



Citizen Insight Council a New Way of Seeking Input

Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2010

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — In an effort to hear from as many people as possible while updating the Official Community Plan, the City of Victoria is partnering with Wise Democracy Victoria, a local non-profit group, to facilitate two Citizen Insight Council discussion groups made up of randomly selected citizens.

“This is an exciting initiative,” said Mayor Dean Fortin. “Whether you’re 18 or 85, people have important ideas and insights about our city. The Citizen Insight Councils allow people to come together in a casual setting, hear each other’s ideas and work towards a common goal. The direction set by these groups will benefit the entire community and directly shape Victoria’s future.”

Similar to a focus group, a Citizen Insight Council brings together a randomly selected group of 12 individuals to address a question that is central to the Official Community Plan update. But unlike focus groups, which tend to gauge reactions and feeling on specific scenarios, the Citizen Insight Councils are more conversation and solution-focused.

The Citizen Insight Council process is based on a format created by the Centre for Wise Democracy, an internationally recognized organization that helps to develop creative solutions for citizen engagement. Similar approaches to citizen engagement have been successful in communities in the United States and Europe.

Any citizen of Victoria 18 years or older has a chance to be selected to participate, providing a unique opportunity for involvement by a wide cross-section of community members.

This is the first time the City of Victoria has used this approach to gather input. Other efforts for public input include citizen-led ‘Community Circle’ discussions on topics such as transportation, local food and the economy. Consultation with youth, community service providers, arts and culture groups and members of the business community are also taking place over the next few months.

The Official Community Plan will be updated from now until January 2011. For more information visit www.ShapeYourFutureVictoria.ca

— 30 —

For More Information:

Cameron Scott
Senior Planner, Community Planning
City of Victoria
250.361.0534

Simon Natrass
Wise Democracy Victoria
250.294.3588