

MAJOR REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (2026 – 2028)

DATE – 08 DECEMBER 2025

BACKGROUND

The Council Priorities Plan 2023 – 2026 includes a project to prepare a “project scope document” in Q1 of 2026 for the “Official Community Plan Major Review”. Furthermore, at their October 21, 2024, meeting, Council, sitting as the Committee of the whole, recommended that Council request that the Chief Administrative Officer instruct staff to prepare an impact assessment for a major review of the Official Community Plan.

The Official Community Plan has not had a major review for nearly 20 years. The previous review that resulted in the 2018 Official Community Plan carried over many of the policies from the 2007 Official Community Plan and was at best considered as a major recalibration rather than a major review of the Official Community Plan. Likewise, the 2025 review of the Official Community Plan was a minor recalibration primarily aimed at bringing the Plan into conformance with recent amendments to the Local Government Act as well as updating statistics and select policies and guidelines. A major review of the Official Community Plan would incorporate a much more robust review process including the incorporation of the results of several studies including but not limited to:

- 1) The Development Capacity Study – The Development Capacity Study is currently underway with a draft expected to be presented to Council before the 2026 summer council break and the final report delivered to Council shortly after the summer break. This study will highlight areas in Esquimalt that contain constraints to future development.
- 2) Fiscal Impact Analysis Model of Development Potential – This model would include an analysis of building heights and densities for various uses and locations. It would be prepared by a consultant that specializes in fiscal analysis for land development. Because the relevant variables are in constant flux, the consultant will be asked to develop a dynamic model that can be updated as financial and economic conditions change. This model will also be able to be used to calculate how much density must be provided to a developer before density bonuses can be triggered. This is a new requirement of Section 473.1 of the Local Government Act.
- 3) Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines – This document would use the findings from the Development Capacity Study and the Fiscal Impact Analysis Model to develop urban design guidelines for Esquimalt Road, particularly between Lampson Street and Constance

Avenue and at the Esquimalt Road – Head Street Node. In addition to providing guidelines for building heights, density, setbacks, and site coverage along Esquimalt Road, the Guidelines would examine the feasibility of adding bike lanes to the portion of Esquimalt Road between Joffre Street and Constance Avenue. Given the constrained road right-of-way in this corridor, there needs to be a comprehensive review of various components of a complete street including but not limited to sidewalks, boulevards, street trees, street furniture, street signs, traffic control devices, driving lanes, transit facilities, on-street parking, adequate commercial frontage, bike lanes, underground and overhead utilities, and materials.

PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of the project will involve the engagement of a specialized consulting team with expertise in land use planning, geographic information systems, health planning, public engagement, environmental management including potential impacts of various policies on the climate, urban design, housing, land use economics, transportation planning, civil engineering, social planning, and planning law.

The outcome will be a comprehensive land use policy document that will guide Council decision making for the next 20 years with reviews every 5 years as per the requirements of the Local Government Act.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

December 8, 2025:	Council confirms its desire to proceed with the project and requests that the Chief Administrative Officer instruct staff to prepare a project charter and signoff report for Council's consideration in Q2 of 2026.
May 2026	Budget approval for the Financial Impact Analysis Model, Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines, and the Official Community Plan.
June 2026	Council approves the project charter and signoff report
June 2026	Draft Development Capacity Study presented to Committee of the Whole
June 2026	Request for proposals is issued for the Financial Impact Analysis Model.
September 2026	Completed Development Capacity Study presented to Council for receipt.

August 2026	Contract awarded for the Financial Impact Analysis Model.
September 2026	Request for proposals is issued for the Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines.
November 2026	Contract awarded for the Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines.
January 2027	Financial Impact Analysis Model completed.
February 2027	Request for proposals for the Major Official Community Plan Review issued.
June 2027	Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines completed.
April 2027	Contract awarded for the Major Official Community Plan Review.
Q4, 2028	Official Community Plan adopted by Council.

STAFF IMPACT

This project will involve extensive staff involvement from the following departments:

Development Services	Is the lead department and oversees the entire project and ensures that schedules and budgets are maintained. The proposed timeline is incumbent on budget approval for a Senior Planner whose job will be to oversee this project daily along with numerous other tasks.
Engineering	Involved in the Esquimalt Road Urban Design Guidelines as well as the transportation and servicing sections of the Official Community Plan
Finance	Involved in the Financial Impact Analysis Model as well as budget compliance for the project.
Fire	Involved in policies related to protection of various types of building typologies.
Parks and Recreation	Involved in those sections of the Official Community Plan that deal with parks and recreation as well as trees, green spaces,

and environmental management.

Strategic Initiatives	Involved in the engagement of First Nations in the review process as well as policies related to public safety.
Communications	Involved in the dissemination of information to the public and ensuring that public engagement is activated at the appropriate level.
Corporate Services	Involved in the oversight of legislative processes involved in the adoption of the Official Community Plan bylaw.

STAKEHOLDERS/POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS OR DEPENDENCIES

The following stakeholders have been identified:

- Residents of Esquimalt
- Business owners who own businesses in Esquimalt.
- Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce
- Capital Regional District
- Kosapsum First Nation
- Songhees First Nation
- City of Victoria
- District of Saanich
- Town of View Royal
- Greater Victoria School District No. 61
- Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Columbia Brianique School District No. 93
- Agricultural Land Commission
- Department of National Defence – Base Commander CFB Esquimalt
- BC Transit
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Public Port of Victoria (Transport Canada)
- Greater Victoria Harbour Authority
- BC Hydro
- Greater Victoria Housing Authority
- Urban Development Institute
- West Bay Residents Association

In addition, there will be a very significant public engagement process that will involve numerous engagement tools including but not limited to:

- Open houses,
- On-line surveys,

- Frequent news releases related to progress,
- Focus groups,

There will also be numerous opportunities for the Advisory Planning Commission and the Design Review Committee to review various drafts of the Official Community Plan in whole or part.

PROJECT RISK MANAGEMENT

Due to the complex nature of the review and the number and complexity of the background studies required, it is conceivable that the proposed timeline will need to be extended. The timeline does not include contingency for unforeseen events. In addition, it is contingent on the hiring of a Senior Planner to oversee the project on a day-to-day basis. The timeline will be extended considerably if this project must be managed by the existing staff complement.

There is also a potential budget risk if Council reduces the proposed budget amounts.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The completion of the Major Review of the Official Community Plan is contingent upon approval of the following budget requests in the 2026, 2027, and 2028 budgets.

- Fiscal Impact Analysis Model - \$50,000 (2026) and \$200,000 (2027)
- Esquimalt Road Design Guidelines - \$25,000 (2026) and \$175,000 (2027)
- Consulting fees for OCP - \$200,000.00 (2027) and \$50,000.00 (2028)