



Victoria to Focus on Walkable Neighbourhoods in Updated Official Community Plan

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — On Thursday, Council voted in favour of a new land use model for the updated Official Community Plan that would see the development of walkable, complete neighbourhoods for Victoria over the next 30 years. It was one of the more significant decisions for Council as they received a staff report on the Official Community Plan that included several months' worth of research and public input.

"We heard from many that residents want to meet their daily needs within a short walk from home," said Mayor Dean Fortin. "This vision will help ensure our city develops with neighbourhoods that are more complete and that provide amenities for people close to where they live."

The second option Council considered was to focus most new growth in the Downtown core. While the updated Official Community Plan will put less residential focus in the Downtown over the next 30 years, it would still see the population of the Downtown Core Area more than double by 2040. Public input strongly supported the village centre concept and a move towards progressively more complete communities that provide a range of services and amenities within walking distance. In addition, citizens expressed a desire for a vibrant downtown and an enhanced transit network. The direction approved by Council moves forward a village centre model, but also ensures significant growth Downtown and along rapid and frequent transit corridors.

Based on Thursday's decision, the updated Official Community Plan will look at accommodating 50 per cent of future population and housing growth in the Downtown Core Area over the next 30 years. The remaining 50 per cent will be accommodated in large scale village centres (40 per cent) and small scale village centres (10 per cent). Victoria's population is expected to grow by 20,000 people by 2040.

One of the advantages in accommodating more population growth outside of the downtown core is that it will allow for more ground-oriented type housing, which is more attractive to young families. Another advantage of increasing population near village centres is that more amenities and services can be provided in neighbourhoods, making communities more complete with many more services available within a walkable distance from home.

Using the framework approved in Council's decision, a draft plan will be presented to Council in January 2011. Further public engagement will take place in early 2011, providing Victoria citizens an opportunity to provide more input on Victoria's updated Official Community Plan once it is in draft form.

Established under the authority of the Province of BC's Local Government Act, an Official Community Plan (OCP) is a city-wide plan. Council, staff and citizens refer to the community plan to help make decisions on things like where to locate affordable housing, how the City will respond to climate change, and what the community's transportation priorities are. The current plan was last updated in 1995.

For more information about Victoria's Official Community Plan, visit www.shapeyourfuturevictoria.ca

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