

## **R E P O R T**

### *DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT*

To: Mayor W. Wright and Members of Council in Committee of the Whole      Date: January 20, 2014

From: Beverley Grieve, Director of Development Services      File: 13.2525.20

Subject: Proposed Workplan for the Official Community Plan Review

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT Council endorse the proposed Official Community Plan Review Workplan and direct staff to undertake the next steps as outlined in this report.*

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present a community planning process that, if endorsed by Council, would result in a comprehensive review of the Official Community Plan (OCP).

### **SUMMARY**

On May 28, 2012, Council directed staff to proceed with the preparation of a City Sustainability Framework which would be a preliminary step leading to the undertaking of a comprehensive update of the Official Community Plan (OCP). Through 2012 and 2013, staff undertook a process to develop an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, which Council adopted on May 27, 2013 as the Envision 2032 Sustainability Framework (“Envision”). Now that the sustainability plan is complete, staff would like to initiate the OCP review.

New Westminster’s current consolidated OCP is based primarily on a document that was adopted in 1998, shortly after the adoption of the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) as Metro Vancouver’s (then Greater Vancouver Regional District) Regional Growth Strategy. It is best practice to review the OCP every five years and to conduct a major review every 10 years. While a number of updates have been made to the OCP there has been no major revision of the document, although the local, regional, provincial, national and international context has changed significantly since that time. Within the last 10

years, the City has also made significant advancements across all planning areas and adopted many important new policies. The City is also at the threshold of adopting a new Master Transportation Plan, with which the OCP should align.

This report outlines a process for a comprehensive review of the OCP which will take into consideration the contemporary context, new planning policy, and community, stakeholder and Council feedback in the creation of a fully updated OCP document. Should Council approve this workplan, this two-year process would begin in January 2014 with the completed OCP expected to be brought forward to Council for adoption in late fall 2015. Year one would focus on conducting background research, and community engagement workshops and a visioning charrette which would build on the principles set in Envision and establish the OCP vision and policy area goals. Year two would focus on drafting policy, including the Land Use Map, followed by the development of the updated Official Community Plan document, including the review of these by Council and Council's committees/commissions, the community, and external stakeholders.

## **BACKGROUND**

On May 28, 2012, Council directed staff to proceed with the preparation of a City Sustainability Framework which would be a preliminary step in undertaking a comprehensive update of the Official Community Plan (OCP). Through 2012 and 2013, staff undertook a process to develop an the sustainability framework, which Council endorsed on May 27, 2013 as the Envision 2032 Sustainability Framework ("Envision"). The resulting document provides an overarching set of sustainability principles, called "Descriptions of Success" that may be used to guide decision-making at all levels in the City, including land use, development and other community planning decisions.

Now that the sustainability plan is complete, staff is proposing to initiate the OCP review. The OCP review would be one means of implementing the directions of the Envision that can be addressed by an OCP. For example, the Descriptions of Success would be used to help shape the specific goals for each policy area in the updated OCP, creating a model for the process through which the broader sustainability directions flow down into other City plans and policies. The OCP review process would also support the continuing development of indicators for measuring and reporting progress toward the Descriptions of Success, which are another tool proposed for implementing the Envision policy.

As well, the OCP review will foster alignment between the Official Community Plan document and other key City policies and plans, the most significant being the new Master Transportation Plan.

## **EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE**

### **Existing Official Community Plan**

The current OCP is based on a major review that was concluded in 1998. Since that time, there have been a number of updates and additions, including:

- Housekeeping updates that respond to minor changes, such as the renaming of agencies and documents referred to in the OCP;
- A new section to address legislated requirements resulting from provincial Bill 27 to provide GHG reduction targets, policies and actions;
- A limited number of changes to land use designations that are consistent with other City policies;
- The inclusion of the Downtown Community Plan as a schedule to the OCP; and,
- A consolidation of all amendments since 1998 into an officially adopted version of the OCP.

It is best practice to review the OCP every five years and to conduct a major review every 10 years. While there have been the noted minor amendments and updates, there has not been a comprehensive review of the OCP since 1998. Other considerations that support the review of the OCP at this time include:

- Responding to significant new provincial and regional policy directions, such as Metro's Regional Growth Strategy and TransLink's Transport 2040;
- Revisiting the City's growth management areas and strategy given events over the last 10 years, including the addition of two rapid transit stations;
- Incorporating other policy initiatives which are currently in progress or were completed since the last update, both within the Planning Division (such as the Livable City Strategy, Community Energy and Emissions Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, Child Care Strategy for New Westminster, and Envision 2032 Sustainability Framework) and within other Departments, such as the Master Transportation Plan.

### **Legislative Context for OCPs**

Official Community Plans are established under the statutory authority of the Provincial Local Government Act ("LGA"). The LGA describes the purpose of an OCP as a comprehensive guiding document, primarily in relation to land use planning. It gives local government the authority to define other areas that are subject to OCP policies and

plans and to adopt the plan through a bylaw. The LGA and outlines the process and sequence for adopting the OCP, including a requirement for consultation during the preparation of an OCP.

The LGA outlines required policy components (e.g. approximate location, amount and type of residential development to meet the community's expected housing needs for the next five years) and optional components (e.g. policies relating to social well-being in the community). A key required component is the "Regional Context Statement," which must be approved by the regional district board and demonstrates how the OCP policies and plans respond to and are consistent with Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy. Historically, New Westminster has chosen to include a wide range of "optional" policy areas in the OCP, including social, cultural, economic and environmental policies, seeking to move forward in many areas where a local government can influence community success and livability.

An OCP is intended to be a high-level planning document. The LGA states that a local government is not obligated to immediately meet the objectives of the OCP or to undertake any project included in the plan, or to retroactively amend existing bylaws. However, all of the City's subsequent policies, plans, capital projects or bylaws must conform to the adopted OCP. For example, the Zoning Bylaw and the Subdivision and Development Bylaw should be made consistent with the OCP over time.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed OCP Review Workplan**

Should Council approve this workplan, the OCP review would be undertaken over two years, 2014 through 2015. This process would begin in January 2014 with the completed OCP expected to be brought forward to Council for adoption in late fall 2015. Year one would focus on conducting background research, and community engagement workshops and a visioning charrette which would build on the principles set in Envision and establish the OCP vision and policy area goals. Year two would focus on drafting policy, including the Land Use Map, and the review of these by Council and Council's committees/commissions, the community, and external stakeholders. Throughout the process, Council would be updated at appropriate points. This workplan is illustrated in Attachment 1. The review process would have the following four steps:

*Step 1. Background Research (January – September 2014)*

Review of Existing Policy: Staff would review the existing OCP and other related policy to identify:

- What to retain in the current OCP;
- Where there are issues or plan and policy gaps which need to be addressed through further research; and,
- How to integrate and respond to other plans and policy documents, including local, regional, provincial and federal initiatives that were completed since 1998 or are currently in progress;

This review would be done for each of the general planning policy areas (i.e. Community Well-Being, Economy, Energy, Environment, Hazard, Heritage, Housing, Parks/Recreation, Culture, Transportation, Urban Design, Utilities). To record the findings of this review, staff would prepare discussion papers for each of the OCP policy areas which would outline context, identified issues and gaps, and potential solutions and innovations. To further explore innovative approaches to issues, external experts would be invited to speak to staff on key topics.

Consultants would be required for some background research and mapping. For example, consultants would be required to prepare updated mapping and analysis of city hazard areas and natural areas. The need for consultants related to other issues may be identified through the background research process and these would be engaged with Council's approval.

Statistical Research and Analysis: In support of the OCP, staff would conduct an update of city statistics and projections out to 2041. This would include data related to population, employment, and land use. An update of the City's Neighbourhood Profiles and the City-wide profile would be completed as part of this task. Staff would seek Council's approval to engage consultants to assist with developing projections that would take into account the specific context of New Westminster.

*Step 2. OCP Review Public Launch and Workshops (April – September 2014)*

The OCP Review would be publicly launched through a series of Public Workshops held in neighbourhoods across the city. These workshops would feature a variety of activities to engage the public in sharing what is important to them about their city. The workshops would be held in mid- to late-spring. A summary of the workshop outputs would be posted online in early summer. The workshop outputs would be used by staff in the next

step of the review process, i.e. to help develop a draft OCP vision statement and policy area goals.

As part of the public launch a HotShots! photo contest will be launched at the workshops. The public will be invited to submit photos of New Westminster related to each policy area. The contest would be held over summer with final online voting in early fall. Submitted photos may be included in the final OCP document.

*Step 3. OCP Vision and Policy Goals Development (April 2014 – February 2015)*

The outputs of the first two steps would be used, along with the Envision Descriptions of Success, to inform the generation of the draft OCP vision and policy area goals. Staff would integrate the outputs of the background research, statistical analysis, and Envision directions into an OCP vision statement and an overarching goal for each policy area. The vision statement would also use the Strategic Plan vision as a base. The draft vision and goals would be circulated to Council's committees/commissions for review.

Visioning Charrette: As part of the visioning and goals development process, staff proposes holding a visioning charrette in late January 2015. The purpose of the charrette would be to use a design-based workshop process to explore options for how the city will grow into the future. The charrette process would be run by consultants hired by the City and would involve a group of stakeholders, guests from external agencies, and City staff. Opportunities for broad public input would be provided through public open houses hosted at key points in the process.

The charrette explorations would be guided by the draft vision statement and policy goals. Staff would also provide overarching questions to be addressed, such as:

- How to address growth management for a multi-cultural and older yet multi-generational population faced with housing affordability issues;
- How to promote the city's economy and employment while addressing the needs and impacts of transportation networks;
- How to meet City greenhouse gas reduction targets and promote other sustainability goals through "green" architecture and infrastructure; and,
- How to build on the community's sense of pride through good urban design.

The charrette outputs would be a vision in drawings of what New Westminster might look like in 2041 (as compared to the vision statement which is the vision in words). These outputs would include an exploratory land use plan and numerous other sketches

and diagrams illustrating ideas for the city's future. These outputs would be used to help refine the draft vision and goals as well as in the next step of the review process, i.e. to inform the development of the draft Land Use Plan and policies for the updated OCP.

*Step 4. Official Community Plan Development and Adoption (February - December 2015)*

Staff would draft a land use plan and policy for each of the policy areas, including other mapping. The draft land use plan and policy would be presented to Council and Council's committees/commissions, to the public through Public Workshops, and circulated to external agencies for review.

Staff would incorporate the OCP vision statement, charrette vision drawings, policy area goals, policies, land use plan, and other components into an updated draft Official Community Plan document. The document would be laid out similar to the draft Queensborough Community Plan to be easily understandable and useable by Council, staff, the public and other users. The draft OCP would be presented to Council, to the public in Open Houses, and circulated for review, as appropriate. It is expected that the updated Official Community Plan would be forwarded to Council for adoption by the end of 2015.

*Developing Indicators for Measuring Progress (November 2014 – September 2015)*

Parallel to the OCP review, staff would continue to develop and select those key indicators for each policy area that should be monitored and reported on regularly to help determine progress towards the goals of the OCP and the Envision Descriptions of Success. The goal would be to identify one key indicator for each policy of the OCP, across all policy areas, thereby ensuring all aspects are monitored while keeping the number of indicators to a manageable amount.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The OCP review will integrate the directions of the City's Envision 2032 Sustainability Framework into the updated Official Community Plan document. The resulting OCP will be based on best practices in sustainability, and will be developed with extensive community engagement and full consideration of social, cultural, economic and environmental perspectives. It will provide a sustainable decision-making framework for the future development of the city. The indicators developed parallel to the OCP review process will provide a tool for implementing the sustainability directions of the City's Envision 2032 Sustainability Framework.

## **OPTIONS**

There are two options presented for Council's consideration, that Council:

1. Endorse the proposed Official Community Plan review workplan and direct staff to undertake the next steps as outlined in this report; or
2. Provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommends option 1.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

It is proposed that the OCP review process be conducted primarily with internal staff resources. It is estimated that an aggregate total of 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) from existing planning staff positions will be required to lead the review process, excluding overview by the Planning Manager and Director of Development Services. An estimated additional 2.0 FTE (aggregate) commitment from existing resources in the Development Services Department would be required for undertaking research, analysis, policy development, and public engagement. Additional support from other departments (particularly Engineering, Parks, Culture and Recreation, and Electrical) would be required in the order of 0.75 FTE (aggregate) for research, analysis, and policy development, technical inputs and public engagement.

In addition to the development of plans and policies, a number of background studies to be undertaken by external consultants may be required, including:

- Confirmation of population projections and demographics;
- Identification of Environmentally Sensitive Areas and habitat values outside of the Queensborough Community Plan ("QCP") area; and,
- Identification of Hazard Areas outside of the QCP area.

Consultants would also be engaged to lead the visioning charrette process.

Additional consultants may be engaged, as necessary, with the approval of Council.

It is estimated that a budget of approximately \$80,000 will be sufficient for these additional background studies. Approximately \$30,000 would be required for the charrette process consultants. The budget for both would be allocated from annual general consulting budgets.



**INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

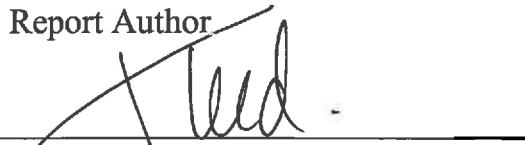
All related City departments have been consulted in developing the proposed OCP review workplan. The OCP will be developed as a coordinated interdepartmental process, focused on creating a single, commonly-held vision that is supported by the entire community and understood by all potential users. An interdepartmental team would be involved with researching and writing components of the OCP, and would meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss process strategy and policy issues. Other related staff would be updated regularly on the process at the inter-departmental Development Review Committee. Staff would be invited to contribute their insights and feedback and ultimately would be presented the final documents with regard to applying them in their areas of responsibility.

**CONCLUSION**

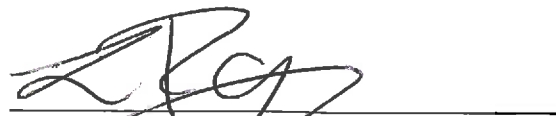
The City has identified the need for a major review of the OCP. Through 2013, the City developed a comprehensive sustainability framework which was seen as a preliminary step leading to the undertaking of a comprehensive OCP update. Now that the sustainability plan is complete, staff would like to initiate the OCP review.

This report has outlined a process for completing OCP through a coordinated interdepartmental and public engagement process focused on creating a single, commonly-held vision that is supported by the entire community and understood by all potential users.

Report Author

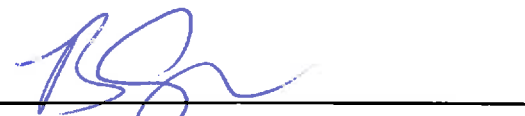


Jackie Teed  
Acting Manager of Planning

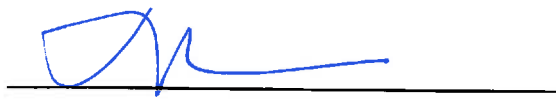


Lynn Roxburgh,  
Planning Analyst

Approved for Presentation to Council



Beverly Grieve,  
Director of Development Services



Lisa Spitale,  
Chief Administrative Officer



# **Attachment 1:**

## **Proposed OCP Review Workplan**



**Official Community Plan Review Workplan**

Task Description	2014												2015											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Step 1: Background Research</b>	C				C																			
Statistical Research and Analysis																								
Neighbourhood Profile																								
Projection Consultant																								
Review of Existing Policy																								
Discussion Paper Part A: Context, Issues, Gaps																								
Research By Consultant (e.g. Hazard, Environment)																								
Discussion Paper Part B: Solutions and Innovations																								
<b>Step 2: OCP Review Launch &amp; Public Workshops</b>																								
Community Workshops																								
Hotshots Contest																								
<b>Step 3: OCP Vision &amp; Policy Goals Development</b>																								
Visioning Charrette																								
Preparation of draft OCP vision and policy goals																								
<b>Step 4: OCP Development &amp; Adoption</b>																								
Develop Land Use Plan and policies																								
Develop Official Community Plan document																								
Adoption Process																								
<b>Developing Indicators for Measuring Progress</b>																								
Review and refine list of indicators developed to date																								
Staff indicators prioritization workshop																								
Finalize draft indicators (filling gaps, as needed)																								

- o 1st/2nd Draft Deliverable Due
- Final Deliverable Due
- rfp Post RFP for Consultants
- h Hire Consultant
- C Council Report
- P Public Engagement (i.e. workshop, charrette, open house)
- PH Public Hearing
- A Adoption