

# Staff Report to Council

Community Development

FILE: 13-6480-20/20

REPORT DATE: May 20, 2020                      MEETING DATE: May 26, 2020  
TO: Mayor and Council  
FROM: Anne Berry, Director of Planning and Development  
SUBJECT: City of Pitt Meadows Official Community Plan Review – Proposed  
Timeline Options in Response to COVID-19 Crisis

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:



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RECOMMENDATION(S): THAT Council:

- A. Endorse Timeline A as presented in the report titled "City of Pitt Meadows Official Community Plan Review – Proposed Timeline Options in Response to COVID-19 Crisis"; OR
- B. Other.

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council regarding the Official Community Plan (OCP) review in light of the COVID-19 crisis and to propose alternative timelines and strategies for Council's consideration.

☐ Information Report                      ☐ Decision Report                      ☒ Direction Report

## DISCUSSION

### Background:

In January 2020, at the conclusion of the housing and population growth review, staff presented the following timeline for the completion of the OCP Review:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>Draft Land Use Plan and Policies</b>	February 2020
<b>Public Consultation (Did we get it right?)</b>	March 2020
<b>Final Land Use Plan and Policies</b>	April 2020
<b>Official Community Plan Bylaw – First Reading</b>	April 2020
<b>Official Community Plan Bylaw – Referral to Stakeholders (i.e., Metro Vancouver, ALC, School Districts, neighbouring municipalities)</b>	May 2020
<b>Official Community Plan Bylaw – Second Reading</b>	Early June 2020
<b>Public Hearing</b>	June 2020
<b>Third Reading and Adoption</b>	July 2020

During the week of March 16th, it became apparent that the City would have to cancel in-person events, committee meetings and close City Hall to the public because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All in-person OCP consultation events have since been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Council endorsed the residential land use plan at their February 11, 2020 Special Public Meeting of Council, and staff put final touches on policies and a draft land use map for public consultation in March. The purpose of the engagement at this point in the OCP review is to consult with the public one final time before drafting the Official Community Plan bylaw for First Reading, to determine if there were any lingering issues that needed to be addressed, and to provide a final check before the project entered into the bylaw stage that staff had accurately interpreted and translated the public consultation up to that point into a plan. This final check-in with the public was committed to in the early stages of the development of the OCP consultation strategy. Although the community will have the chance to comment on the OCP bylaw at the

formal public hearing, given the size of the project and the resources that have been dedicated to it, it is staff's recommendation to consult with the community one final time, rather than be caught off guard by a new issue at the public hearing. Also, engagement helps to increase community buy-in for the policies and directions within the OCP, helping to facilitate future city projects and development proposals. Finally, it increases transparency of the process, giving the public greater confidence in the City, Council and the new OCP.

Two open houses were scheduled, numerous "pop-up" planning events were planned and online engagement on the Have Your Say Pitt Meadows site was activated. Planning staff managed to hold one open house on Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup>, and approximately 30 people attended. The second open house was planned for Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> at the South Bonson Community Centre. All open house material as well as surveys seeking public input for the draft policies and land use plan are now on the Have Your Say website.

The City was also preparing to speak with internal committees such as the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Active Transportation Committee and Advisory Design Panel while reaching out to external agencies such as the Katzie First Nation, Metro Vancouver, TransLink, the School Board and the Agricultural Land Commission in order to obtain their feedback regarding the draft land use policy and map, to smooth the way for formal referrals that are required by the *Local Government Act*.

Government agencies are all having to navigate through the COVID-19 crisis in addition to continuing with the work they were doing. These agencies are in the process of coming up with new procedures to continue moving projects ahead, but naturally, there have been delays. As the road ahead becomes clearer, City staff will reach out to agencies to arrange virtual meetings if possible.

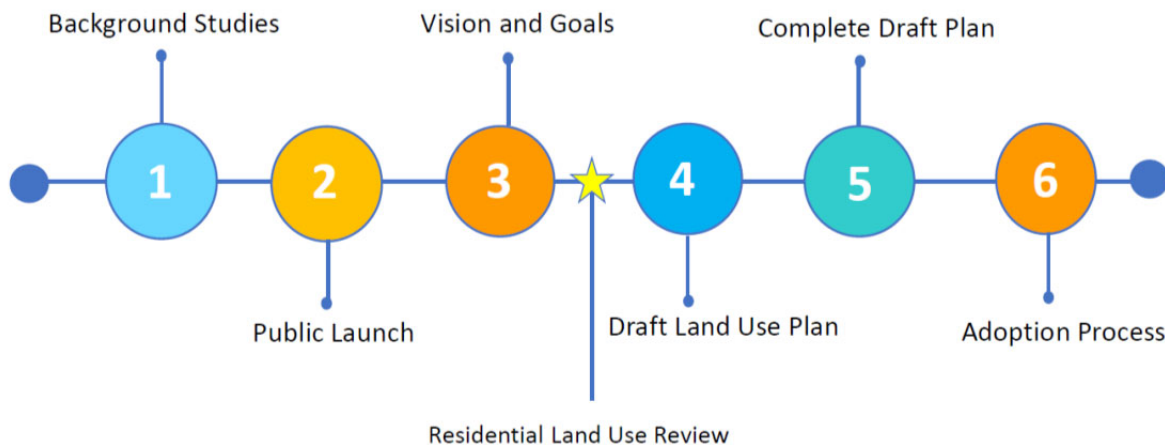
As a result, the timeline as presented above cannot be met because public engagement events have been cancelled and consultation with internal and external agencies must be coordinated taking the present situation into account.

Much work has been done on the Official Community Plan review. Initiated in the spring of 2018, the City has:

- Held three major community events (launch event, community visioning workshop, Community Growth and Housing workshop)
- Held numerous smaller public consultation events, including workshops with seniors and youth, pop-up events at Pitt Meadows Day, and community stakeholder meetings.
- Commissioned a commercial and industrial analysis and a community growth and housing study
- Developed the "Have Your Say Pitt Meadows – I See 2040" website and accompanying surveys and discussion papers.

- Created a draft land use plan and drafted policies, now posted to our website and presented at an open house in March.
- A complete draft of the new OCP is currently in development

The graphic below summarizes the OCP Review process. The review currently sits between steps 4 and 5. Public consultation for the draft land use plan (step 4) has not been completed, but staff is currently working on the draft OCP for First Reading.



Keeping the momentum going on this project is imperative because so much work has been completed at this point.

### Analysis:

In person events are particularly important to an OCP review. OCP consultation is designed to be as broad and include as many people as possible since it is intended to be a document that will guide Council decisions regarding many aspects of municipality for years to come. Engaging with the public for the OCP Review is important for the following reasons:

- It raises awareness of the OCP Review and the draft policies and land use plan;
- It broadens input beyond the “usual suspects” bringing new ideas and perspective from a wider and more diverse range of community members and stakeholders;
- Allows staff and Council to field –test the draft policies, ultimately improving our chances of success with the OCP;
- Helps generate consensus around the direction to take, leading to greater understanding of goals, objectives and policies, and more support for their implementation
- Increases trust in local government, which in turn enables the City to take effective action.

Public engagement at this phase of the OCP is particularly important because it is the first time that the public has seen the completed land use map and policies. This is a very important point to check in with the community to see if staff translated input accurately and if there were any unintentional omissions.

Different engagement methods attract and appeal to different parts of the Pitt Meadows community. For example, seniors may prefer in-person events while working parents may prefer online engagement, where they are free to consider information and respond when time permits. In person events allow for clearer communication, and in studies, has been shown to be more positive, and more credible than online or virtual conversations.

“Pop-up” planning events play an important role in engaging the public. They are intended to capture the public in places where they may already be going about their lives, like close to trail heads or near playing fields. These are people who might not otherwise provide input into the OCP, or perhaps not even be aware of the project. Three such events were planned: One morning at the Silver Bridge parking lot and two afternoons at the Pitt Meadows Athletic Fields.

Summer brings its own challenges regarding public consultation. In a typical summer, many people, as well as staff and Council, go away on vacation so are unable to attend many City events. For this reason, the City typically tries its best to avoid scheduling larger events during July and particularly August. This summer may be very different if travel continues to be restricted. If that is case, residents may be at home and available to participate in engagement activities (online and otherwise).

Due to the inability at this time to hold large gatherings and the requirement to social distance staff propose the following two alternatives:

#### **Timeline A:**

This option assumes that some social distancing measures are still in place indefinitely, and that Council still desires to complete the OCP Review within the next few months. The City will continue online engagement, and ensure heavy promotion (Facebook ads have been particularly effective).

The limitation of this approach is that there will be no planned in person engagement in the form of open houses and pop-up planning events. Rather, engagement will take place on line or through other remote means.

Staff will engage with external and internal stakeholder groups remotely as much as possible, and in any way possible, i.e. through Zoom meetings, or by distributing draft policies directly to members of committees and receiving feedback.

#### **Proposed Timeline:**

First Reading: End of June 2020

Formal referrals: July and August 2020

Second Reading: First half of September 2020

Public Hearing: End of September 2020

Adoption: End of October



### **Timeline B:**

This option assumes that social distancing measures will come to an end sometime in the summer and that groups are able to gather in one place. In this case, Staff will hold an OCP Open House in mid-September, as well as a series of pop-up planning events, in addition to the existing online engagement.

### **Proposed Timeline:**

First Reading: End of September 2020

Formal referrals: October / Early November 2020

Second Reading: Mid November 2020

Public Hearing: Early December 2020

Adoption: Early January 2021

This option proposes a longer timeline, and it assumes that gatherings are permitted in the near future, and that there will be no further Coronavirus outbreaks in the fall that would require social distancing measures that would prevent all public gatherings.



Here is a summary of the two proposed timelines, with the pro's and con's listed for each:

	Timeline A	Timeline B
<b>Pro's</b>	Faster timeline and more certainty since it does not assume that groups of people will be permitted to meet.	In person engagement so that as many people can see and provide input into the draft plan as possible, assuming in-person attendance is achievable within the Provincial requirements at that time.
<b>Con's</b>	No in person engagement opportunities, unless incorporated with the public hearing.	Longer timeline and less certainty since it assumes that groups of people will eventually be able to meet in 2020, which may not be the case.

#### Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

Section 477 of the Local Government Act sets out the process requirements for the adoption of an Official Community Plan Bylaw. These requirements include consideration of the Official Community Plan Bylaw in conjunction with its financial plan, referrals to outside agencies (particularly the Agricultural Land Commission and the School District) and the holding of a public hearing.

It should be noted that under both timelines, the City will be able to meet its legislated requirements as set out under Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*.

#### COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- ☒ Principled Governance  
 ☐ Balanced Economic Prosperity  
 ☐ Corporate Excellence  
☒ Community Spirit & Wellbeing  
 ☐ Transportation & Infrastructure Initiatives  
☐ Not Applicable

Community Voice: Engage stakeholders in meaningful discussion around the current and future success and prosperity of Pitt Meadows.

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### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

☒ None      ☐ Budget Previously Approved      ☐ Referral to Business Planning  
☐ Other

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

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### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

☒ Inform      ☒ Consult      ☐ Involve      ☐ Collaborate      ☐ Empower

Comment(s): The Official Community Plan Review is entering an important stage of the public consultation process because it is the first time that the public has seen the completed land use map and policies. This is a very important point to check in with the community to see if staff translated input accurately and if there were any unintentional omissions.

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### **KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Referral      ☐ Yes      ☒ No

Staff have been in consultation with the Katzie First Nation regarding the Official Community Plan review generally, and will continue consultation as the project progresses. This report will not be referred to the Katzie First Nation.

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### **SIGN-OFFS**

#### **Written by:**

Dana K. Parr, Planner II

#### **Reviewed by:**

Alex Wallace, Manager of Community Development

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### **ATTACHMENT(S):**

A - Official Community Plan Review Public Engagement Approach, May 2020 – December 2020



## **Appendix 1: Official Community Plan Review Public Engagement Approach, May 2020 – December 2020**

*Note: This approach assumes that groups larger than 50 people will not be able to gather as part of the City's ongoing Covid-19 community response, but has built-in-flexibility in case people may be able to meet in person in the future.*

The Official Community Plan Review Engagement Strategy was developed using the City's 2017 Civic Engagement Framework Toolkit. This engagement strategy follows a seven step process:

1. Clarify the issue and purpose of public participation
2. Identify key audiences
3. Determine the level of public participation
4. Design and scope the process
5. Select tools and tactics
6. Develop strong messaging and communication methods
7. Build in evaluation

The original engagement strategy was presented to Council in April 10, 2018, and was based on the City's 2017 Civic Engagement Framework Toolkit. This update is intended to chart the final phases of OCP Review consultation in light of the pandemic.

### **Clarify the issue and purpose of public participation**

Section 475 of the *Local Government Act* requires that a local government provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected in the development of an OCP. Specifically, the local government must:

- consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing, and
- specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:
  - the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;
  - the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
  - the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
  - first nations;
  - boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;
  - the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies, including the Agricultural Land Commission

This is the minimum requirement for the development of an OCP. Local Governments, as a general practice, organize and carry out robust public engagement and consultation involving many different approaches to reach as many people as possible. Public engagement and consultation is critical in the development of an OCP for three main reasons:

1. To gain an understanding of the community and its values (which will serve as the foundations of the plan).

2. To build an understanding with the community regarding the decisions made in the process of creating the OCP.
3. To gain a greater acceptance or support for the decisions that are based on the plan moving into the future.

### Identify key audiences

In the final stages of the OCP Review, public consultation must continue to involve as much of the community as possible as well as agencies outside of the community such as Metro Vancouver, the Agricultural Land Commission, the Ministry of Transportation and the school board. These steps will be done concurrently.

Target Audience	Potential Issues or Interests	Special Consideration for Engagement or Communications
<b>Internal Municipal Stakeholders</b>		
Mayor and Council	Decision-makers	Keep updated through regular reports
Municipal Committees (Advisory Design Panel, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Active Transportation Advisory Committee)	Advise Council regarding the committee's areas of interest	In person meetings are preferable, but if not possible, potential virtual meetings
<b>Community</b>		
Residents	High interest; moderate influence  Issues: Housing, preservation of small town feel, walkability, traffic	Potential participation type: open houses and pop-up planning events if possible; online
Businesses / Chamber of Commerce	High interest; moderate influence  Issues: Growth potential accommodated in OCP, policies that support businesses and industry	Potential participation type: open house open houses and pop-up planning events if possible, online, interview
Pitt Meadows Clubs and	High interest; moderate	Potential participation type:

Societies (e.g. Pitt Meadows Environmental Network, Lions, Friends of the Katzie Slough, Pitt Meadows Heritage and Museum Society)	influence  Issues: Ecology, climate change	interview, open house open houses and pop-up planning events if possible, online
<b>External Agencies</b>		
Katzie First Nation	High interest; moderate influence  Intergovernmental relationship and land use and other policies affecting the Katzie First Nation	Draft OCP referral, interview
Metro Vancouver	High interest; moderate influence  Alignment with the regional growth strategy	Draft OCP referral, interview
School District 42	High interest; moderate influence  Population growth and projections	Draft OCP referral, possible interview
Agricultural Land Commission	High interest; moderate influence  Policies and land use plans affecting the Agricultural Land Reserve	Draft OCP referral, possible interview
Translink	High interest; moderate influence  Land uses and road network changes that may affect public transportation routes	Draft OCP referral, possible interview
Ministry of Transportation	High interest; moderate influence	Land uses and road network changes that may affect the provincial routes; draft OCP referral, possible interview
Neighbouring Municipalities	High interest; moderate influence	Maple Ridge will have the most interest, particularly concerning any plans for the Lougheed

		Highway Staff will meet with Maple Ridge virtually and refer the draft plan to the other municipalities after 1 <sup>st</sup> reading
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An Official Community Plan Review must involve as much of the community – individuals, businesses, organizations and other stakeholders – as possible. It will also involve regional organizations such as the Agricultural Land Commission, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and Metro Vancouver, to name a few.

### **Determine the level of public participation**

Depending on the stage in the process, the level of public participation will rest between “Involve” and “Collaborate” on the Spectrum of Public Participation.

The final decision to adopt an Official Community Plan rests with Council, who can choose to – or choose not to – follow staff’s and the public’s advice and recommendations. Occasionally, difficult and controversial issues will need to be addressed within the framework of an OCP Review and a final decision maker is necessary.

### **Design and Scope the process**

The OCP public consultation process is intended to employ the “funnel” method, moving from broad questions (i.e. how do you see the future of this community?) to more specific questions (i.e. what is the best future use of this property?). According to the Civic Engagement Framework, “moving from broad questions to narrow ones, with report-backs to participants at the end of each phase, builds trust, clarity and momentum, growing the numbers of people involved over time. The following table generally sets out the public consultation process from beginning to end. It should be noted that since this is such a long process, changes in the plan may occur to respond to issues and needs as they arise.

### Potential Issues and Mitigation Measures

Staff has identified the following potential issues and suggested mitigation measures in the last two phases of the OCP development:

Lack of public awareness regarding online public engagement opportunities	Continue to advertise project and opportunities to participate online on City’s social media and website hosted by City, and local newspaper
Key groups unable to participate online	Seniors are less likely than other groups to participate in online surveys. Contingent on the progress containing Covid-19 and applicable City policies at that point, continue to investigate possibility of holding in person events, such as “pop-up” planning events at trailhead parking lots.

Lack of transparency about process or decisions

Continue to post reports and updates on the OCP development online as well as providing summary on the development of the OCP thus far.

Lack of trust towards local government / feeling that the OCP has been rushed through because of Covid-19.

Clearly show all the steps taken as well as prior public engagement opportunities to illustrate the measures that the City has taken to encourage broad community participation.

### **Select tools and tactics**

At this time, tools and tactics are limited since in person events cannot take place. The Have Your Say website is a powerful tool that can continue to engage the public in the remaining phases of the OCP Review. As mentioned in the table above, staff will continue to monitor Covid-19 provincial guidelines and if possible, will consider in person events, but only if everyone's safety can be assured.

### **Description of phase activities and tools**

The two final phases are:

Draft land use plan and policies

Adoption process

### **Develop strong messaging and communication methods**

The final two phases of the Official Community Plan Review will continue build on the "I See Pitt Meadows 2040" branding and images. The communication campaign is continuing to cast as wide a net as possible in terms of the amount and types of outreach for the Official Community Plan review:

- Facebook ads
- Direct mailing to all homes in Pitt Meadows (postcards mailed out to advertise the two March OCP open houses, one of which was subsequently cancelled.
- Newspapers advertisements
- City Website
- Social Media
- Posters

Communications regarding the OCP Review will focus on driving people to the Have Your Say and the City of Pitt Meadows website during the pandemic.

Staff will meet (remotely, for the time being) with City committees such as the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Active Transportation Committee, as well as community groups, if they are able to meet virtually.