



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee **Date:** August 12, 2024
From: John Hopkins **File:** 08-4045-30-08/Vol 01
 Director, Policy Planning
Re: **Official Community Plan Targeted Update — Phase 1 Public Engagement Overview**

Staff Recommendations

1. That the proposed Phase 1 public engagement framework for the Official Community Plan targeted update, as outlined in the staff report dated August 12, 2024, titled “Official Community Plan Targeted Update — Phase 1 Public Engagement Overview” from the Director, Policy Planning, be approved; and
2. That staff report back with a public engagement summary with next steps in the Official Community Plan targeted update.

John Hopkins
 Director, Policy Planning
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REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Climate & Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Social Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Development Applications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Housing Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Intergovernmental Relations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

In 2022, Council endorsed a proposed scope and process to review and update the City's Official Community Plan (OCP). This included an in-depth analysis to create a more robust policy framework for the provision of affordable housing, addressing issues as they relate to social equity from a land use perspective, improved environmental protection and enhancement policies, and addressing the challenges of climate mitigation and adaptation. This work was interrupted by the introduction and enactment of several pieces of provincial legislation (Bill 16, 44, 46, and 47) which significantly changed the planning landscape to address housing supply, and the tools that are used to create and retain affordable housing. As a result, an extended break in the OCP review was required to review the new legislation and bring forward the necessary bylaw amendments prior to the June 30, 2024 deadline as mandated by the Province.

This report reintroduces the scope of the OCP targeted update and requests Council's endorsement on the first phase of the public engagement framework.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Strategy #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement.

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.

1.1 Continue fostering effective and strategic relationships with other levels of government and Indigenous communities.

1.2 Advocate for the needs of Richmond in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

1.3 Increase the reach of communication and engagement efforts to connect with Richmond's diverse community.

1.4 Leverage a variety of approaches to make civic engagement and participation easy and accessible.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

Strategic and sustainable growth that supports long-term community needs and a well-planned and prosperous City.

2.1 Ensure that Richmond's targeted OCP update shapes the direction and character of the City.

2.2 Develop and implement innovative and proactive solutions that encourage a range of housing options and prioritize affordability.

2.3 Ensure that both built and natural infrastructure supports sustainable development throughout the City.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #5 A Leader in Environmental Sustainability:

Leadership in environmental sustainability through innovative, sustainable and proactive solutions that mitigate climate change and other environmental impacts.

5.2 Support the preservation and enhancement of Richmond's natural environment.

Findings of Fact

Background

Under the *Local Government Act*, an OCP is a comprehensive policy document that outlines the long-term land use goals and objectives, which enable the City to plan, coordinate and manage its environmental, social, and economic interests over the long term. The existing OCP was adopted in 2012 and since then, Richmond's population and economy has grown and various challenges have arisen and/or intensified over the years. These include but are not limited to housing affordability and climate change, with vulnerable populations experiencing the most impacts. Over the past five years, Council has amended the OCP from time to time to keep it relevant and effective in light of social, demographic, environmental, and economic trends and changes in community values. This has included the Industrial Land Intensification Initiative, Farming First Strategy, Lansdowne Master Plan, and updates to the Market Rental Housing Policy, and No. 5 Road Backlands Policy, to name a few. Despite this, a deeper dive into specific issues is required to strengthen the OCP policy framework.

On February 28, 2022, Council endorsed a proposed scope and process to update the OCP. The overarching themes to guide the OCP update included "Resiliency, Equity and Adaptation" with six target areas such as:

1. Housing Affordability
2. Social Equity
3. Environmental Protection & Enhancement
4. Climate Mitigation & Adaptation
5. Long-Term Planning for Emerging Trends & Transformational Technologies
6. Administrative Updates

Since the beginning of the review, a considerable amount of effort has been spent on the issue of housing affordability. Some of the work has included a contextual understanding of Richmond's housing market, a review of federal, provincial and external agency influences on housing affordability, and a review of case studies around the world on the various approaches to address housing affordability. The introduction of the provincial housing bills in early 2023 significantly altered the planning framework in British Columbia by requiring local governments to allow minimum densities and building heights near rapid transit stations, and small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) across all neighbourhoods in Richmond. The legislation focuses more on

increasing housing supply rather than addressing how to increase the supply of affordable housing and other implications of new provincial bills. Further, the “one-size-fits-all” approach to land use planning undermines long-term planning efforts such as the Arterial Road Land Use Policy; allowing three to six dwelling units per lot would essentially diminish the effectiveness of this policy. The enactment of this legislation with its associated deadlines required staffing resources to focus on the required bylaw amendments and place the OCP review and any kind of public consultation on hold.

The first major deadline with respect to the provincial housing bills included the adoption of bylaws to incorporate Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs) and pre-zone for SSMUH in selected areas by June 30, 2024. The provincial housing bills also required local governments to conduct the following prior to December 31, 2025:

- endorse an interim Housing Needs Report no later than December 31, 2024 which would consider the housing needs of the community over a 20-year horizon; and
- as local governments will lose the ability to secure amenities through density bonusing in areas impacted by TOA by mid-2025:
 - establish a new Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) bylaw for specific amenities (e.g., community & recreation centres, child care facilities); and
 - utilize inclusionary zoning to secure affordable housing.

By the end of 2025, the OCP must:

- incorporate a new policy framework on how amenities are collected;
- update the density bonus framework for items that are not included in the ACC bylaw, and use inclusionary zoning to secure affordable housing;
- reflect and pre-zone for the 20-year total number of housing units required to meet anticipated housing needs as outlined in the interim Housing Needs Report; and
- be consistent with the TOA and SSMUH related bylaws.

According to the new provincial legislation, the OCP must be updated every five years and include housing policies respecting each class of housing need required in the most recent Housing Needs Report.

With the deadlines outlined by the Province combined with the scope of the Council endorsed OCP review, it is critical to begin public consultation on priorities that need to be considered prior to drafting a revised policy framework.

Analysis

Under section 475 of the *Local Government Act*, local municipalities such as Richmond “must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.” These include but are not limited to adjacent municipalities, provincial agencies, and members of the public. Likewise, this is also supported by Council Policy 5043 (OCP Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy). By providing opportunities for public engagement, the City is also creating a more comprehensive and inclusive process to ensure the OCP reflects the aspirations of its residents in the long term.

OCP Project Principles

The following Project Principles will guide the OCP targeted update planning process and the preparation of the project deliverables:

1. **Policy Context Alignment:** Establish a renewed vision, goals and planning policies to guide the development of an adaptable, sustainable¹, equitable, and liveable city. The OCP will also align with Council adopted strategies, policies and other initiatives, and is both practical and aspirational.
2. **Comprehensive Engagement:** Provide opportunities for the public to participate in engagement activities and to review and provide feedback on OCP update proposals through a variety of means.
3. **Public Reporting:** Provide various types of accessible documentation throughout the OCP planning process in order to communicate project updates with the general public and establish project transparency.

Phasing and Timeline

Staff are recommending that the project be divided into the following three consultation phases:

Consultation Phases	Timeframe
<p>1. Background Research & Public Engagement: Conduct background and contextual research on the six target areas noted above and other implications of provincial bills. Simultaneously, launch public engagements to garner awareness, educate and provide opportunities for the public to share feedback. Public open houses and an online survey would be scheduled for November. Staff will analyze engagement feedback and produce an engagement summary that will be shared with Council in the next stage as it relates to the Strategic Options.</p>	<p>Q3 to Q4 2024</p>
<p>2. Strategic Options: The second phase will involve drafting policy directions that are informed by the background research and the engagement feedback. Interdepartmental staff, advisory committees, and the public will provide input on the draft policy directions. During this period and into the Summer/Fall 2025, specific but related reports will come forward, per provincial requirements, including such matters as inclusionary zoning on TOA areas, DCC/ACC options, etc.</p>	<p>Q1 to Q2 2025</p>
<p>3. Pulling the Plan Together: The third phase will involve drafting clear policies and implementation actions. The public will provide feedback on the draft policies. Staff will seek Council’s consideration of the OCP Bylaw, including a required public hearing, to wrap up the third phase of engagement.</p>	<p>Q3 to Q4 2025</p>

¹ Inclusive of a commitment to a zero-carbon and 100% circular community by 2050 per the Community Energy & Emissions Plan 2050 and Circular City Strategy.

Proposed Engagement and Outreach Activities

Opportunities for online and in-person engagement activities and project updates will be shared on Lets Talk Richmond, the City OCP project webpage and social media channels. Other outreach and communication methods include postcards, newsletters, emails, bus shelters, and posters. Key messaging will be mindful of the targeted audience, with branding, design and graphics to support communication efforts.

For the first phase of public and stakeholder engagement in fall 2024, the intention is to conduct the following engagement activities:

- *Get Snapping*: This activity would invite local residents to take part in the photo sharing opportunity to celebrate their favourite place in Richmond and to generate interest throughout the engagement phase. Submitted photos may be shown at the public open house in November 2024.
- *Focus groups and meetings*: Focus groups and meetings will be conducted with advisory committees, community organizations, and interdepartmental staff for the purposes of carrying out targeted feedback on specific topic areas.
- *Pop-up booths*: Pop-up booths will be organized across different locations in the City to raise awareness and for the public to learn about the project and ways to engage. The intent of pop up booths is to ‘go where the people are’ in order to connect with those who may not be able to share their input online or attend a scheduled engagement activity.
- *Public open houses*: At the end of phase 1, several in-person public open houses will be held in November 2024 to share engagement highlights and provide further opportunity for feedback on high-level goals and objectives for each of the targeted areas of the OCP review and update.
- *Lets Talk Richmond online survey*: A series of questions will be posted on Lets Talk Richmond where residents can provide input on the high-level goals and objectives presented at the public open house and provide input into the purpose, process and outcome of phase 1 of the OCP targeted review.

The expectation from the first phase of engagement is to receive meaningful feedback from member of the public regarding proposed refinements to the OCP vision and goals as well as objectives for each of the targeted areas prior to preparing strategic options and policy frameworks. For example, the first phase of engagement would inquire on the level of support to have higher densities and building heights up to six storeys along arterial roads and near neighbourhood service centres.

Following this first phase of consultation, phase 2 would be conducted in 2025 with proposed strategic policy directions and amendments which would form the basis of the revised OCP to be adopted by the end of 2025.

Financial Impact

The existing OCP review budget will have no financial impact on existing budgets, have any tax implications, or require additional staff resources.

Conclusion

In 2022, Council endorsed a proposed scope and process to update the OCP. The proposed overarching themes to guide the OCP update included “Resiliency, Equity and Adaptation” with the six target areas to include:

1. Housing Affordability
2. Social Equity
3. Environmental Protection & Enhancement
4. Climate Mitigation & Adaptation
5. Long-Term Planning for Emerging Trends & Transformational Technologies
6. Administrative Updates

Since then, new provincial housing legislation has mandated changes to the planning landscaping by requiring minimum densities and building heights for land within 800 m of a rapid transit station, and a minimum number of units for land in traditionally single-family neighbourhoods depending on lot size and proximity to frequent transit service. This has impacted the timing and scope of the OCP review. The OCP process will accommodate public feedback opportunities related to ongoing implementation of new provincial housing bills in an integrated manner.

Staff propose to relaunch the OCP review by conducting three phases of public engagement with a targeted completion of late 2025 as required by the provincial government. The first phase of public engagement is to begin in the fall of 2024 and will include online and in-person public engagement activities with the general public through pop-up booths, open houses, and online surveys.

It is recommended that the proposed Phase 1 public engagement framework for the OCP targeted update be endorsed, and that staff report back with a public engagement summary with next steps.

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