

Shape Your Future Victoria



Neighbourhood Planning

Definition and description

Neighbourhood Plans are plans that focus on a specific geographic area of a city, and may address many planning topics including services, amenities, and urban design.

Planning practices for neighbourhood plans vary with different cities taking different approaches to selecting boundaries and topic areas to address in their plans. A **Neighbourhood Planning Program** is a municipality's approach to neighbourhood-level planning. Overall it deals with how neighbourhood planning is structured, administered, and delivered and addresses the planning process, community engagement techniques and the scope of work.

Why is this topic important?

Neighbourhoods are often the scale of community with which residents and local businesses are most familiar, bridging the gap between the individual household and the greater city. The development of plans at a scale that residents know well allows for a meaningful level of engagement, a key element of sustainable community planning.

Neighbourhood plans help to articulate more general city-wide goals and guidelines expressed in an *Official Community Plan* in greater detail according to the needs, conditions, and aspirations of the neighbourhood. For example, city-wide goals such as the provision of affordable housing or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions can be translated into action in a way that fits the neighbourhood.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Ideas and Options for the Future

June 25 and 26 - Topic Insert



Public Input on Neighbourhood Planning

Proposed Goal 1 From Public Input : <i>Plan the Neighbourhoods Around Complete Village Centres</i>	
Direction: <i>Integrated mix of uses, buildings and housing tenure in developments, and neighbourhoods</i>	Direction: <i>Inclusive, Community-Based Service Node</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood planning based on small precincts based on neighbourhood characteristics / arterials. • Planning model: “village” concept with hubs. • Mixed uses in neighbourhoods = complete communities. • More mixed-use in core and village centres. • More complete village centres. • Network of neighbourhood hubs. • Every neighbourhood has access to affordable, healthy food (grocery stores). • Food store in every village centre plus other businesses and services necessary to meet daily needs (pharmacy, barber, baker, laundry, hardware store, café/pub, etc.). • Complete neighbourhoods: seniors’ facility, schools, gym, stores, restaurants, library. • Families need access to basic services without having a car, including food, library, school, community gathering place, parks, some recreation programs, places for art, health services. • Amend land use and development regulations to enable the development of village centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new village node focused community service delivery model where nodes are located adjacent to linked outdoor park space. • Create hubs for service delivery. • Possibly use schools as new community / service delivery centres instead of selling them. • Strong network of neighbourhood centres that deliver a full spectrum of community and health services around the clock (child, senior care). • Neighbourhood health centres for coordinated health care delivery with a preventative focus. • Neighbourhood based centres for pre-school daycare and seniors, in schools and close to homes. • Create agreements with community centres for cultural groups to share space. • Community Plan for services in Downtown and in Neighbourhoods. • Every neighbourhood has a community garden and food market hub. • Community-based agriculture.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Land Development:	<i>Victoria has compact, human-oriented development patterns that use land efficiently.</i>
Neighbourhoods:	<i>Neighbourhoods become centres of economic development which serve the needs of residents within walking, wheeling or cycling distance.</i>

Public Input on Neighbourhood Planning

Proposed Goal 2 From Public Input : <i>Restructure the Planning Process to Address Citywide and Neighbourhood Issues</i>	
Direction: <i>Citizen's Role</i>	Direction: <i>City's Role</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use comprehensive planning approach. • Think beyond neighbourhood to the city as a whole. • Improve relationship of City to neighbourhoods by examining new boundaries and more citywide focus. • Focus neighbourhood plans on village node concept; involve neighbourhood associations in OCP process. • Decentralize some of the responsibility for municipal issues to the neighbourhood level (e.g. neighbourhood associations could have more responsibility for neighbourhood planning). • Citizen led neighbourhood planning e.g. Seattle. • Victoria has a city-neighbourhood planning model that is like Seattle. Victoria's unique model for planning should be maintained and enhanced. • Development Permit Areas for the entire city (neighbourhoods to provide guidelines). • Neighbourhoods can organize charettes and pay for improvements through parking pricing. • Provide more funding for neighbourhood groups to do public engagement • Work with neighbourhoods to address NIMBYism. • Address NIMBYism and causes at neighbourhood level, particularly with neighbourhood associations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use comprehensive planning approach. • Think beyond neighbourhood to the city as a whole. • Improve relationship of City to neighbourhoods by examining new boundaries and more citywide focus. • Focus neighbourhood plans on village node concept; involve neighbourhood associations in OCP process. • City should consider social impacts of its decisions in the neighbourhoods. • Planning Department driven development process (not citizen-led by neighbourhood associations). • Planning staff takes leadership role in crafting the City versus neighbourhood associations: Staff designs Master Plan for portions of the City. • Improve land economics literacy among staff, Council and neighbourhood associations. • Interdisciplinary approach to city – across departments. • Improve city building processes (i.e. development) and ensure citywide goals are furthered. • Neighbourhood planning that is managed consistently after plan approval. • Requirement for Council / staff to clearly explain why they are choosing a course different from policy (based on a clear set of values/principles). • Criteria for changes that permit rezoning / amendments (based on plan principles).

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Accountability:	<i>Corporate and community decision-making processes are defensible, clear and open to the public.</i>

Public Input on Neighbourhood Planning

Proposed Goal 3 From Public Input : <i>Engage Citizens in Planning and Development Processes</i>	
Direction: <i>Stakeholders</i>	Direction: <i>Engagement Model</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value different perspectives on community issues (e.g. help marginalized groups communicate their interests to citizens on issues that affect them). • Consider the specific needs of stakeholders/demographics when planning public meetings (e.g. no youth meetings in the morning!). • Work with school board to do “local government engagement”; encourage civic and community involvement in students. • Use neighbourhood residents as an asset. • Better City Hall outreach to marginalized and disenfranchised groups. Right now staying connected requires too much effort for many groups. • Consultation with community foundations to help direct resources. • Youth engaged in City Hall activities. • Youth-specific engagement for City processes – clearer and easier to understand how to engage. • Encourage civic involvement through school system, starting at middle school. • Anonymous citizen suggestion box. • Neighbourhood planning that authentically engages citizens and responds to needs of local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of engagement between City & community. • Culture shifting at staff level to public participation. • Move further on the participation continuum. • Understanding of IA2P (what are they, application, and commitment) by neighbourhoods, staff, Council, consultants). • Establish a centre for urban sustainability to integrate people’s involvement. • Accessible City Hall - have a visitors centre that allows for easy engagement. City hosts monthly discussion on municipal activities for feedback. • More community involvement in city processes. • Partnerships lead to creative solutions in all areas. • More effective partnerships with other levels of government. • Strong social organizations and networks enable connection. • Support and cultivate community networks and associations. • Citizens feel ownership of the city have a direct stake. • Put community’s feedback/ideas into action. • Handing resources and tasks to the community.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Community Engagement:	<i>Victorians are interested, informed, empowered and involved in their communities and the process of democratic governance.</i>

Existing Policies on Neighbourhood Planning

Victoria Sustainability Framework (2010)		
Land Development:	<i>Victoria has compact, human-oriented development patterns that use land efficiently.</i>	
Neighbourhoods:	<i>Neighbourhoods become centres of economic development which serve the needs of residents within walking, wheeling or cycling distance.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the impact of highrises on their immediate environment, in the context of the neighbourhood plan and its preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown is a neighbourhood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Development Policy Neighbourhood Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By means of neighbourhood plans, zoning and senior government housing programs, sustain a mix of housing types to meet the changing demands of the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Cycling Network routes that provide direct and efficient connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, major public destinations, Greenways and the regional pathway system. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through land use controls and neighbourhood plans, recognize and sustain existing schools by encouraging family housing in neighbourhoods 		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the Neighbourhood Development Policy, develop a partnership process in which the City and the neighbourhoods work together to satisfy neighbourhood needs and aspirations in the context of overall City goals, building on the local area planning process. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Civic Engagement Strategy (draft)