review.

4.5.1 Program Overview

In order to meet the requirements of the State of Washington’s Growth Management Act, the City of Seattle adopted a city-wide Comprehensive Plan entitled *Towards A Sustainable Seattle*. The Comprehensive Plan established a vision and policy framework for the City to accommodate and manage future population and employment



growth. The growth strategy concerned a number of Seattle's citizens, so in the mid-1990s City Staff collaborated with community members to find appropriate strategies for implementing the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Two fundamental outcomes of this collaboration were that the Comprehensive Plan would be implemented through neighbourhood plans, and the creation of neighbourhood plans would be administered through the establishment of a community-based Neighbourhood Planning Program.

In 1994, Seattle's City Council passed a resolution, formally creating the Neighbourhood Planning Program. The resolution states, "*The purposes of the neighborhood planning program are to enable the City and the community to work in partnership to improve the quality of life within the city by: 1) helping people achieve their goals for their neighborhoods; 2) involving the neighborhoods in determining the best ways to achieve established citywide goals; and 3) creating an environment which will encourage building of community within neighborhoods*" (cited in City of Seattle 2001).

The City established a Neighbourhood Planning Office to administer the program. Through the program 38 neighbourhood plans were completed and approved. Each plan took between two to three years to complete. Once all plans were approved the Neighborhood Planning Office was closed. The Neighbourhood Preservation and Development Division was then established to oversee plan implementation.

4.5.2 Program Structure

The philosophy behind the establishment of the Neighbourhood Planning Program was that neighbourhood residents working within the structure of city-wide policies and goals, and supported by City staff and resources, are in the best position to identify and attend to the needs of their neighbourhood. Within the program's structure neighbourhood groups were responsible for executing neighbourhood planning processes while receiving support, guidance and leadership from the City.

As previously noted, the program was administered through the establishment of a Neighbourhood Planning Office. Ten project managers were hired to support neighbourhood planning groups, and neighbourhood planning groups also had the opportunity to hire their own planner. The project managers served as liaisons between neighbourhood groups and City departments. A Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee worked with the Neighbourhood Planning Office. The advisory committee's role was to resolve any substantive issues that may arise through the delivery of the program (e.g., fund allocation, community outreach requirements, and boundary issues).

The advisory committee included representation from District Councils, the City Neighbourhood Council, City Council, the Planning Commission, directors from various City departments, and representatives from the neighbourhood planning groups.

Neighbourhood planning groups and the City used legal contracts to formalize their relationships. The contracts addressed the scope of work, timelines, performance standards and funding arrangements. The following mechanisms were used by the City to ensure that the neighbourhood planning groups were meeting the requirements of their contract:

- Neighbourhood planning groups were required to submit performance reports to the Neighbourhood Planning Office.
- Progress meetings between the director of the Neighbourhood Planning Office and members of the neighbourhood planning group were built into the planning process.
- Neighbourhood planning groups were required to maintain records throughout the planning process, including records of meetings.
- City staff worked closely with neighbourhood planning groups in order to provide assistance and monitor progress.

In order to undertake neighbourhood planning, planning groups were eligible to apply to the City for funding. Eligible funding ranged from \$60,000 to \$100,000. The amount of funds allocated to a neighborhood was determined by a list of funding criteria that were developed by the Neighbourhood Planning Office in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee. The funding criteria included the following:

- current neighbourhood population and projected population growth;
- current neighbourhood employment and projected employment growth in the neighbourhood;
- number and size of the business nodes in the neighbourhood; and,
- the number of non-English speaking residents that resided in the neighbourhood (to cover the additional costs of translating materials such as surveys).

The neighbourhood groups had flexibility in defining the scope of work to be undertaken. This allowed neighbourhood groups to design their plans around the specific needs and characteristics of their area. Neighbourhood groups also had flexibility in how they designed their public consultation process, provided they met the City's expectation that a wide variety of neighbourhood stakeholders would have opportunities to provide

input. To assist neighbourhood groups with designing their public participation processes the City provided them with an “outreach tool kit.” As noted by a former director of the Seattle’s Department of Neighborhoods, both the scope of work and public consultation strategy had to be approved by the City’s Neighbourhood Planning Office (Diers 2006).

Though there was flexibility in defining the scope of work for the neighbourhood plan, in order to have their plan approved the neighbourhood planning group had to follow and meet a set of standardized procedures and criteria. Approval criteria included the following:

- the plan had to follow the policy direction of the citywide Comprehensive Plan or justify why the citywide plan needed to be amended;
- the plan had to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act and any other applicable laws;
- the plan had to contain prioritized recommendations;
- the plan had to outline a clear strategy for achieving the recommendations outlined in the plan;
- the neighbourhood planning group had to demonstrate community support for the plan; and,
- the format of the plan had to be “user friendly.”

City staff were responsible for reviewing neighbourhood plans in order to ensure compliance with the City’s policies and guidelines, and to identify if City policies and guidelines needed to be amended or changed. City Council then formally adopted the plans by resolution.

4.5.3 Neighbourhood Planning Process

Though neighbourhood planning groups were given flexibility in designing their planning and public consultation processes, those processes had to occur within parameters established by the Neighbourhood Planning Office and the Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee. The parameters were established through a four-step process:

Step 1: Pre-Application

- Neighbourhood residents were required to organize and establish a coalition, which had to include representation from a variety of neighbourhood interests. The coalition was then required by the City to complete the following:
 - establish an organizing committee,

- establish the tentative boundaries of the neighbourhood planning area,
- find a financial agent to assist with coordinating financing, and,
- prepare a work program, schedule and budget.
- The neighbourhood organizing committee would then submit an application to the Neighbourhood Planning Office in order to be formally recognized as participating in the Neighbourhood Planning Program. This would include applying for funding to initiate Step 2.

Step 2: Planning and Public Consultation

- The organizing committee worked with the broader neighbourhood to conduct a community assessment, generate ideas and finalize the scope of work for the plan.
- The organizing committee then worked with the broader neighbourhood to finalize planning area boundaries and begin the work on establishing a neighbourhood vision. The vision would identify issues and goals that neighbourhood residents would want to address in the creation of their plan. The vision had to be approved and validated through a public review process.
- Finally, the organizing committee developed a process to select members for the establishment of a planning committee.
- The entire process outlined above typically took 6 months to a year to complete.

Step 3: Developing the Neighbourhood Plan

- The newly established planning committee prepared a detailed work program, schedule and budget. The committee then applied to the City's Neighbourhood Planning Office for funding.
- The planning committee would work with various neighborhood groups in crafting the plan. Through a public process members of the planning committee would have to demonstrate public support for the plan. This validation process was designed to prevent a small group of people from directing the outcomes of the neighbourhood planning process.
- Draft plans would then be sent to the Neighbourhood Planning Office and the Planning Commission for review and comment.
- On Average, Step 3 would take one to two years to complete.

Step 4: Approval and Implementation

- The City reviewed the draft plans in order to ensure compliance with the policies of the city-wide Comprehensive Plan
- City departments worked with neighbourhood planning groups to develop a matrix of action items. The plan matrix also had to be validated by members of the broader neighbourhood.
- City Council approved the narrative of each neighbourhood plan by resolution.

4.5.4 Prioritizing Neighbourhoods

In terms of plan preparation no neighbourhood received priority over another. As previously noted, neighbourhood residents were responsible for initiating the creation of a neighbourhood plan. If neighbourhood residents chose not to create a neighbourhood plan, the Comprehensive Plan would then provide policy direction for the neighbourhood.

4.5.5 Reflecting on the Seattle Experience

In their review of the Neighbourhood Planning Program, the City of Seattle's Planning Commission (City of Seattle 2001) noted the following:

- Because the Seattle model was a bottom up approach to neighbourhood planning, in order to ensure fairness and legitimacy, the City developed a formalized and structured framework to provide direction and guidance to neighbourhood groups. According to one project manager from the City's Neighbourhood Planning Office "the NPP (Neighbourhood Planning Program) was an impressive grassroots endeavor, but because it was a bottom-up program, it had to be highly organized in order to be legitimate. It had to fit into the Comprehensive Plan and the City's context. This required a labyrinth of regulations and procedures" (cited in City of Seattle 2001).
- The process required community members and City staff to work toward a common goal in the creation of neighbourhood plans.
- Thirty eight neighbourhood plans, each with varying levels of detail and variations on the issues and topic areas addressed were submitted over the life of the program. Because of the variations in the plans the City

felt that it could not adopt neighbourhood plans exactly as they were written. In order to respond to these variations the City created an approval and adoption process. This involved the narrative from the plans being approved by resolution, the goals from the plans being translated into policy statements to be included in the Comprehensive Plan, and plan recommendations and actions being compiled into an approval and adoption matrix.

- Many of the recommendations coming out of individual neighbourhood plans had city-wide implications. Rather than approving the recommendations on a plan-by-plan basis, City Council held action on the recommendations and created inter-departmental teams to address the issues that the proposed recommendations were intended to solve at a city-wide level. This took some two years to complete.
- The recommendations coming out of the plans were not analyzed within the context of municipal budgets and available funding. Therefore, in 2003 the Department of Neighbourhoods initiated a process to begin working with neighbourhood groups and City departments to identify each neighbourhood's top five priorities.

4.6 Lethbridge

The City of Lethbridge's planning system is made up of a "hierarchy of plans" for developing and established neighbourhoods. The Municipal Development Plan provides city-wide policies for housing, transportation, environment, parks and future growth. Urbanization Plans help to manage the sectors of the City that are experiencing growth pressures. Area Structure Plans help guide the growth of future neighbourhoods by setting out general locations for major land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, schools and parks), major roadways, utility servicing, trail systems, and potential population density. Area Redevelopment Plans manage land use change in certain established neighbourhoods. These plans are intended to coordinate neighbourhood revitalization and reinvestment.

The majority of Lethbridge's centrally-located neighbourhoods do not have a specific plan to guide change and development. Rather, through a *Central Neighbourhoods Study* the City is attempting to address many of the planning issues facing all of Lethbridge's central neighbourhoods. The *Central Neighbourhoods Study* will be the focus of this case study review.



4.6.1 Program Overview

Over the last several years Lethbridge's central neighbourhoods have been experiencing development-related pressures. This was revealed through the types of rezoning and development permit applications that were coming forward. The types of applications and neighbourhood responses suggested a need for a process that would develop a comprehensive and thorough understanding of issues facing these neighbourhoods. Strategies would then be developed to help to effectively manage change in the neighbourhoods. The *Central Neighbourhoods Study* was initiated by City Council resolution in 2005 and is ongoing. Through the study the City is developing a program to address issues related to neighbourhood planning and the delivery of municipal services. Rather than undertaking neighbourhood planning one neighbourhood at a time, the *Central Neighbourhoods Study* took the approach of simultaneously addressing the planning issues facing multiple neighbourhoods. The rationale for this approach included:

- a desire for consistency across neighbourhoods regarding the policies, programs and regulations that would be the product of the study;
- an issues driven approach would be a more efficient use of limited staff resources; and,
- many of the issues would be common to a number of neighbourhoods, therefore; addressing the issues at a multi-neighbourhood level would ensure timelier implementation.

4.6.2 Program Structure

The Planning Department, with support and representation from other City departments, including engineering, transportation, bylaw enforcement, parks, transit, police, fire and waste and recycling, leads an inter-departmental steering committee that provides direction and support to the process.

An advisory committee collaborates with City staff to ensure that community input is central to the overall process. The advisory committee comprises 14 resident volunteers who represent a variety of interests and perspectives. The City's Municipal Planning Commission selects committee members, with each neighbourhood receiving equal representation on the committee. Not all neighbourhoods involved in the study have formalized associations. Neighbourhoods that have an established neighbourhood association, automatically have the option of having one member of the association sit on the advisory committee. To ensure a clear understanding of advisory committee roles and responsibilities, the City developed terms of reference, which include the following:

- the advisory committee serves as a “sounding board” to review input gathered from residents, businesses, and neighbourhood groups and organizations;
- members are responsible for bringing forward and representing various neighbourhood perspectives;
- members are responsible for representing the advisory committee at scheduled public outreach activities; and,
- members work with City staff in addressing neighbourhood issues and public comments.

Although the advisory committee has no decision-making authority members work with staff in developing community outreach materials and potential strategies for City Council consideration.

4.6.3 Neighbourhood Planning Process

The process for identifying and developing strategies to address the issues facing the central neighbourhoods is designed to reach a broad range of publics. Community outreach methods include meetings in each of the neighbourhoods, contacting advisory committee representatives, and participating in a neighbourhood survey.

The study’s process includes three steps and is elaborated on below:

Step 1: Identifying the Issues

- Residents and business owners were informed about the study through a letter sent by City Hall.
- Media stories and ads were issued which provide additional coverage.
- City staff held meetings in each of the city’s central neighbourhoods that explain the study’s process to residents, and solicit applicants for the central neighbourhoods’ advisory committee.
- At each neighbourhood meeting residents were asked to share their thoughts about their neighbourhood. City staff and the advisory planning committee used the information to develop a survey.
- The Municipal Planning Commission selected members for an advisory committee, comprising neighbourhood residents and business owners.
- Advisory committee members and City staff developed a survey that is provided online and mailed to all households and businesses in the study area.

- An outreach campaign was undertaken that informs residents of the survey and encourages response. The campaign includes radio, newspaper and television ads as well as media stories.

Step 2: Clarifying and Reviewing the Issues

- City staff and the advisory committee analyzed the information gathered through the survey.
- The City's inter-departmental steering committee was provided with a progress report.
- The advisory committee and City staff held a series of debriefing meetings.
- The Municipal Planning Commission received a progress report.

Step 3: Assessing the Issues

- City staff and the advisory committee examined optional strategies to address the issues identified.
- City staff drafted an "Issues and Strategies" report, which is reviewed by the advisory committee.
- The City's inter-departmental steering committee reviewed the draft "Issues and Strategies" report.
- The "Issues and Strategies" report was taken to the Municipal Planning Commission for review and comment.
- The "Issues and Strategies" report was taken to City Council for review and comment.
- City Council then directed City staff to formulate a process for developing detailed strategies for addressing the issues that Council considers a top priority.
- Strategies are currently being created and implemented. This, for example, involves the preparation of new policies, programs, procedures or regulations, as well as undertaking improvements to the delivery of municipal services.

4.6.4 Prioritizing Neighbourhoods

As the program involves an issues-based approach to neighbourhood planning, issues rather than neighbourhoods are prioritized. The priority list is based on the findings of a mail out survey vetted by an advisory committee. In consultation with City departments and with input from neighbourhood residents City Council finalizes priorities.

4.6.5 Reflecting on the Lethbridge Experience

Reflecting on the process so far, the City of Lethbridge provided the following comments:

- It is important to have a clearly defined planning process and scope of work in place. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of all participants need to be defined and agreed to at the beginning of the process.
- It is important to have clearly defined, City Council-endorsed, program goals. All stakeholders should have a clear understanding of the parameters of the program.
- For the program to be successful, all City departments must “buy into” its goals.
- Neighbourhood involvement is essential to success. For example, a survey designed by City staff in collaboration with an advisory committee comprising neighbourhood residents received a response rate of 40 percent. The City of Lethbridge attributes this to fact that neighbourhood residents were involved in developing the questions for the survey.
- A strong communication strategy is an important part of the public consultation process. One that attempts to reach as many people as possible will help ensure that neighbourhood issues and concerns are accurately identified.
- Resource and time efficiencies result from an issues-based approach to neighbourhood planning, as opposed a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood approach.
- Many of the identified issues were common to all neighbourhoods; therefore, it is more effective to address them from a city-wide perspective as opposed to the perspectives of single neighbourhoods.

5.0 COMPARABLES ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents a comparables analysis of the case study communities. **Table 5** compares the characteristics of the case study communities to the characteristics of the City of Victoria. **Table 6** outlines the rationale for the establishment of the case study programs, as well as a compares the structure of the neighbourhood planning programs. **Table 7** compares the planning process used in each case study community, identifies the process leader, and summarizes how the product of the planning process is delivered. **Table 8** compares how neighbourhood planning initiatives are prioritized. **Table 9** summarizes the administrative structure of the case study program, identifies implementation funding sources, and the monitoring mechanisms employed by each case study community. Finally, **Table 10** highlights the outcomes or products of the neighbourhood planning initiatives undertaken by each case study community.

Table 5
Characteristics of Municipalities

	City Population (approximate)	Neighbourhood Population (approximate)	Canadian City	Legislative Structure
Victoria	78,000	1,300 to 11,500	Yes	British Columbia Local Government Act
Case Study Communities				
Vancouver	580,000	12,000 to 45,000	Yes	Vancouver Charter
Winnipeg	630,000	400 to 9,500	Yes	City of Winnipeg Act
Seattle	575,000	1,000 to 43,000	No	Growth Management Act, Washington State
Lethbridge	80,000	500 to 5,000	Yes	Alberta Municipal Government Act

**Table 6
Program Rationale and Structure**

	Vancouver	Winnipeg	Seattle	Lethbridge
Rationale for the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of city-wide plan in neighbourhoods with no existing plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building at neighbourhood level • Focuses on neighbourhoods requiring reinvestment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Comprehensive Plan at neighbourhood level, and to identify amendments to the Comprehensive Plan • Involve residents in the planning of their neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues driven approach seen as a more efficient and effective process than preparing individual neighbourhood plans
Program Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community liaison group • Council appointed panel to ensure city-wide goals are being met • “One-size-fits-all” approach • Standardized consultation methods for engaging broad community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process funded by Province and City • Program has clear objectives to guide funding • Neighbourhoods approach City for funding • City staff review and approve the neighbourhood’s request for funding and provide technical support • Standardized approval process • Public consultation approaches vary and are led by residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhoods initiate planning • Neighborhood Planning Office approves funding and provides technical support • Legal contract between City and neighbourhoods • Neighbourhoods submit performance reports • Standardized approval procedures for plans • Flexible consultation process, neighbourhood must demonstrate broad community outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory committee comprising residents and business owners is appointed by Planning Commission • Inter-departmental steering committee • Comprehensive issues identification process • Comprehensive communication strategy • Multiple neighbourhoods engaged simultaneously

**Table 7
Neighbourhood Planning Process**

	Vancouver	Winnipeg	Seattle	Lethbridge
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach • “Vision Festival” to generate ideas • Survey to prioritize choices • Vision statement sent to all households and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish neighbourhood planning team • Neighbourhood assessment • Craft neighbourhood vision • Apply for implementation funding • Performance indicators developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing committee established • Vision developed • Planning committee drafts plan for public review • Matrix of action items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach (e.g., letter to all households) • Issues identification (meetings and mail out/online survey) • “What we’ve heard” meetings • Potential strategies developed with advisory committee • Detailed strategies developed based on Council direction
Process Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time planning staff lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning initiated by neighbourhoods • Planning and other departments provide support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood leads plan creation • City provides technical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff leads
Delivery Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Vision • Approved by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Plan • Action Plan • Approved by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Plan • Neighbourhood goals added to Comprehensive Plan • Implementation Matrix • Approved by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan outlining strategies for addressing neighbourhood issues (e.g., policies, bylaws, plan amendments, procedures, etc.) • Approved by Council

**Table 8
Neighbourhood Prioritization**

	Vancouver	Winnipeg	Seattle	Lethbridge
Responsibility for developing prioritization criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood stakeholders in consultation with City staff identified criteria and pilot projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City in consultation with community organization developed criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhoods simultaneously undertook planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues rather than neighbourhoods are prioritized
Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development issues, transportation issues, deficiency in amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing stock (age and quality), income, crime rates, and market indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhoods were not prioritized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High priority issues derived through public consultation process
Evaluating criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After pilot project City staff ranked remaining neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical analysis involving ranking and weight of indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhoods were not prioritized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority issues identified through a public consultation process and approved by City Council based on staff report and recommendations

**Table 9
Program Administration and Implementation**

	Vancouver	Winnipeg	Seattle	Lethbridge
Staff Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program managed by a senior planner • 2 planning teams each comprising a planner, a planning analyst and a community resource person • Additional staff as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 additional staff hired to assist with plan development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 fulltime planner • Additional staff as needed
Funding Source for Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council allocates \$10,000 annually to each vision neighbourhood • Neighbourhoods apply for grant funding • Capital budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial and municipal funding committed to implementation • Plans used to apply for grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Implementation Fund (\$50,000 to each neighbourhood) • Neighbourhood Matching Fund • Departmental Capital Improvements Plans • Bond/levy measures • Targeted tax increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In early stages of the process, but anticipated funding sources include department budgeting and capital budgeting
Impact to municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visions are helping departments coordinate services • City service teams implement visions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early stages of municipal service co-ordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination between neighbourhoods and City departments • Neighborhood Development and Preservation Division created to implement plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination between departments
Monitoring Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No monitoring indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring redevelopment activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority update status report prepared for each neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early in the process. Implementation of strategies will be monitored

**Table 10
Program Outcomes**

Vancouver	Winnipeg	Seattle	Lethbridge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designates & provides policy direction for neighbourhood centres • Provides policy direction for large redevelopment sites • Identifies future housing needs (type & location) • Provides policy direction for affordable housing • Establishes a rezoning policy • Identifies the need for roadway improvements & traffic calming measures • Identifies pedestrian and cycling improvements • Identifies the need for park & open space improvements • Provides policy direction for improving environmental practices (e.g., recycling, composting, community gardens, sustainable development) • Provides policy direction for community facilities (e.g., seniors programs, facility upgrades) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies neighbourhood improvement projects through the creation of an action plan & budget • Identifies opportunities for green space improvements • Identifies opportunities for the redevelopment of neighbourhood properties • Identifies opportunities for improving/upgrading a neighbourhood's housing stock • Identifies opportunities for infill housing • Promotes home maintenance & housing repair programs • Identifies opportunities for transportation improvements (e.g., cycling & traffic calming) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designates urban villages • Identifies zoning changes • Identifies need for neighbourhood design guidelines • Identifies redevelopment sites • Identifies playground improvements • Identifies pedestrian improvements • Identifies opportunities for future studies (e.g., commercial centres, rezoning, mid-block crosswalks, traffic calming & signage) • Identifies public works projects (e.g., sidewalks, curbs, gutters, drainage improvements) • Identifies need for streetscape improvements • Identifies potential cultural & historical neighbourhood elements • Identifies future park & open space needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the need for future studies (e.g., land use, traffic, parking) • Identifies improvements to City programs (e.g., sidewalk improvements, tree replacement, spring clean up, water purging) • Identifies the need for new policies (e.g., heritage, redevelopment, subdivision of large lots) • Identifies the need for changes to regulations, or for the creation of new regulations (e.g., notification distance for rezonings) • Identifies the need for neighbourhood improvements (e.g., back lane clean up, traffic calming)

6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

6.1 Introduction

Based on the information gathered and analyzed in the preceding sections, this section provides a list of lessons learned and accompanying neighbourhood planning considerations that are intended to provide direction and guidance to the review and update of the City's neighbourhood planning program. Both the lessons learned and neighbourhood planning considerations have been categorized under five headings: Program Design, Program Structure, Communication and Public Involvement, City-Wide Policy Planning and Implementation and Financial Management.

Program Design

Lessons Learned	Considerations for Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vancouver case study shows that a “one-size-fits-all” program can still ensure that the unique characteristics of individual neighbourhoods are not lost through the planning process. As noted in Section 2, Victoria’s current approach to neighbourhood planning involves developing neighbourhood-specific programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the perspectives of effectiveness and efficiency consideration should be given to developing a program with process, format, content and other requirements common to all neighbourhoods.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown by the Seattle case study, from an approval and implementation standpoint, it is important to have a standard format for the end product of the planning process. As noted in Section 2, currently there is no standard format for neighbourhood plans. In addition, the “user friendliness”, clarity and formatting of planning documents was an issue raised during the issues identification process discussed in Section 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to developing a standard format for neighbourhood planning documents. This should also include consistency in the content of the neighbourhood plans, which was also raised as an issue (Section 3).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted in Sections 4 and 5, the case study neighbourhood planning programs have a clear and consistent purpose or rationale for undertaking neighbourhood planning. As identified in Section 2, in Victoria the primary rationale for undertaking neighbourhood planning has been to guide land use change and redevelopment. After this, the rationale for preparing a neighbourhood plan greatly varies between individual plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to clearly articulating the purpose and rationale for the neighbourhood planning program. This will help to ensure consistency in terms of the program’s content, as well as provide focus to what neighbourhood issues the program addresses and what issues it does not address.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown by all the case studies the neighbourhood planning program (i.e., the approach, term of reference and outcome) should be formally sanctioned by City Council, by resolution, bylaw, or a program charter. As noted in Section 2, in Victoria neighbourhood planning processes have varied between neighbourhoods, with the majority being formally sanctioned by City Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to a standardized process for sanctioning neighbourhood planning initiatives.

Program Design (continued)

Lessons Learned	Considerations for Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though the prioritization of neighbourhoods varied across case study communities, the Winnipeg and Vancouver examples illustrate that if prioritization is required, it needs to be fixed to a rationale. • As noted in Section 2, neighbourhood planning priorities are established through the Planning and Development Department’s work program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the approach for prioritizing neighbourhood planning initiatives would allow neighbourhoods to know where they stand in terms of priority, as well as provide City departments with an opportunity to allocate appropriate resources (i.e., financial and staff). Staff resource allocation was also an issue raised through the issues identification process (Section 3).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a wide variety of models that can be used in the development of a neighbourhood planning program. As the Vancouver experience shows, a program should be designed to meet the specific needs of the city and its neighbourhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in Section 2, approaches to neighbourhood planning have, historically, been designed to meet the needs of specific neighbourhoods. However, there is enough commonality between the approaches to neighbourhood planning that a consistent approach could be developed. This would also help to ensure that neighbourhood-level planning is delivered in a more efficient and effective manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though not addressed through the review of the case study communities, the issues identification process identified the need to involve agencies external to the City of Victoria in neighbourhood-level planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When designing a neighbourhood planning program consideration should be given to how to effectively involve external agencies in the neighbourhood planning process. For instance, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Capital Regional District, Federal Government, BC Transit, Vancouver Island Health Authority, and Greater Victoria School District No. 61).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A conclusion of the Vancouver case study is that a pilot project can help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a single neighbourhood planning program that is common to all city neighbourhoods is developed consideration should be given to testing the strengths and weaknesses of the program through a pilot project.

Program Structure	
Lessons Learned	Considerations for Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As all case studies show, a well-documented and detailed program structure needs to be established. The structure should clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholder groups, including the Planning and Development Department, other City departments, community groups and the general public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted in Section 2, neighbourhood planning processes have varied between individual neighbourhood planning initiatives. An approach common to all neighbourhood would ensure a consistent and clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown by the Lethbridge and Vancouver examples, a neighbourhood planning program should have clearly defined terms of reference. This helps to ensure that neighbourhood planning initiatives remain focused, on-time and on-budget. In addition, a conclusion of the Lethbridge case study is that in order to be successful neighbourhood planning programs must have clearly defined program goals. Goals need to state what will be achieved through the program, including what it does and does not address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined program goals ensure that neighbourhood planning initiatives remain focused, thus avoiding “scope creep”, which can impact budgets and timelines. Consideration should be given to having clearly articulated program goals and terms of reference. This will ensure that everyone knows the parameters of the program as well as their roles and responsibilities, which will help to ensure that neighbourhood planning initiatives, are delivered in a timely manner to all neighbourhoods requiring planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown by both the Winnipeg and Seattle examples, planning departments do not necessarily have to lead neighbourhood planning processes. Processes can be led by neighbourhood residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown by the case studies, if a neighbourhood planning process is led by neighbourhood residents it must be highly organized and structured with strong involvement from City staff. For instance, neighbourhood planning still needs to be linked with city-wide goals and objectives (e.g., the Seattle case study); and, public participation mechanisms need to be in place that provide opportunity for input from a broad cross section of the neighbourhood.

Communication and Public Involvement

Lessons Learned	Considerations for Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careful consideration needs to be given to developing public outreach and communication strategies. As the Winnipeg example shows, a lack of a formalized public consultation process can result in the exclusion of some neighbourhood stakeholders. Section 2 highlighted the variety of public involvement techniques used during neighbourhood planning processes. The desire to ensure broad-based community involvement was also raised through the issues identification process (see Section 3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to developing a communication/public outreach strategy that provides a variety of opportunities for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide input. The strategy should build on past successes and could be verified and further strengthened through a pilot project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown by all the case studies community involvement in the planning process is crucial. Local neighbourhood groups and residents, and business owners must be involved in preparing neighbourhoods plans, policies and strategies. The Winnipeg example illustrated that the planning process can empower residents, resulting in community ownership of the end product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted in Section 3, through the issues identification process, community members expressed their desire to play a central role in the planning of their neighbourhoods. Community involvement will be central to the success of any neighbourhood planning program, so consideration should be given to designing a program that is inclusive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the Vancouver experience concluded, neighbourhood planning programs can provide an opportunity for non-planning departments to connect with neighbourhood residents. As noted in Section 2, City staff technical committees currently form part of the neighbourhood planning process; however, technical committees do not directly work with neighbourhood and other stakeholder groups. The issues identification process also revealed a desire for integrated inter-departmental planning teams (see Section 3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to actively involving all necessary City departments in the planning process effectively and efficiently. Though, the type and degree of involvement would have to take into account the existing workloads of the departments.

City-Wide Policy Planning

Lessons Learned	Considerations for Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be coordination between the neighbourhood planning program and city-wide planning policies. As demonstrated by both the Vancouver and Seattle examples, city-wide plans provide a broad civic policy framework for neighbourhood planning. In addition, the Seattle case study illustrates how neighbourhood planning goals can inform city-wide policy. • The need to strengthen linkages between city-wide policies and neighbourhood goals was identified as a key theme in the issues identification section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations should be given to the establishment of city-wide planning goals. This includes clearly articulating the policy and regulatory linkages between the various levels of planning (i.e., city-wide, neighbourhood and regulatory measures).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As both the Lethbridge and Seattle case studies show, many of the neighbourhood issues identified through planning processes are not necessarily neighbourhood-specific. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administratively, it may be more efficient and effective to address neighbourhood planning issues, where feasible, from a city-wide perspective rather than neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood. • Consideration should be given to first addressing neighbourhood planning issues common to the majority of neighbourhoods. That will help to ensure that planning services of the appropriate type are equitably delivered to all neighbourhoods.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The notion of “certainty” was a key theme raised through the issues identification process. Issues around certainty primarily focused on prescriptively following the direction of neighbourhood plans, and providing the plans with bylaw status. • Through the review of case studies the notion of “certainty” was hard to measure. However, both the Vancouver and Seattle case studies reveal that a potential first step in achieving a degree of certainty is to ensure that city-wide goals, policies and plans provide clear direction to neighbourhood planning initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the issues identification process some participants’ defined “certainty” as making policies and decisions ahead of time so that every development application isn't seen as a “special case.” During the review and update of the neighbourhood planning program consideration will have to be given to how certainty could be achieved. The first step maybe to ensure that city-wide policies and goals provide clear direction to neighbourhood-level planning.

Implementation and Financial Management

Lessons Learned	Considerations for Victoria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the Seattle example illustrates, recommendations from neighbourhood planning processes need to be analyzed and approved within the context of City budgets. • As noted in Section 2, there are no formalized mechanisms linking neighbourhood planning implementation programs to City budgeting processes. The lack of connectivity between the recommendations coming out of neighbourhood planning exercises was also raised during the issues identification process (see Section 3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to ensuring better linkages between the recommendations coming out of neighbourhood planning processes and the City's Corporate Strategic Plan and Twenty Year Capital Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As shown by the Vancouver, Winnipeg and Seattle case studies, plan implementation is important and requires appropriate funding including, grants and matching fund programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in Section 2, the City has several existing grant programs that could be formally linked to the implementation plans coming out of future neighbourhood planning exercises.

6.2 Conclusion

This discussion paper has provided a synthesis of the issues, opportunities and challenges associated with neighbourhood planning in Victoria. This has been done by:

- examining how the City has historically approached neighbourhood planning;
- identifying issues with the City's current approach to neighbourhood-level planning; and,
- examining how other municipalities approach planning at the neighbourhood level.

This analysis has resulted in a list of lessons learned and accompanying neighbourhood planning considerations that are intended to provide guidance and direction to the review and update of how the City's approach to neighbourhood planning.

A key objective of the review and update should be to develop a neighbourhood planning program that can effectively, efficiently and equitably deliver neighbourhood planning services of the appropriate type to all of the city's neighbourhoods. The next steps would involve developing program goals and principles.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advisory Planning Commission

The Advisory Planning Commission (APC) is a standing committee of Victoria's City Council. The APC comprises 11 members appointed by Council. The members of the APC must not be City Councilors, officers, or employees of the City of Victoria. The APC provides advice and recommendations to the Committee of the Whole Council concerning land use policy matters and proposed bylaws and permits under Divisions 2, 7, 9, and 11 of Part 26 of the *Local Government Act*.

Bylaw

A law passed and adopted by the City under powers granted by provincial legislation.

Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC)

The Community Association Land Use Committees (CALUCs) must be endorsed by City Council before they can participate in the CALUC review process. To date the following have been endorsed: Burnside/Gorge, Downtown & Harris Green, Hillside/Quadra, Fairfield & Gonzales, Fernwood, James By, North Jubilee, North Park, Oaklands, Rockland South Jubilee, and Victoria West. The purposes of the CALUC are to facilitate dialogue between land use applicants and the community; comment whether development applications fit with the spirit and intent of a neighbourhood plan; communicate to everyone involved regarding issues with development applications and the adequacy of community consultation; and, inform and be involved in the updating of neighbourhood plans and other land use issues as referred by City Council.

Development Permit Area

An area designated in the City's *Official Community Plan* where development requires design review and approval by City Council. Differing types of Development Permit Areas require differing levels of control over design. Areas designated include major entrances to the city, downtown as well as other commercial and neighbourhood centres and areas identified as having special character.

Heritage Conservation Area

The City has designated areas in the *Official Community Plan* for which greater control is required to maintain the highest possible quality of design in keeping with an area's special potential. Heritage Conservation areas are recognized for their unique heritage value and features. The tool for achieving the control is the Heritage Alteration Permit which must be obtained prior to obtaining a building permit.

Municipal Planning Commission, Lethbridge

In the City of Lethbridge the Municipal Planning Commission is a City Council appointed body comprising 4 citizens at large, 3 members of City Council and 1 citizen appointed by the Mayor's Commission on Aboriginal Affairs. The Commission performs assigned approval functions on behalf of City Council regarding certain land use and planning and land development matters. These include serving as the principal advisory committee of City Council in achieving the purposes of the Alberta Municipal government Act; acting as the principal coordinating, reviewing and recommending committee to Council with respect to amendments or changes to City land use plans.

Neighbourhood Plan

A plan prepared and used by the City setting out objectives, policies and implementation strategies with regard to land use, transportation, community development and other aspects to guide future change and development within a neighbourhood. The preparation of a neighbourhood plan is undertaken in consultation with residents and other stakeholders.

Official Community Plan

A general statement, in the form of a bylaw, of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan. It provides the policy framework for developing the detailed policies in the neighbourhood plans.

Regional Growth Strategy

The Capital Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted by the Capital Regional District Board on August 13, 2003. The strategy represents an agreement, developed and approved by the member municipalities and the regional district in partnership, on social, economic, and environmental goals and priority actions. The strategy sets out actions, targets, and guidelines to achieve a regional vision for the Capital Regional District. The City of Victoria is a partner in the implementation of the strategy. The strategy is implemented at the municipal level through a Regional Context Statement which is included as part of the Official Community Plan.

Seattle Planning Commission

The City of Seattle's Planning Commission advises City officials on city-wide planning goals, policies and plans. The Commission comprises 16-members. Membership on the Commission is intended to reflect a broad range of professional and community experiences and perspectives, with the Commission being made up of residents from different city neighbourhoods, and at least one engineer, architect and urban planner.

Zoning

The main way the City controls new development. The city is divided into a number of different zoning districts, labeled by letters and numbers, e.g., R1-B, CR-3. Each type of district or “zone” has regulations that control what kind of activities (uses) may take place, e.g., various kinds of dwelling, retail, offices. Zones also have regulations that control the maximum height of the building, the position of the building on the lot (“yards and setbacks”), the amount of development (“floor space” or “density”). The amount of parking required and other quantitative aspects.

APPENDIX A

References

Ceraso, K. 1999. "Seattle Neighborhood Planning: Citizen Empowerment or Collective Daydreaming?" *Seblterforce Online*. Issue #108, November/December.

City of Lethbridge. 2005. *Central Neighbourhood Study Work Program*. Development Services Department.

City of Lethbridge. 2005, June 20. Minutes of a Community Issues Meeting. Community Issues Committee.

City of Seattle. 2001, November. *Seattle's Neighborhood Planning Program, 1995 – 1999: Documenting the Process*. Seattle Planning Commission.

City of Vancouver. 1995. *CityPlan: Directions for Vancouver*. Vancouver, BC.

City of Vancouver. 2003, revised October. *Community Visions Terms of Reference*. Vancouver, BC.

City of Vancouver. June 9, 2006. "Future Area Planning Programs." City of Vancouver Administrative Report.

City of Victoria. 1986. *Victoria West Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1987. *Rockland Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1988, August 25. City Council Minutes "Draft Downtown Victoria Plan 1988 – APC #214 – 358."

City of Victoria. 1991, January 10. "Neighbourhood Plan Preparation Process Summary." Planning Department Memorandum to Councilor Jan Greenwood, Chairman of Planning.

City of Victoria Advisory Planning Commission. 1991, September 23. "Community Plan Process – Study Case #23-88." Memorandum to City Council.

City of Victoria. 1992. *Burnside Neighbourhood Plan*.

APPENDIX A

City of Victoria. 1993. *James Bay Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1993. *Oaklands Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1994. *Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1995. *City of Victoria Official Community Plan*. Amended December 14, 2006.

City of Victoria. 1995. *Harris Green Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1996. *Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1996. *Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan*.

City of Victoria. 1996. *North Park Local Plan*.

City of Victoria. 2001. *Victoria Harbour Plan*.

City of Victoria. 2002. *Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan*.

City of Winnipeg. 2000. *Neighbourhood Designation Report*. Winnipeg, MB.

City of Winnipeg. 2000. *Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision*.

Diers, Jim. 2006. *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*. University of British Columbia Press.

Dillon Consulting Ltd. 2005. *Best Practices in Neighbourhood Planning – Final Report*. Prepared for the City of Ottawa.

League of Women Voters of Portland. 2006, November. *Portland's Neighborhood Associations Part II – How Portland's Neighborhood Program Works Today*. The League of Women Voters of Portland Education Fund.

Province of Manitoba and City of Winnipeg. 2002. *A Guide for Developing Neighbourhood Plans*. Winnipeg, MB: Province of Manitoba.

APPENDIX A

Ruder, K. and Dehlendorf, S. 1997. *Neighborhood Planning in Seattle: Not the Garden Grass Roots Project*. Paper presented at American Planning Association Annual Conference, San Diego, CA..

Sirianni, C. 2007. "Neighborhood Planning as Collaborative Democratic Design: The Case of Seattle." *Journal of the American Planning Association*. Vol 73, No. 4.

Web Resources

City of Winnipeg <http://www.winnipeg.ca/Services/Government/PlanWinnipeg/>

City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/np/>

City of Vancouver <http://www.vancouver.ca/>

City of Lethbridge <http://www.lethbridge.ca/>

APPENDIX B

Community Groups Contacted

Name	Land Use Committee	Association
Ms. Kate Forster		Burnside Gorge Community Association
Mr. Wayne Hollohan, Chair	Planning and Zoning Committee	Fairfield Community Association
Ms. Margaret Harris, Coordinator		Fernwood Community Association
Mr. Doug Rhodes, Chair		Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group
Mr. Tim Van Alstine, Chair		James Bay Neighbourhood Environment Association
Soren Henrich, Director		North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association
Ms. Kristin Atwood, Chair		North Park Neighbourhood Association
Mr. Bernie Talbot, President		Oaklands Community Association
Mr. Henry Phillips, President		Rockland Neighbourhood Association
Ms. Liz Hoar, Coordinator		South Jubilee Neighbourhood Association
Ms. Diane Carr, Chair	Land Use Committee	Victoria West Community Association
Ms. Christine Lanz	Community Program Coordinator	Oaklands Community Association
Mr. Mitchell L. Hammond, Chair	Land Use Committee	Rockland Community Association
Ms. Stephanie Hill, Chair	Land Use Committee	Fernwood Community Association
Mr. Robert Randall, Chair	Land Use Committee	Downtown Residents' Association
Mr. Thomas Guerrero	Land Use Coordinator	North Park Neighbourhood Association

APPENDIX B

Community Groups Contacted

Name	Land Use Committee	Association
Ms. Audrey Whittell	Secretary Treasurer	Victoria Harbour Residents' Association
Mr. Ron Greene, President	Rock Bay Ratepayers' Association	
Mr. John Sanderson, President		Victoria/Esquimalt Harbour Society
Ms. JoAnnn Youmans, President	Victoria West Community Association	c/o Victoria West Community Y
Ms. Roberta Martell, Executive Director		Fernwood Community Centre
Mr. Raymond Lee, President		Burnside Gorge Community Association
Mr. Paul Gerrard, Acting President		Burnside Gorge Community Association
Mr. Grant Bolton, Executive Director		c/o Blanshard Community Centre
Mr. Ed McClanaghan, Chair	Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group	c/o Blanshard Community Centre
Ms. Joan Kotarski, Executive Director	Fairfield Community Association	1330 Fairfield Road

APPENDIX B

Community Groups Contacted

Name	Land Use Committee	Association
Mr. John Campos, President		Fairfield Community Association
Ms. Candice Hellier, Coordinator		Fernwood Community Association
Ms. Hanne Fair, Community Development Officer		James Bay Community Project
Ms. Mavis DeGirolamo, Chair		James Bay Community Project
Jesse Hyder		James Bay Community School
Mr. John Hopper, Secretary-Treasurer		Rock Bay Ratepayers' Association
Mr. James T. Allard, First Vice-President		Victoria Esquimalt Harbour Society
Ms. Lynn MacDonald, President		Victoria Harbour Residents' Association
Mr. Dean Fortin	Community Development Officer	Burnside Gorge Community Association

**Neighbourhood Planning Issues Identification Meeting – June 6, 2007
Meeting Participants**

Name	Affiliation
Pieta Van Dyke	James Bay Neighbourhood Association
Pat McGuire	James Bay Neighbourhood Association
Doug Rhodes	Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group
Doreen Mueller	Rockland Neighbourhood Association
Jarren Butterworth	
Marc Pakenham	James Bay Neighbourhood Association
Robert Randall	Downtown Residents Association
Erik Kaye	North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association
Robert Martell	Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group
Tim Van Alstine	James Bay Neighbourhood Association
Marie Savage	Urban Development Institute
Wayne Hollohan	Fairfield Community Association
Cathy Martin	Advisory Planning Commission
Howard Willis	Victoria West Community Association
Helmut Hissen	Advisory Planning Commission
Redner Jones	
Jo Ann Youmans	Victoria West Community Association
John Dietrich	Victoria West Community Association
Caleb Horn	
Kate Forster	Burnside Gore Community Association
Marg Gardiner	
Trish Richards	Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group
Al Critchley	James Bay Neighbourhood Association
Sharon Russell	

**Neighbourhood Planning Issues Identification Meeting – June 6, 2007
Meeting Participants (continued)**

Name	Affiliation
Anna lee Lepp	Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group
Cathy Brankston	Downtown Residents Association
Joanne Murray	Fernwood Community Association
Steve Jones	
Diane Carr	Victoria West Community Association
Jim Bennett	Victoria Real Estate Board
Cornelia Lange	
Lisa Helps	Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group
Bill Goers	Fernwood Community Association

**Neighbourhood Planning Issues Identification Meeting – June 13, 2007
Meeting Participants**

Name	Affiliation
Catherine Spencer	Rockland Neighbourhood Association
Susan Bartol-Drinker	Rockland Land Use Committee
Jurgen H. Mitbroadt	
Ray and Linda Travers	
Marc Pakenham	James Bay Neighbourhood Association
Marie Savage	Urban Development Institute
Terry Smollett	Victoria Real Estate Board
John Smith	Victoria Real Estate Board
Marni Offman	Rob Fleming MLA Victoria-Hillside
Andrew Mackinnon	Downtown Residents Association
Lee F. King	Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Florence Walker	
Lloyd O. Ollila	
Lois Johnson	
Brandon Foreman	Victoria Real Estate Board
Dave Chard	Chard Development
Kathryn Lesueur	
Donna Jones	
Tony Joe	Urban Development Institute
Travis Lee	Urban Development Institute
Yule Heibel	
Dennis Carlsen	Urban Development Institute
James Mitchell	Housing Affordability Partnership
Doug Rhodes	Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group

**Neighbourhood Planning Issues Identification Meeting – June 13, 2007
Meeting Participants (continued)**

Name	Affiliation
Nick Russell	Hallmark Society
Henry Kamphof	Capital Region Housing Corporation
Glen Wilson	Urban Development Institute
Art Kool	Urban Development Institute
Darlene Tait	
Joanne Murray	
Mary Jo Morun	
Diane Carr	Victoria West Community Association

Issues Identification

Certainty

- For citizens to have confidence in neighbourhood planning commitment from Council is essential
- A neighbourhood plan is a testament of faith, but can be unilaterally ignored
- What weight does the neighbourhood plan carry (both legally and practically)?
- Staff need to respect what was agreed to through the planning process (e.g., James Bay Neighbourhood Plan mediated outcomes are not followed by Staff)
- The City needs to respect processes, participants and agreements
- Plans are not respected
- Lack of respect for plans by Council and staff leads to uncertainty and the need, on behalf of the community, to defend the plans
- The community's effort is wasted if the plans are not respected
- No clear signals are being given to developers
- It is inefficient to do neighbourhood planning through every single rezoning
- Neighbourhood plans, once made, are often ignored (plans are not bylaws)
- Neighbourhood plans have limited legal status because they are not adopted as bylaws
- Accept community (neighbourhood) plans as bylaws
- Respect Neighbourhood and Precinct plans
- City respecting the neighbourhood plans
- City staff must uphold the intent of the current plans
- Stick with the plan once it is completed

Issues Identification

Community Involvement

- Hard to find interested people to volunteer in neighbourhoods
- Community groups should be given the opportunity to provide input on developments in nearby neighbourhoods
- Citizen volunteers do not feel supported by the City
- Citizen committees don't necessarily have the expertise to effectively participate in neighbourhood planning. There is a need to improve expertise in the community through City sponsored workshops
- Who gets status to participate in the neighbourhood planning process? And, how is it determined?
- I have trouble with the emphasis that City Hall is giving neighbourhood associations because neighbourhoods only look at a small part of the big picture
- There is a disconnect between community lead visions and the Planning Department
- Lack of public engagement of a wider cross-section of the community
- The process for preparing neighbourhood plans needs to ensure that a broad spectrum of community representation is involved. Creative ways for involving seniors, youths and other groups that are not typically engaged in neighbourhood planning need to be identified and integrated into the planning process
- When neighbourhoods are brought into the process a broad range of issues are raised
- Need to involve multi-stakeholders in resolving planning issues and defining a shared vision/plan
- Things go right when the walls are broken down. All stakeholders should be engaged
- Steering committees, bottom-up, but figure out what some of the unengaged stakeholders think. Right now there's too much opportunity for NIMBYs to create an adversarial climate. Rockland, for example, is 70% renters, yet none were on the board or on LUC (Land use Committee) when I was on the board (2005). It's important not to let the community associations become monocultures.
- Need much more community consultation and input.
- Innovation within the neighbourhoods themselves (neighbourhood workshops)
- Incredible knowledge / passion / willingness in the community
- The commitment of community (e.g., James Bay documentation)
- The Community Association Land Use Committees are working very hard. They serve as a place to go in the community, and they help to address issues.
- Steering Committee works better than community associations (e.g., Gonzales plan) because it provides different points of view
- Community and Neighbourhood Associations working very hard to keep up with pressures
- Community Associations are building bridges with the Urban Development Institute. For example, members attend Urban Development Institute events
- Citizens are interested in neighbourhood planning
- Council appointed steering committee (terms of reference) would a) create buy in; b) define scope; and, C) create transparency
- The public involvement techniques used in preparing neighbourhood plans involve a variety of groups (e.g., walk-about, community mapping, open houses)
- Legacy group in Gonzales has taken ownership over the implementation of the neighbourhood plan
- The City should use community web resources to communicate planning initiatives and issues to the public (e.g., Vibrant Victoria Web site)

Issues Identification

External Agencies

- Influence of other agencies is an issue – BC Transit, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Capital Regional District, School Board
- Who is accountable?
- Consultation for projects beyond City's control (e.g., new bus system)
- There is a need for the City to support the community in dealings/decisions of other levels of government and agencies (e.g., , Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Capital Regional District, School Board Federal Government, BC Transit, Vancouver Island Health Authority, School district)
- We need to pay special attention to working with the School District. The School District is a large landowner in the City of Victoria. School land is also occasionally co-owned with City. The City therefore needs to use its influence as a landowner to improve communities
- There needs to be better dialogue between the City and the school district. The school district needs to be more involved in neighbourhood planning. Consideration needs to be given to what happens to school buildings and land after school closures
- Need to integrate neighbourhood planning with the planning of other organizations

Issues Identification

Comprehensive Planning

- Need to re-envison how the Official Community Plan and neighbourhood plans work
 - Neighbourhood plans need to be part of Official Community Plan
 - Neighbourhood plans need to have force behind them
- Need to listen to the neighbourhood and develop the Official Community Plan up from there.
- Existing neighbourhood plans may not reflect the current thinking about growth. Continuous amendments to the plans is an indicator of the need to update the plans and bring them in line with the current thinking around growth
- Scope of community plans may not be understood by the community. For example, the impacts that individual decisions have on the overall goals of the plan (e.g., school closures)
- Need a stronger Official Community Plan
- What comes first the Official Community Plan or neighbourhood plans?
- The City should clearly state a city-wide vision and what is expected of different neighbourhoods (e.g., regarding density)
- The Official Community Plan lacks long range projection information (i.e., population and employment). This makes it difficult to plan for growth and change
- Neighbourhood planning is currently not comprehensive and does not take a systems or citywide approach to planning. There needs to be a citywide perspective to neighbourhood planning (e.g., number of recreational facilities and parks)
- Neighbourhood planning is currently not guided by demographic and trend based analysis
- The first step may be to update the Official Community Plan; then do “triage” tasks:
 - Use Official Community Plan to address issues common to all neighbourhoods. Then proceed to neighbourhood-specific issues
 - Community should be involved in the development of the Official Community Plan
- A strong Official Community Plan would be efficient – There would be a need for consultation!
- Need to consider how plans relate to each other
 - Consult all groups
 - Set real goals
 - Official Community Plan provides a great opportunity
- That plans address City Vision and Directions
- Need overall vision in city to capably plan

Issues Identification

Integrated Planning

- All plans need to be clear and there needs to be no contradictions between the plans (i.e., between the Official Community Plan and neighbourhood plans)
- Need consistency between the Official Community Plan and neighbourhood plans
- Neighbourhood plans should serve as a refinement of the policies in the Official Community Plan
- The linkages between regional goals and the Official Community Plan are not well coordinated
- The linkage between policy planning and regulatory planning is inconsistent
- Need to listen to the neighbourhoods and develop the Official Community Plan up from there.
- Integrated staff planning teams need to be created for plan creation and implementation
- City departments (social planning, community development, engineering,) need to be involved in an integrated, holistic approach to neighbourhood planning (team work approach)

Issues Identification

Scope of Work

- Neighbourhood plans need to be more holistic documents (currently they only focus on land use. The plans need to deal with broader issues (social, transportation, affordable housing), take an integrated approach, and ensure balanced / integrated communities
- We need to clearly define the purpose of a plan (need criteria for how to address the purpose)
- Neighbourhood plans are not a true guide to a home purchaser looking to buy into a neighbourhood. The plans need to have a clear link with zoning.
- We need tax revenue planning and a revenue target to determine right mix of commercial and residential
- The fine grained approach to neighbourhood plans sometimes misses the big issues. The result is that the Official Community Plan is relegated to obscurity.
- Need clear design guidelines for village centres (e.g., Oak Bay Ave and Cook Street Village)
- Neighbourhood plans need to include analysis around development economics. There needs to be an understanding of what things cost (e.g., the cost of a new recreation centre or multi-family housing)
- Neighbourhood plans lack a dispute resolution mechanism
- Need a framework / definition of scope in neighbourhood plans
- Scope of neighbourhood plans is currently too narrow. Plans need to embrace environmental, social, and economic factors (including climate change)
- The neighbourhood plans primarily focus on land use. Plans need to be holistic and include the integration of other departments
- Plans do not provide policy direction to the reuse of public buildings and institutional sites (e.g., schools)
- Neighbourhood plans do not identify heritage conservation areas There is also a lack of integration with the heritage registry
- Neighbourhood plans need to include more than land use (e.g., social planning)
- There needs to be more emphasis on urban design guidelines and the neighbourhood level
- Some of the neighbourhood plans are too detailed. For instance, some of the plans make very specific operational recommendations. This can cause several programs: 1) if the operational recommendation is completed the plan is not amended to reflect the change, which can cause confusion in the neighbourhood; and, 2) the City has separate operation plans for neighbourhoods. Operational recommendations should flow out of the plans, not be in the plans
- Emergency planning needs to be included in the neighbourhood planning process. The Gonzales neighbourhood plan was the first time that is occurred.
- The primary focus of the neighbourhood plans is land use. Land use impacts other areas (e.g., future recreation and parks needs) therefore the scope of the plans should be extended beyond land use (e.g., community development, recreation, parks and social planning)
- Neighbourhood plans need to clearly spell out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders/actors (the role for the general public also need to be spelled out)
- City should provide guidelines on what topic areas should be considered in neighbourhood plans
- Consult with community in selecting these topic areas
- City and neighbourhood plans should be more detailed in the provision of affordable housing – for all residents including homeless (i.e. Coal Harbour in Vancouver)
- More attention paid to social and environmental factors
- That plans address the regional housing and affordability strategy
- Most of the recent neighbourhood plans are fairly fine grained (lots of detail to guide decisions)

Issues Identification

Process Planning

- Need an approach to neighbourhood planning that does not thwart people's interest and passion
- City planners are telling us what to do in our neighbourhoods
- Essentially redoing the plan with every rezoning/development application, it is more efficient to do the neighbourhood plan every 5-10 years
- Past neighbourhood plans that were led by consultants resulted in the consultants reporting to the Planning Department and not the community. The result was that the consultants were working for the Planning Department (Consultants need to be the servant of the community – the actual client)
- For years neighbourhoods have had to be reactive/not proactive (the City simply taxes them and wears them out)
- Maybe the process for neighbourhood planning needs to be broader (e.g., the Official Community Plan includes neighbourhoods at a general level)
- Are we defining the problem incorrectly? – We need to reframe the problem around issues. Update the Official Community Plan and through the planning process identify areas of change, areas that will experience little change and village centres).
- We need to consider the “notion of planning.” Should we instead focus on dealing with issues as they arise (i.e., pave where the people walk)? Consideration should be given to responding to community needs as they emerge (e.g., a pattern language approach).
- The neighbourhood planning process is not clear (e.g., Community Association Land Use Committee process)
- Neighbourhood plans are amended with most development proposals (the process is unclear)
- There is no formalized process for updating neighbourhood plans
- There is a need to balance the neighbourhood vision with infrastructure realities
- Land use impacts transportation and infrastructure upgrades. Therefore, when there are proposed land use changes the engineering department needs to be involved early in the process in order to identify infrastructure/transportation upgrades
- In scoping out neighbourhood planning projects integrated staff planning teams need to be formed to ensure an integrated approach to planning (positive connections between the departments need to be identified)
- Gonzales Planning process – topics were known; community members drafted sections that were reviewed by the planning department, and when necessary, the language was adjusted
- The use of a pre-meeting with the public before the planning process is finalized
- Zoning amendments follow the adoption of the neighbourhood plan (e.g., Gonzales)
- The process used in the preparation of the precinct plans worked well. Staff was involved from the beginning and was given the opportunity to provide input on capacity issues.

Issues Identification

Timelines

- Timelines for plan development are lengthy (i.e., it can't take 5 years)
- It is a challenge to keep plans relevant, the plans become outdated quickly
- Land Use Committees are made up of volunteers, there is a lot of time pressures put on them to respond to applications and inquires. The committees need additional resources
- Neighbourhood plan update timelines do not respond to business cycles. There have been 3 business cycles in the last 20 years
- Length of the neighbourhood planning process can result in a loss of interest
- Longer process allows for greater public input
- The question of priority setting is still top down – it is too late for prioritizing

Issues Identification

Clarity of Planning Documents

- Need clear actions verbs in the plans in order to give clear direction to Council and staff
- There is a need for substance in the content of the plans. The plans include motherhood statements and lack substantive direction
- There should be one standard format for neighbourhood plans
- Lack of clarity / current thinking around issues creates confusion and animosity between the community and developers
- The paper production of plans is not graphically pleasing, which may contribute to the public's perception that the plans are out of date
- The format for neighbourhood plans is not consistent
- Policies can become lost when they are buried in text
- There is a lack of funding put towards neighbourhood planning for hiring consultants, advertising and plan production
- There needs to be consistency in the topic areas that neighbourhood plans address
- There are too many neighbourhood-specific rules. The complexity of the rules and regulations makes it difficult for City Hall to communicate with residents
- The final planning product has to be clear in its communication
 - Highly graphic
 - Innovative
 - Accessible to volunteers / all people
 - Accessible through various technologies
- Plans should be “living documents” that are open to amendments
- More clarity in plans

Issues Identification

Implementation

- Neighbourhood planning needs to be tied to an implementation plan with regular reporting
 - Firm timelines for things like parks & transportation
 - Measure plan performance through implementation guidelines
- Implementation of plans have no yardstick or measurable.
 - Need more guidelines / benchmarks
 - Need a framework for achieving planning goals
- Neighbourhood plan implementation strategies need to include a timeframe and be tied to capital budgeting
- Funding needs to be set aside to implement the recommendations coming out of the neighbourhood plans
- There needs to be a better linkage between community development initiatives (i.e., neighbourhood development grants) and community engagement/neighbourhood plan implementation
- The recommendations coming out of neighbourhood plans are currently not directly linked to capital budgeting.
- The recommendations and proposed changes coming out of a plan need to be tied to capital budgeting

Issues Identification

Resource Allocation

- The City needs to integrate City Department's in a cross-departmental manner (e.g., North Vancouver has a matrix organizational model)
- Four or 5 staff can't meet the needs of all the neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods just need to get on with it.
- Huge challenge for planning department to update plans. It will require great resources to update 13 neighbourhood plans
- The Planning Department's staff has been increased to address neighbourhood planning issues. There may not be enough staff in other departments to meet the neighbourhood planning needs of 13 neighbourhoods
- There has been good interdepartmental communication for both the Gonzales plan and the Downtown plan update.
- A heritage planner is an important resource to neighbourhoods

OTHER COMMENTS

From the Issues Identification Meetings

1. Staff analysis is inadequate in the assessment of development proposals that contradict neighbourhood plans
2. Community resources will not be there for a second time when plans have been walked on
3. Plans should not be belittled by Council and the Planning Department
4. Need for sound, comprehensive staff analysis if a proposal to change a neighbourhood plan comes forward
5. Exception is the rule. Creates uncertainty & “need to defend community”
6. All neighbourhood issues are considered a “fight to the death”
7. Need to invest in G.I.S. resources to enable easy comparisons between all levels of plans/zoning, etc.
8. Do Councillors’ votes actually reflect the neighbourhoods they are assigned to?
9. There is a lack of interest on behalf of the City in helping communities address their issues and needs
10. Spot zonings are rendering neighbourhood plans irrelevant
11. Commitment by Council to plan
12. Conflict of interest for staff to represent and interpret community views
13. Staff need to attend neighbourhood meetings
14. Some community members mistrust Staff to represent community views to Council. Community members should directly be expressing their views to City Council
15. It has been a conscious decision of the City not to change processes, procedures and practices
16. When plans are followed everyone benefits – sense of certainty
17. Shamrock Hotel – example of an open minded developer and community acceptance
18. There are some committed and energetic staff who can get outside of the limitations of their formal roles within the City of Victoria
19. There is an opportunity with a new planning director and new staff to do it right
20. There seems to be a demonstration of commitment to update neighbourhood plans
21. Just because a plan is old doesn’t mean it is invalid. The neighbourhoods should be telling the City if the plans are old
22. If the planners can’t update neighbourhood plans, then give money to the community and they will do it.
23. The Official Community Plan process needs to be an engaging process for residents
24. The Seattle model of bottom up planning should be tried in Victoria as a pilot project (it would take 18 months with resources plus matching dollars). The neighbourhood would hire the resources and expertise
25. Use blogs and chat rooms and other Web-based means to tap into broader community views. Could create a discussion group / blog for planning
26. The City should invest in 3-D massing models for use in neighbourhood planning (digital form modeling)
27. There should be a central Web location to demonstrate neighbourhood best practices
28. Residents feel a sense of ownership over their neighbourhoods
29. We need a coordinated approach to neighbourhood planning. Use smart growth on the ground and charrette processes
30. Order of the plans is a red herring
31. 13 neighbourhood plans equals repetition
32. Maybe focus planning efforts on corridors (e.g., Fort Street Corridor, Corridor in Rockland)
33. Core neighbourhood issues need to be addressed now. Neighbourhood plans could be approved as their chapters are completed
34. Find out what the City’s policy is on public circulation of draft documents prior to Council review

Appendix D

35. The planning staff should distribute the copies of the notes from both meetings to those in attendance
36. Development community dictates where priorities are – example is the recent development of precinct plans, not neighbourhood plans
37. A process for granting exceptions in Official Community Plan and neighbourhood plans should be established. We currently have no such process
38. Shortfalls in plans should be met through a community process
39. More community autonomy to deal with neighbourhood issues
40. Acknowledge community-based plans
 - a. Respect and integrate community-driven plans
41. City should promote community participation (like Seattle)
42. Foster renewal and succession in Neighbourhood associations
43. Recognition of community
44. Commitment to a recognition of a problem
45. There is cynicism towards this exercise
46. Need to fix the problems with the R1A and R1B zones
47. More than a year ago Council passed a resolution to abide by “Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation.” These values need to be followed
48. Absence of Councillors was noted
49. Put moratorium on development to demonstrate the City’s real commitment to neighbourhood planning
50. The City needs to use a Wikipedia type clearing house for information (“Wikipedia”)
51. The city should use “See-it” Web technology
52. Need easy access to information (overhaul City Web site in order to make it clear, comprehensive and simple)
53. Clarity, transparency, honesty in planning
54. In Saanich you can request information on a property or development proposal through email – the details are sent as they occur
55. Need for timely agenda and minutes for Council meetings
56. Go to the neighbourhoods to see what’s working & inform City priorities from there
57. It is too late to prioritize, we need a broader focus. The Official Community Plan provides an opportunity
58. Existing policy appears to permit major home renovations without citizen input. There needs to be a mechanism for citizen input.
59. Most neighbourhood plans are 20 years old
60. Don’t pit the community against the developers. Capture all issues as community stakeholders
61. Commercial and industrial uses are being pushed out of the city because city hall is not strong enough in resisting community preferences for housing
62. Exclusivity at City Hall:
 - a. City sees itself as the expert
 - b. Hard to get information from the City
 - c. Citizen’s don’t feel welcome
63. Age of neighbourhood plans
64. The City can’t tell neighbourhoods what is expected of them. Neighbourhoods should decide how they respond to density
65. Incorporate harbour into planning
66. The City should look at the Regional District of Nanaimo Sustainability Plan
67. Saanich has committed to making their municipal operations carbon neutral
68. Need to balance the social/economic/environmental factors and begin to take a long-term view. Need a longer time frame in plans
 - a. 50 years +

Appendix D

- b. Critical for sustainability
- 69. Look at USA examples on how to address housing affordability
- 70. Use the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy as a starting point for goals on housing affordability
- 71. Residents need to take ownership for their communities. To ensure broad engagement the general public needs to be engaged
- 72. The Urban Development Institute is in the process of developing a workshop that would help the community understand the financing issues around development projects
- 73. Smart Growth BC
 - a. Planning process – smart growth on the ground
 - b. Use as a resource / vehicle
- 74. Don't overlook the harbour – take into account in the planning process
- 75. Victoria needs its own charter to obtain more power over development
- 76. Sustainable neighbourhood planning in Europe / Far East
- 77. HAP website as a resource
- 78. Saanich – greenhouse gas plan
- 79. Development process timelines have increased dramatically. In 1960 it took 8 months to plan, build and sell a development project. Now it takes much longer.
- 80. Involve neighbourhoods more through pilot projects
- 81. Translating land designated for affordable housing into housing units is an issue in Vancouver
- 82. Engage wider community at different levels
- 83. New planning process represents a new beginning
- 84. Streetscape beautification successes (e.g., Quadra Village)
- 85. Fairfield community vision which was driven by the community is a successful model
- 86. Old Town Design Guidelines is an example of a pro-active rather than a reactive approach to planning
- 87. Harris Green charette was successful
 - a. Created an understanding between neighbours & developers/landowners
 - b. Reduced controversy
- 88. Planners are willing to listen to community associations and developers
- 89. Precinct plans are excellent (if followed)
- 90. Not enough proactive planning, more reactive
- 91. Need a pilot project for a bottom up process
- 92. Tonight's meeting (June 6) is an excellent start
- 93. Jury is out on "new" process
- 94. Very little
- 95. This meeting is a good start. We need to feel the Planning Department is approachable and aware of neighbourhood concerns
- 96. I do appreciate the increased/intensified attempts to involve the community at large in Victoria at all levels, and I'm hearted by all the activity so far around the Downtown Plan. I've participated in many of those workshops
- 97. Recognition that communities are not all the same and that planning needs to respond to local neighbourhoods
- 98. What planning?
- 99. No approach at all until this meeting
- 100. Vision mapping and Victoria West vision maps are a success story
- 101. Harris Green Charrette was a success
- 102. Quadra Street Village was a success
- 103. I like that the City is allowing developers and architects to be a little more creative in their approach to sires, especially in the downtown core
- 104. Neighbourhood associations are included in the process

Appendix D

105. Please engage sustainability as a basic building block for all planning
106. The description provided by today reflects a very top down process
107. Use the dollars to enable communities to participate more positively
108. Status quo does not reign supreme
109. Density is good!
110. Development pressure is fun and healthy!
111. Give the neighbourhoods the power to develop their plans and the support they need to do it.
112. Remodel vs. reconstructions
113. Update community plans – this is urgent
114. Implement Spaxman Report
115. All plans unilaterally need to be updated
116. In neighbourhoods other than the downtown open up or loosen the zoning so that proposals that may not apply exactly to zoning but are in character with the zoning get through
117. Let neighbourhood associations know why planning is against a project rather than making us find out
118. If planning would like feedback from a neighbourhood association on an issue ask them
119. City has no consistent approach or mandate to update these neighbourhood plans. Once in place can still be overlooked by planners and developers.
120. If a development conforms to city bylaws and it is not specifically referenced in a neighbourhood plan then the developers are free to exploit an area for significant short term profits. No consultation or variances are required. These developments have resulted in devalued adjacent properties, significant loss of enjoyment/views of long-term tax paying residents for the short term benefit of real estate speculators.
121. Make information available on the internet – keep it up to date
122. Love the “neighbourhoods hiring planners” idea to help explain their vision
123. Community plans should be “descriptive” in nature, while the Official Community Plan should be “prescriptive” in nature.
124. Zoning interpretation by city planners from general guidelines developed in community process. This would require communication and trust!
125. Council and City should declare a moratorium on anything that negates any part of a neighbourhood plan until changes are made. This would go along way towards re-establishing trust
126. Neighbourhood plans should be driven by local needs and desires, and not by pressure of development
127. Because a neighbourhood plan is new doesn’t necessarily mean it will be more favourable to large developments in its heritage areas
128. More transparency
129. All stakeholders at the table
130. No more adversarial stances
131. The media needs to be involved (print and television)
132. The harbour and waterfront are critically important to Victoria as a liveable region, and are critically important to tourism and the economy
133. Spaxman report is the road map. It needs to be implemented as a whole
134. Official Community Plan and individual neighbourhood plans need to fit together (integrated whole Official Community Plan with vision and goals. Neighbourhood plans implement the Official Community Plan’s vision and goals on the ground)
135. Be creative and don’t be bullied into a bad process
136. Planning staff consistently support development proposals that are contrary to the neighbourhood plans. This is inconsistent with the request to participate in neighbourhood planning

Appendix D

- 137. Better co-ordination with Planning, Developer and Land Use Committees – meeting times, processes
- 138. Clarify process for developers and communities
- 139. Less site specific re-zoning
- 140. Foster cooperation among communities in developing their plans and once the plans are accepted, and adopted into the Official Community Plan, follow them
- 141. City bylaws trump the neighbourhood plan always. Bylaws are used by planners to justify developments that are contrary to any neighbourhood plan. If this doesn't change then we are all wasting our time with this process of wind dressing consultations

Selecting Case Study Communities – Public Feedback

- Seattle model of bottom up planning
- Seattle model: The City gives resources to the community and lets them ensure that a broad cross-section of the community is at the table
- The staff needs to research good examples of neighbourhood planning models and then provide them to the community for review
- Look at Coquitlam for modular model of Official Community Plan with neighbourhood plans built-in
- Portland – Mark Lickman (City Repair)
- Look at cities that have more “home rule” capacity. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation housing resource centre will have more information
- Look at Australian examples. You can access them from the Housing Affordability Partnership Web site
- There is a housing report from Alberta that can be accessed from the Housing Affordability Partnership Web site
- Saanich Gorge-Tillicum plan was a good process model
- Santa Barbara
- Montreal as a model. They have no public process
- San Antonio
- Cities in Belgium and Holland
- Portland
- Portland
- Old cities in Europe that have very old plans that continue to direct development
- Vancouver
- Vancouver
- Seattle
- Seattle
- Santa Barbara
- Montreal
- Melbourne