

# COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE REPORT

## REQUEST FOR COUNCIL DIRECTION

**DATE:** November 28, 2017  
**FROM:** Department of Community Services  
**SUBJECT:** Official Community Plan 2018 Review Scoping Report

**FILE:** 6480-20-01-2017

**SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** THAT Committee:

- A. Receive, for information, the report dated November 28, 2017 from Community Services providing the scope for the 2018 Official Community Plan review; OR
- B. Other.

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER COMMENTS:**



**BACKGROUND**

In 2017, Council directed staff to begin the process for an Official Community Plan (OCP) review that is set to begin in early 2018. The purpose of this staff report is to identify the scope of the OCP update and provide high level context for areas that may be addressed during the update. As with any comprehensive OCP update, the community plays an important and significant role in the update process. In addition to the community role, the OCP update will also include areas of legislative changes at the provincial and regional government level.

***What is an Official Community Plan?***

Official Community Plans (OCP) is defined by the *Local Government Act* as a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management. A Council is required to comply with an OCP when adopting a Zoning Bylaw amendment, all bylaws and works undertaken by the City must be consistent with the OCP.

***Legislative Requirements for Official Community Plans***

Section 473 of the *Local Government Act* requires that the following content be included in the OCP:

- Approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of 5 years;
- Approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
- Approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;

- Approximate location and phasing of major road, sewer and water systems;
- Approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites;
- Housing policies for affordability, rental housing, and special needs housing, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;
- Policies that maintain and enhance farming in areas designated for farming and agricultural land use; and
- Policies related to preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, its ecosystem and biological diversity.

In addition, an OCP may include broad statements respecting a variety of other matters including social needs, heritage, and culture.

The *Local Government Act* sets out requirements for consultation during the development of an OCP. Council must consider whether early and on-going consultation is required, who should be consulted (persons, organizations and authorities). Principles that will be applied to the OCP update will be discussed below and a consultation strategy will be presented in early 2018 for Council's consideration.

### **KEY INFORMATION:**

#### ***Current Official Community - Overview***

The current OCP, "City of Pitt Meadows Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2352, 2007" was adopted in September 2008. The OCP update began in 2005 with the establishment of a Steering Committee, who met consistently over a 2 year period. A number of background studies were prepared by both consultants and staff on topics such as housing, industrial and commercial lands, transportation and heritage. A transportation open house and two general open houses were hosted by the City.

Several issues prompted the preparation of the last Official Community Plan review, the most important being transportation. The province had announced major transportation investments affecting Pitt Meadows, including the construction of the Golden Ears Bridge and the reconstruction of the Pitt River Bridge. These transportation projects improved the City's connectivity to the rest of the region, thereby influencing the development of housing, commercial areas and industry. The Official Community Plan reflected all of these issues.

The current OCP addresses a variety of topics including the following policy areas:

- Natural Environment and Sustainability
- Agriculture
- Heritage and Community Uses
- Residential , Commercial and Industrial land uses
- Transportation and Utilities
- Development Permit Areas.

Over the past 9 years, 9 OCP amendments were approved. These amendments included a new Regional Context Statement in 2013. The requirement for a new RCS was triggered by the adoption of a new Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy.

New policies to address legislative requirements arising from Bill 27 to provide GHG reduction targets and strategies required amendments showing how the City, through its Official Community Plan, could work towards achieving those targets.

With the adoption of the Housing Action Plan, new policies were adopted that reinforced policies on affordable housing, rental housing and non-market housing.

### **Current Official Community Plan Content**

The 2008 Official Community Plan confirmed the vision below from the 2000 Official Community Plan.

*The citizens of Pitt Meadows aspire to achieve a diverse community that:*

- *Provides for increased transportation choice and efficiency;*
- *Has a commitment to the productive use of its agricultural land;*
- *Protects its natural environment;*
- *Maintains its unique "small-town" and rural characteristics and preserves its heritage;*
- *Achieves sustainable economic growth;*
- *Develops and maintains quality parks, recreation and community services for its residents and visitors; and*
- *Carefully manages its residential growth in balance with job creation and the provision of services.*

The focus of the Official Community Plan is primarily on land uses (residential, commercial, industrial etc), infrastructure (utilities and transportation) and Development Permit Areas (form and character of development, environment, and hazards). More recent plans from other communities, like New Westminster, are based upon community values and are to a greater degree organized around goals and objectives.

### **RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS:**

#### **Changes Since the 2008 Official Community Plan**

The adoption of the Official Community Plan in 2008 sparked changes in other regulations and policies in order to help achieve goals and objectives as set out in the OCP.

In 2011, after community consultation and public hearing, a new Zoning Bylaw was adopted by Council. The purpose of the new Zoning Bylaw was to create a document that was easier to use, provided greater consistency within the document and with other City bylaws and that reflected the goals and objectives of the new Official Community Plan. Key changes included:

- Legalization of secondary suites
- Permitting greater residential infill development through subdivision, duplexes and garden suites
- Rationalizing the commercial zones and industrial zones and ensuring that they were consistent with the goals of the new OCP

Notable developments that were approved by Council and constructed after the adoption and are a result of the current Official Community Plan include:

## PITT MEADOWS

- Cedar Downs – Multi-family apartment buildings
- Liv 42 – Mixed use multi-family apartment building
- Origin – Multi-family apartment building
- Solaris – Mixed use 10 storey buildings
- Nature’s Walk – 220 unit townhouse development

Generally, in terms of residential development, the current OCP opened the door for mixed- use, four-storey developments and, as was the case for Solaris, the possibility of buildings higher than four storeys.

The current OCP also paved the way for the development of the Golden Ears Business Park by designating the area at the south end of Harris Road as “Business Park”. This land use designation is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, which has identified the area as “industrial” since its adoption by the Metro Vancouver Board in 2011.

Finally, the current OCP broadly contemplates the possible development of the area north of the Lougheed Highway and east of Harris Road, although such a development would still require an OCP amendment application. The Regional Growth Strategy identifies it as “special study area”. Previously the development application proposed highway commercial development. However, as market trends shift other types of uses may be appropriate. Currently these lands are located in the Agricultural Land Reserve and were granted exclusion with specific conditions. As the 2018 OCP update proceeds, these lands will require further consideration and policies that help guide future discussions pertaining to the use of the land.

### Other Changes / Regional Changes

#### **Transportation**

Regional transportation infrastructure projects are not as much a driving force for updating the OCP as they were in 2007 – 2008, when the Golden Ears Bridge opened and the new Pitt River Bridge was completed. However, as the region continues to grow and the amount of traffic continues to increase, the provincial and federal government, municipalities and other agencies continue to push for transportation improvements that would affect life in Pitt Meadows. Most recently, the Gateway Transportation Collaboration Forum announced that they would be seeking funding for underpasses for Harris Road and Kennedy Road, impacting not only transportation, but land use in the area. Finally, the long-awaited B-Line bus service and improved public transportation along the Translink’s Frequent Transit Network have the potential to impact land development. These potential impacts should be evaluated within the context of an OCP review.

#### **Population and Housing Growth**

The community continues to grow and change along with the larger Metro Vancouver region and experience many of the same trends, including housing unaffordability, which affects the greater region.

The 2016 Census revealed that the Pitt Meadows community continues to grow, albeit at a slower rate than it has in past Census periods and slower than Metro Vancouver as a whole. Pitt Meadows also grew more slowly than the City’s and Metro’s projections predicted.

## PITT MEADOWS

According to the 2016 Census, the population of Pitt Meadows was 18,573. The community grew by 837 residents or 4.6% since 2011, the year of the last Census. This represents a fairly significant slowing of growth compared to the previous five year census period from 2006 to 2011 when growth was 13.5%.

According to the City's own population projections which were updated in 2013, the population was expected to grow to 19,265 people by 2017. The difference between the 2016 Census number and the City's 2017 projection is 692 people, or gap of 3%.

Similarly, the number of housing units reported by the Census does not meet the City's own projections: 7,547 housing units were projected and 7,195 were counted by the Census, a difference of 352 units.

### **The Official Community Plan Review**

#### **Principles of an Official Community Plan Update**

To develop a vision for the community, the process must start with the community – our residents, organization and businesses. Through the OCP Review consultation process, we hope to learn what our community values, hopes and aspirations are for the future. Some of the principles that will guide the review include:

##### ***Innovative, broad and inclusive engagement***

Residents, business owners, property owners and renters, the Katzie First Nation, Metro Vancouver, Translink, community organizations, and developers will be engaged throughout. Groups that are traditionally underrepresented, such as youth and newer residents, will also be encouraged to have a voice.

##### ***Clarity and user-friendly document***

The OCP is a document that articulates the vision and goals of the City. It should be an accessible document that is written in clear and concise language, utilizes graphics where appropriate and is user-friendly.

##### ***Knowledge sharing and storytelling***

Through the OCP process, residents and staff will have multiple opportunities for information sharing and knowledge building. In many ways, an OCP is the story of our community. It can reflect individual stories through the engagement process, but also tells the story of the City – it's past, present and goals for the future. Residents have a unique perspective that will be essential to the formation of the OCP. Staff will present information about broad issues, trends and impact of key trade-offs as the community establishes its goals and vision.

##### ***Sustainability as the plan's foundation***

Principles and action around social, environmental and economic sustainability will be foundational elements of the OCP. A prosperous community meets the needs of residents both economically and socially. Growth should be directed in such a way that it capitalizes on existing and planned investment in infrastructure and amenities. Importantly, care of the environment means residents have a healthy community to live. As a changing climate continues to impact communities on a local and regional level, caring for and protecting the environment becomes all the more critical.

### **Issues/Topics to be considered during the Official Community Plan**

The following community issues have emerged at a staff level as starting points for the review. Other issues will emerge as a result of consultation with the community and Council.

#### ***Growth***

The community generally struggles with the issues that arise out of population and commercial growth including increased demand for services, parking, traffic, changing building forms and patterns, loss of trees and green spaces. The OCP review process will explore these issues while also weighing the costs and benefits of growth scenarios with no-growth scenarios and what it means to be a small city in the middle of a rapidly growing region.

#### ***Complete Communities/neighbourhoods***

The urban area of Pitt Meadows has functioned in the past as a bedroom community, a place where residents retreat to their homes in the evening and on the weekends when the workday was done. Many areas throughout the lower mainland were also developed as bedroom communities.

The result of this pattern of development has been a gradual increase in commuting times and with that, the environmental costs of vehicle emissions and the social costs of isolation.

The current OCP explicitly shifted this direction in order to create a complete community – a place where one could potentially work, live, raise their families, retire, and enjoy life all within one community, without having to rely on a vehicle.

The OCP will explore what makes a neighbourhood complete. Are there opportunities for recreation close to home, can you access basic commercial needs in your neighbourhood, are there parks and trails nearby? Are there opportunities to work close to home? All of these help to support complete neighbourhoods.

#### ***Corridor Planning***

The City of Pitt Meadows is bisected by the Lougheed Highway. This has impacted how our City developed and settled. While this corridor is outside of the City's jurisdiction, land use planning needs to consider how uses interface with the Lougheed Hwy. In addition to Lougheed Highway, there are other key corridor areas, mainly Harris Road and Hammond Road. Harris Road acts as a key corridor for the movement of people through the community and connecting into neighbourhoods. Hammond Road is a similar corridor, albeit, on a different scale.

A corridor becomes an interface for the community as people transition into local neighbourhoods. Often commercial uses and density is situated on or adjacent to corridors. The plan should examine corridors within the city and how they interface with neighbourhoods.

#### ***Commercial Lands***

As part of the OCP update, staff undertaking a commercial lands study. This will assist in establishing the current status of commercial space (do we meet the current demand) and to forecast future supply required over the next 5 years. The study will touch on the type of commercial spaces the city should be supplying over the term of the next OCP.

## ***Agriculture & Food Security***

With over 80% of the City located in the agricultural land reserve, the OCP update will engage with the farming community to identify issues and challenges. Issues such as long term agricultural viability can continue to be encouraged as well as resident farmplate regulations. Ongoing development pressure and resulting bylaw infractions for residential and commercial development, truck parking and filling activities are all detrimentally affecting active farming and food production in the ALR.

## ***Environment***

Provincial and federal legislation regarding environmental protection, especially of our waterways, should be formally acknowledged and policies in the OCP need to be strengthened and given a greater emphasis. A broader discussion regarding the effects of climate change on the community needs to be incorporated throughout the plan.

## ***Crown Land Interface Issues (wildlife, fire, hazard/sloped lands)***

More fully address Crown Land interface issues, such as the threat of wildfire and conflict with wildlife.

## ***Heritage***

Many of the City's heritage buildings are aging and some appear to be in poor condition. It is possible that the City could lose a significant portion of our heritage in the next few years. Staff will be seeking to strengthen heritage building policies.

## ***Development Permit Areas (RAR, hazard, and wildlife, wild fire DP)***

Include new Development Permit Area guidelines for Riparian Areas, Hazard lands (steep slopes) and wildfire development permit area.

## ***Regional Context Statement***

The Regional Context Statement (RCS) will need to be updated to reflect new updated policies and their relationship with Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy. This will require a formal referral to Metro Vancouver and the Board's acceptance of the RCS.

## ***Local Area Policies***

### ***North Lougheed Lands***

The current OCP broadly identifies 33 hectares north of the Lougheed Highway and east of Harris Road for possible future development. This portion of land is one of the areas of potential for large scale future development. A local area or specific policies are necessary to guide future development applications. Previous land uses proposed in the area included mixed employment and retail commercial development. However, with a shifting market, future development may envision broader uses. The location of these lands adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve requires that consultation include the Agricultural Land Commission and that best practices are undertaken that protect farming and ensure that the agricultural interface is handled in an appropriate manner. While protecting farming is important and will shape policies, opportunities for new uses should be explored further through the plan development, this could include a high level concept map and criteria for rezoning/development proposals. This will help guide future land use decisions for these lands.

*Airport Lands*

As the City enters into a more involved role with the management and enforcement at the Airport, as well as an updated zoning uses for the land, local area policies are likely needed to guide future development at the airport, including areas where non-aviation uses is proposed but the land is located in the Agricultural Land Reserve. A review of Airport policies will involve a number of agencies and stakeholders, including the Airport, and the Agricultural Land Commission.

**Workplan**

***Timelines and Major Milestones for the OCP Update***

**Step 1: Background studies and existing policy review**

Staff is in the process of identifying areas for study and data collection that would help to inform the OCP review. Further studies will be required as the public consultation process reveals issues or gaps in knowledge and information.

Staff will also review current plans and studies in addition to the OCP to identify policy gaps, including:

- *City of Pitt Meadows Transportation Masterplan*
- *City of Pitt Meadows Active Transportation Plan*
- *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future (Regional Growth Strategy)*
- *Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy*

**Step 2: Public Launch**

Community consultation is an integral part of the OCP review throughout the entire process. A community consultation plan, consistent with the City's public consultation policy, will be brought to Council for consideration and approval early in the New Year.

The goal of the public launch is:

- To generate broad interest for the plan from the community.
- To share with the community information from the background studies and policy review in the first step.
- To ask the community what their vision for the future would be.

This stage will provide direction and direct input for the next stage.

**Step 3: Draft Vision and Goals**

Based on prior research, studies and public consultation, a new vision statement and Goals for the Official Community Plan will be drafted. This step is intended to be interactive process, with staff returning to the public and to Council for input more than once.



**Step 4: Refining Vision and Goals and Land Use Map**

Vision and goals will be further refined during this stage and some policies may be drafted at this point. A draft land use designation map will also be produced at this stage. The map will identify potential future land uses throughout the municipality and will be of particular interest to the community. Public consultation will continue throughout this process. This information may be amended based on community and Council feedback.

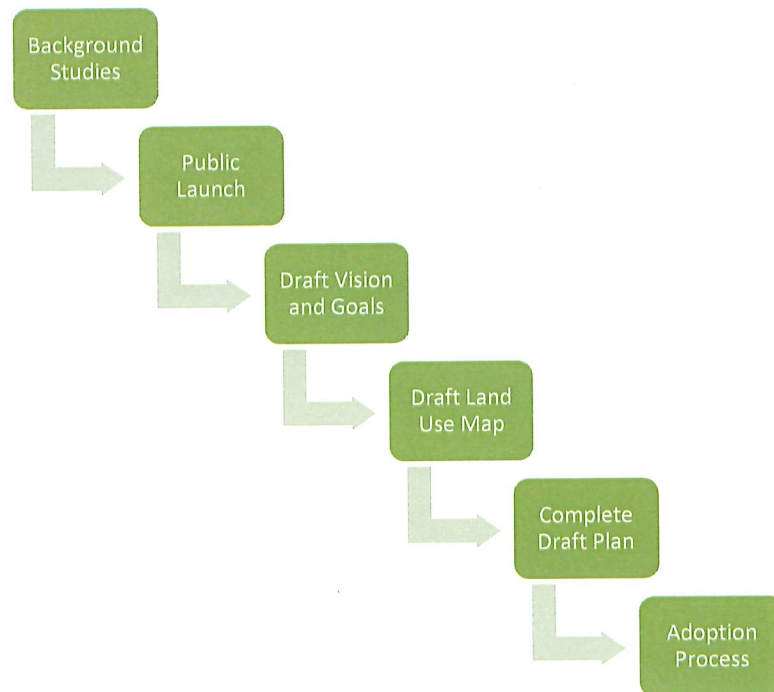
**Step 5: Draft Plan**

The draft plan will be presented to the public at this stage to obtain further feedback and will also be presented to Council. The exact form of public consultation here will be presented to Council in the public consultation report in the New Year.

**Step 6: Adoption Process**

The Adoption Process will consist of the formal Official Community Plan bylaw procedure as required by the Local Government Act. This step will consist of formal referrals to affected agencies, municipalities, and Metro Vancouver, readings of the bylaw, at least one public hearing and final adoption of the new Official Community Plan.

**Workplan Summary**



A more detailed chart summarizing the process is attached to this report.

## PITT MEADOWS

**RELEVANT POLICY:** The OCP Review will be guided by the requirements of the *Local Government Act* and informed by:

- the current *City of Pitt Meadows Official Community Plan*,
- *City of Pitt Meadows Transportation Masterplan*
- *City of Pitt Meadows Active Transportation Plan*
- *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future* (Regional Growth Strategy)
- *Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy*

**STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:** Have all the foreseeable issues been outlined in the report? Does Council agree with staff's direction thus far?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** Can staff proceed with the OCP Review as outlined in this report?

---

### **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

**KEY RESULTS:** Staff will continue with data collection and other studies and will prepare a public consultation report for Council to be presented early in the New Year.

**DESIRED BENEFITS OF KEY RESULT:** The City can begin the OCP review process, as outlined in the report.

**REQUISITES:** Council direction to proceed as outlined in the report.

**UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES:** None identified at this point.

---

**EXPLORE RESPONSE OPTIONS** : N/A

---

Prepared by: D.K. Parr, Planner II

Submitted by: L. Grant, Manager of Community Development

Approved by: M. Roberts, CAO