

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN CHANGES OR UPDATES

PROPOSED BY – MULTIPLE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

DATE – 23 SEPTEMBER 2024

DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE

Take advantage of the requirement to update the Official Community Plan in 2025 (to meet Provincial requirements) to achieve further development or economic outcomes via an expedited process that includes efficient but effective community engagement.

BACKGROUND

This initiative proposal is an effort by staff to capture feedback from multiple members of Council related to development/community planning related initiatives proposed during the Council Priorities Plan mid-term refresh. There is a potential new initiative related to OCP development that encapsulates or supersedes a number of ideas from various sources, including the Future Projects List in the Council Priorities Plan.

From Future Project List: OCP Recalibration – this project was initially a staff-initiated proposal in 2022 intended to make minor policy changes or direction that occurred in recent years. This was not prioritized during the Council Priorities Plan process.

From Future Project List: Zoning/OCP reduced hurdles for commercial space development – during OCP review of 2025, staff are intending to look at policy changes that allow more commercial space in more land use designations. Staff are also intending to look at removing commercial space from the calculation of Floor Area Ratio.

From Future Project List: Policy Direction – COTW Discussion – Floor Area Ratio Deviations from the OCP – A short-term or interim measure to address the issues raised by the lack of a Floor Area Ratio in the Commercial/Commercial Mixed Use land use designation is underway. However, more permanent changes to the OCP are expected along these lines during the review of the OCP in 2025.

Proposed for Council Priorities Plan (after Housing Needs Assessment Completed): OCP Update – in response to Bill 44, Esquimalt is required to update its OCP by December 31, 2025, to demonstrate how it will meet the 20-year projections of the Housing Needs Assessment that is expected to be complete by end of 2024

On April 8, 2024, Council adopted the following resolution: “That Council direct staff to prepare a report that outlines the implications of amending the OCP to apply an interim limit of 12 storeys

to the residential portion of the Commercial/Commercial Mixed-Used designation until there is an OCP review conducted in 2025.”

In 2017, the Township made efforts to prepare Urban Design Guidelines for Esquimalt Road. The analysis was intended to capture community expectations for Esquimalt Road, including economic expectations, design guidance for future developments, and long-term plan to respond to changing patterns of land use in the community. In short, the intent was to inform the Township’s Economic Development Strategy and the OCP review process. Given the significant change that has occurred in the community since 2017, an updated economic and tax impact analysis and potentially some further work specific to Esquimalt Road may be warranted during the OCP review process.

Notwithstanding the external requirements to update the OCP, there appears to be a number of factors that are driving a potential update or refresh of the OCP. Some of these include incorporating changes in market conditions, updated community needs and new realities in effect since the last major update of the OCP.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Is there a way to update or refresh the OCP in a nimble way, an expedited process that includes Council and community that would minimize the requirement for a 3-5 year process?

Is there a way to reduce ambiguity in the OCP and address areas of public concern (including clarifying height limits and allowable increases in density in exchange for amenities)?

Is there a way to examine density in areas where Council has indicated a willingness to revise the OCP already?

Can we address the need for parks and public facilities in areas where increased density has been approved or is expected?

ANTICIPATED SCOPE

An expedited OCP update process – one that could be completed in 2025 – is the desired scope and level of effort for these OCP-related initiatives.