



HOUSING TASK FORCE FEEDBACK & RECOMMENDATIONS

As directed by Council, staff consulted the Housing Task Force on the endorsed Uptown-Douglas Plan. Through discussions over the Fall 2020 and early Winter 2021, staff received comments and recommendations, both detailed below.

#	Committee Input	Staff Response/Possible Action	Type of Change	Potential Change	Recommended
Themes					
1	Desire to explore potential opportunities to increase maximum height provisions throughout the Plan area to create a more bold vision for growth.	Widespread changes to building height designations would require additional public process, as they would change the fundamentals of the Plan	Major Amendment	Revisions to land use and building height designations to increase height guidelines	No
2	Support for the prioritization of public realm improvements and social infrastructure in parallel with and, where possible, in advance of new developments.	Comment is consistent with the intent and policy direction of the Plan. Provisions in the plan have been established to address right of way improvements, public spaces and parks and community facilities.	n/a	None	n/a
3	Concern about the impacts of new development on existing affordable housing units and the potential displacement of tenants.	Existing apartment rental stock represents a key component of more affordably priced rental stock.	Minor Amendment	Add policy in Section 5.2 to support the retention of existing purpose built rental units and address potential impacts of redevelopment on tenants and housing stock.	Yes
4	Need for assurance that the Uptown-Douglas Plan enables project viability and responds to economic and market conditions and trends.	Economic analysis was undertaken previously to test viability of potential land use designations. Additional economic analysis requested by Council.	n/a	None	n/a

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Housing Task Force Feedback and Recommendations



#	Committee Input	Staff Response/Possible Action	Type of Change	Potential Change	Recommended
5	Importance of the need for growth and density in other Centres, Villages and Corridors to meet the diverse needs of current and future Saanich residents as a complement to Uptown-Douglas Plan.	Comment noted. Local Area Plans and other initiatives are exploring growth options in these areas	n/a	None	n/a
Comments					
6	Consider identifying minimum building heights for some or all land use designations	General intention of the Plan is to support developments that have a significantly higher density than currently exists on the majority of sites. Important to acknowledge potential impacts on existing businesses that may want to incrementally grow / enhance their businesses.	Major Amendment (option A)	Add minimum building heights for land use designations in Figure 5.1	No
			Minor Amendment (Option B)	Add policy in Section 5.1 supporting achievement of minimum building heights	Yes
7	Consider increasing the maximum height in the Core designation	Maximum building height was determined through community engagement, economic analysis and staff review. As part of the Draft Plan review, provisions were added to raise the maximum height from 18 to 24 storeys on some Core sites.	Major Amendment	Increase building height in Core designation`	No
8	Assess changes to the tapering of building heights in the Plan area that recognizes taller building forms throughout, and consider options for additional tapering of properties outside the Plan area	This comment would need to be addressed through a comprehensive review of land use designations and plan boundaries. This would require additional public process to assess the Plan's fundamentals.	Major Amendment	Review and update of Plan's land use designations.	No
9	Include additional policies to support the viability of affordable	Desire for more explicit support and incentives for affordable and supportive	Minor Amendment	Add policies: 1.supporting additional	Yes

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	and supportive housing projects and protect existing affordable units	housing projects to recognize the economic challenges of these projects.		height for not-for profit affordable housing in Neighbourhood Apartment Residential 2. Promoting protection of existing rental units	
10	Assess revisions to the urban design guidelines that restrict tower floor plate where project viability could be negatively impacted	Floor plate limits are in place to limit the bulk of towers and maximize livability of residents. Recent step code changes have impacted building design and the level of usable floor area in high rise projects. Staff recommend some increase in these maximums.	Minor Amendment	Increase minimum tower floor plate guidelines	Yes
11	Assess proposed viability of development through changes to land use and building height designations to ensure building forms are conducive to current and emerging practices	<p>This comment is primarily related to existing building practices that enable conventional wood frame construction up to 6 storeys. Any development beyond 6 storeys is typically concrete. A key issue is that based on current economics, concrete construction between 7-11 storeys struggles to be economically viable.</p> <p>Designations such as Urban Mixed Use, which has a base height of 8 storeys and a max height of 12 storeys do not necessarily reflect current construction practices.</p> <p>Staff acknowledge this concern, but have tried to craft the designations to reflect the 20-30 time horizon of the plan. Mass timber development in this intermediate height range are starting to be developed and may be more commonplace in future. The additional</p>	Minor Amendment	Change "Urban Mixed Use" base from 8 storeys to 6 storeys, Change "Mid-rise Residential" maximum from 8 storeys to either 6 storeys or 12 storeys	No

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		height in designations provides some flexibility to adapt to future conditions and helps to differentiate between the relative scale of different plan areas. Therefore, staff recommend keeping existing designations.			
12	<p>Explore the development of an Economic Development Strategy, on a District or Regional scale, to support the ongoing implementation of the Uptown-Douglas Plan, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis for existing and future employment lands; ▪ Development of an Industrial Land Strategy; ▪ Assessment of Uptown-Douglas objectives and policies to ensure they align with the economic development vision; and <p>Consideration of Saanich-specific solutions, with a focus on looking at the balance of employment and housing (Made in Saanich Solution)</p>	Staff support a policy that supports the exploration of an economic development strategy, and the addition of a policy to highlight its development as a priority action for implementation.	Minor Amendment	Add Policy and Implementation Item supporting the development of an Economic Development Strategy	Yes

Housing Strategy Task Force Motion

1. That the Housing Task Force support, in principle, the Uptown-Douglas Plan, while highlighting the following key feedback themes:
 - a. Desire to explore potential opportunities to increase maximum height provisions throughout the Plan area to create a more bold vision for growth;
 - b. Support for the prioritization of public realm improvements and social infrastructure in parallel with and, where possible, in advance of new developments;
 - c. Concern about the impacts of new development on existing affordable housing units and the potential displacement of tenants;
 - d. Need for assurance that the Uptown-Douglas Plan enables project viability and responds to economic and market conditions and trends; and
 - e. Importance of the need for growth and density in other Centres, Villages and Corridors to meet the diverse needs of current and future Saanich residents as a complement to Uptown-Douglas Plan.
2. That the Housing Task Force forward the following comments on the Uptown-Douglas Plan to Council for consideration as part of the Plan approval and/or implementation process:
 - a. Consider identifying minimum building heights for some or all land use designations;
 - b. Consider increasing the maximum height in the Core designation;
 - c. Assess changes to the tapering of building heights in the Plan area that recognizes taller building forms throughout, and consider options for additional tapering of properties outside the Plan area;
 - d. Include additional policies to support the viability of affordable and supportive housing projects and protect existing affordable units;
 - e. Assess revisions to the urban design guidelines that restrict tower floor plate where project viability could be negatively impacted;
 - f. Assess proposed viability of development through changes to land use and building height designations to ensure building forms are conducive to current and emerging practices; and
 - g. Explore the development of an Economic Development Strategy, on a District or Regional scale, to support the ongoing implementation of the Uptown-Douglas Plan, and include:
 - Analysis for existing and future employment lands;



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- Development of an Industrial Land Strategy;
- Assessment of Uptown-Douglas objectives and policies to ensure they align with the economic development vision; and
- Consideration of Saanich-specific solutions, with a focus on looking at the balance of employment and housing (Made in Saanich Solution).