



Staff Report to Council

DATE: Monday, May 20, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Planning

SUBJECT: Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In October 2023, Council directed staff to undertake a comprehensive “refresh” of Langford’s 2008 Official Community Plan (OCP) to reflect emerging community priorities and to respond to evolving Provincial legislation. The resulting refreshed and reimagined OCP is the product of a multi-phase planning process shaped by three rounds of meaningful public engagement, input from subject matter experts, and a strong commitment to inclusive, transparent policy development. The purpose of this report is to outline this process, key findings, and present the proposed OCP Bylaw for Council’s consideration.

The refresh process unfolded over four key phases, each designed to progressively build on public feedback and technical analysis to deliver a plan that is both visionary and grounded in community values. At every stage of the planning process, public engagement was not just a component—it was the foundation. The resulting proposed OCP captures input from thousands of voices, ranging from casual conversations at pop-up events to formal submissions from community partners. It connects what matters most to residents with the policies that will guide how Langford grows and prospers. The refreshed plan is action-oriented, measurable, and reflective of a shared vision for a sustainable, equitable, and thriving city. These four phases included:

- Phase 1: Community Vision and Priorities (Summer 2024)
- Phase 2: From Big Ideas to Initially Preferred Options (Fall 2024)
- Phase 3: Building the Draft OCP (Winter 2024/2025)
- Phase 4: Preparing the OCP Bylaw (Spring 2025)

Throughout this process, the conversation has been built around developing an OCP for 100,000 residents that strategically meets their needs while addressing the challenges of affordability, housing,

climate change, social equity, rising infrastructure costs, and improved transportation options (referred to as the Big Ideas and the Five Crises).

Council is now presented with a plan that represents the best of collaborative planning: one rooted in community, guided by evidence, and prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2023, Council adopted Langford’s first Council Strategic Plan, which identified the “refresh” of the City’s Official Community Plan (OCP) as a priority initiative. The purpose of this project was to respond to evolving community priorities and meet new legislative requirements from the Province.

City staff led the development of the project with valuable input from external planning experts and extensive community engagement. Public consultation was a cornerstone of the process, ensuring community voices were consistently and meaningfully incorporated at every step. Through a mix of in-person events and online surveys hosted on Let's Chat Langford, residents played a vital role in shaping the proposed OCP. This inclusive approach helped build trust, reflect a diversity of perspectives, and directly informed both the vision and detailed policy directions.

The process was carefully paced to avoid being too lengthy—risking public and key partner burnout—or too brief, which could leave participants feeling unheard. The following section outlines the extent of this process and the steps taken to move the process from defining a vision to testing ideas, refining policies, and, ultimately, drafting the proposed OCP.

COMMENTARY:

Phase 1: Community Vision and Priorities (July–September 2024)

This first phase invited residents to share their vision for Langford’s future and their priorities and values around key planning and growth management issues. Community input during this phase was essential in shaping the overall direction of the plan. Engagement levels were strong, with residents participating via in-person events, online surveys, and social media, including:

- Over 600 in-person interactions at five different pop-up events
- 404 survey responses
- 3,260 visits to the project webpage on Let’s Chat Langford

This phase also introduced several key concepts, including building the OCP around a population outcome of 100,000 residents rather than a timeframe, and a series of “Big Ideas” that could be used to strategically meet the needs of these residents.

Planning for a population of 100,000 does not represent a population target for Langford, but it isn’t an arbitrary number either. Langford has experienced steady growth for more than two decades, with population projections suggesting that the city could reach 100,000 residents within 15 to 20 years, although the exact timing remains uncertain. What is certain is that growth will continue. The Langford Housing Needs Report also identifies that approximately 17,000 new homes will be needed to address Langford’s projected housing needs.

Rather than planning for the next 5, 10, or 20 years, this OCP plans for the kind of city Langford will be when it reaches 100,000 residents. Planning for outcomes, rather than fixed timeframes, is considered a best practice in smart, successful plan making. The key decisions in this OCP focus on where and how Langford will grow.

The Big Ideas introduced in this Phase include strategies for enhancing urban design and amenity expectations, establishing a vibrant downtown, improving mobility options, developing a “made-in-Langford” approach to new Provincial housing requirements, and addressing the challenges expressed by the Five Crises (the Climate Crisis, Housing and Affordability Crises, Equity Crisis, Public Health Crisis, and Infrastructure Cost Crisis).

The feedback gathered through this Phase provided critical insight into the community’s aspirations and concerns, and laid the foundation for the next stage of policy development.

See Phase I Engagement Report for additional details.

Phase 2: From Big Ideas to Initially Preferred Options (October–December 2024)

The second phase involved integrating the feedback from Phase 1 with city-building best practices, technical expertise, and considerations specific to the Langford context to develop the *Ideas Paper*. This paper discussed and proposed a series of *Initially Preferred Options* - policy ideas that could be further developed and incorporated into the Draft OCP to achieve the vision and priorities identified by the community.

The public’s continued participation was key to shaping these directions, and included:

- 737 survey submissions from 347 individuals across four surveys
- Attendance by approximately 85 people at an open house

- 3,690 visits to the project webpage on Let's Chat Langford

What did we learn in Phases 1 and 2?

Through these first two phases, the community expressed strong support for several priorities:

- Directing growth to already built-up areas
- Expanding transportation options
- Establishing clear urban design expectations to support livable urban density
- Creating broader public space policies, including urban plazas and transformed streets
- Bringing local amenities like shops, cafés, and green spaces closer to where people live
- Providing more clarity around building densities and heights

See Phase 2 Engagement Report for additional details.

Phase 3: Building the Draft OCP (December 2024-April 2025)

The third phase involved building the Draft OCP from the strong foundation of the 2008 Plan and the extensive community input gathered in Phases 1 and 2. While retaining much of the original policy intent, the Draft OCP consolidated, reorganized, and clarified previously overlapping or ambiguous policies.

More specifically, several key policies from the 2008 Plan have been retained:

- A sustainable and complete community vision underpins all policies
- The mode-share goal of 42% of trips made by walking, rolling, cycling, and transit was retained and aligned with the population outcome of 100,000 residents, rather than a date
- A modal hierarchy prioritizing: 1) Pedestrians and mobility aid users 2) Cyclists and micro-mobility 3) Public transit 4) Shared vehicles 5) Commercial vehicles and 6) Single-occupant vehicles
- Social community uses (parks, gardens, daycares) permitted city-wide on public and private lands
- A wide range of housing types, sizes, and tenures are permitted in residential and mixed-use areas

The Draft OCP also resolved uncertainty around the location and extent of permitted development. The 2008 Plan was developed to maximize flexibility, deferring the determination of land-use, height, and density to the rezoning stage. While the general policy intent for land use and density was expressed, there were no real limits to height or density within any of the land-use designations. This has posed challenges for staff to administer, for residents trying to understand potential changes to their neighbourhoods, and for the development community in determining what may be supportable. The Draft OCP combined the policy intent of the 2008 Plan with the Initially Preferred Options tested through the Ideas Paper into a new Land Use and Growth Management Strategy with specific, geographically defined height and density limits.

The resulting Draft OCP is primarily a mid-rise plan, with heights of three to six storeys permitted throughout the majority of the City, and targeted, strategically important areas designated for buildings over six storeys. In fact, approximately 88% of the intended growth areas specifically enabled by this Plan are now limited to buildings of six storeys or less. This reflects Langford's identity as a predominantly mid-rise community, while ensuring the integration of vibrant, transit-supportive, mixed-use centres in strategically important areas, particularly downtown Langford.

To ensure this successful integration, taller buildings are subject to heightened design and amenity expectations and have been enabled in locations that are strategically aligned with current and future transit corridors, including potential higher-order transit routes (such as light rail) and hubs. These new policies will direct density to areas that successfully contribute to community goals and priorities, while enhancing quality-of-life for both new and existing residents.

Further to this, the following represent the most significant changes or additions in the Draft OCP:

- Clearly defined building heights and permitted land uses
- Focus on infill development in already zoned and built-up areas with transit access
- Defined uses for Employment Lands that protect industrial lands
- Identification of Future Policy Areas, to be revisited as part of a future OCP review
- New City Centre boundaries and policies that include:
 - A reduced City Centre footprint, redefined Downtown, Moderate High-Rise Residential, Mid-Rise Residential, and Industrial Innovation Area
 - Inclusion of the City Centre map in the OCP (instead of the Design Guidelines)
- New Heights are as follows:
 - City Centre – Downtown: 28–30 storeys, mandatory ground-floor commercial

- City Centre – Moderate High-Rise: 12 storeys, optional ground-floor commercial
- City Centre – Mid-Rise: 6 storeys, optional ground-floor commercial on corners
- Urban Centres: 22–24 storeys, mandatory street-facing commercial
- Corridors: 6 storeys, optional mixed uses
- Complete Communities: 3 storeys residential, with:
 - Neighbourhood Villages (6 storeys, mandatory ground-floor activation)
 - Corner Convenience (4 storeys, mandatory ground-floor commercial)
- Employment Lands: 3 storeys

Additional updates include:

- Design expectations for taller buildings: massing, floor plate size, tower separation, and amenities
- Expanded public space policies: courtyards, plazas, transformed streets, and integrated urban nature
- Enhanced arts, culture, and economic development policies

Phase 3 engagement included an online survey to assess how well feedback from the first two phases had been integrated into the Draft Plan, as well as to gather input on any suggested revisions. The Draft Plan was also reviewed as part of key partner workshops and meetings, which included representatives from Island Health, BC Transit, School District 62, active transportation and placemaking advocates, developers, and affordable housing providers. As part of this process, the City received:

- 144 survey responses
- Over 2,100 visits to the project webpage on Let's Chat Langford

The key results and suggestions for revisions from this phase included (but were not limited to):

- General to strong support for the draft plan
- Concerns about building height, mobility options, and greenspace protection
- Requests for greater transparency, accountability, and implementation
- Suggestions for stronger policies on public health, affordable housing, and climate resilience

See Phase 3 Engagement Analysis for additional details.

Phase 4: Preparing the OCP Bylaw (April–May 2025)

Transforming the draft into its final form involved a detailed review of Phase 3 feedback from the public and key partners. Notable policy updates include:

- Inserting reporting measures to improve implementation and transparency
- Changing a portion of the land-use designation for Sooke Road from Urban Centre to Corridor, with required mixed-use fronting Sooke Road
- Exempting affordable housing from podium requirements in certain zones/conditions
- Adding commitments to pre-zone and eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements for affordable housing in key locations, and to develop a future housing strategy
- Inserting clarified rationale for tall buildings, including linkages to public benefit goals
- Strengthening policies for transitions between density levels (tree planting, landscaping)
- Adding new vegetation and sound mitigation standards for homes near busy roads to improve health outcomes
- Inserting additional support for new neighbourhood villages in South Langford
- Clarifying connections between climate resilience and design (urban heat island mitigation)
- Strengthening commitments to child and youth-friendly spaces within walkable, active neighbourhoods
- Improving support for local food systems, including value-added processing and farm-to-table initiatives

Bylaw No. 2229

The Proposed OCP integrates updated City Centre policies that are currently contained in the Design Guidelines. As such, Bylaw No. 2229 has been drafted to delete the redundant and outdated policy language from the Guidelines concurrently with the OCP Bylaw. Should Council proceed with First Reading of OCP Bylaw No. 2220 at this meeting, they may also wish to direct staff to prepare the necessary notifications for Bylaw No. 2229, such that it can receive consideration of 1st, 2nd and 3rd readings at the same meeting that the OCP Bylaw will receive consideration of 2nd and 3rd readings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Implementing the OCP depends on full integration with strategic, organizational, budgeting, and work planning processes. As such, this OCP includes a commitment to ensure OCP priorities, measurable targets, and implementation actions are incorporated into annual, financial, strategic, and legislated decision-making frameworks and reporting processes. As a result, Council will be able to assess progress, consider new initiatives in the context of OCP implementation, and provide direction to staff accordingly. This will ensure ongoing accountability and transparency in the City's actions toward the goals and commitments set out in the OCP.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The statutory steps for OCP adoption are set out in Division 4 of the *Local Government Act*. Final approval remains subject to a Public Hearing and further input. If Council directs any changes to the OCP Bylaw with respect to land use or density after the Public Hearing, a new public hearing is required.

First reading of the bylaw formally announces Council's intention to proceed with the new Plan. This triggers referrals to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), the Capital Regional District (CRD), and a review of potential conflicts with financial and waste management plans.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

1a -Refresh the Official Community Plan (OCP)

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT Council:

1. Proceed with consideration of "Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2200, 2025" and give First reading as drafted;

AND

2. Direct staff to refer "Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2200, 2025" to the:
 - a. Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for comment; and

- b. Capital Regional District (CRD) Board for the purpose of accepting the Regional Context Statement;

AND

- 3. Direct staff to provide public notification that Council will consider 1st, 2nd, and 3rd readings of “Langford Zoning Bylaw, 1999, Amendment No. 749 (Text Amendment to Update Appendix J), Bylaw No. 2229, 2025.

OR Option 2

THAT Council:

- 1. Proceed with consideration of “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2200, 2025” and give First Reading with the following amendments:

- a. _____;
- b. _____;
- c. _____.

AND

- 2. Direct staff to refer “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2200, 2025” to the:
 - a. Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for comment; and
 - b. Capital Regional District (CRD) Board for the purpose of accepting the Regional Context Statement;

AND

- 3. Direct staff to provide public notification that Council will consider 1st, 2nd, and 3rd readings of “Langford Zoning Bylaw, 1999, Amendment No. 749 (Text Amendment to Update Appendix J), Bylaw No. 2229, 2025.

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Attachments:

1. OCP Bylaw No. 2200
2. Bylaw No. 2229
3. Phase 1 Engagement Report
4. Phase 2 Engagement Report
5. Phase 3 Engagement Report