



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning
Date: September 3, 2015
Subject: Work Plan – Community Planning Section
File: 2310-20

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of:

1. A general Work Plan for the Community Planning Section of the Planning Department that identifies resource allocation and future priorities for three streams of work:
 - Local Area Plan Updates;
 - Centre and Corridor Plans; and
 - Policy Initiatives.
2. A Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference to guide the update of Local Area Plans.

BACKGROUND

Council's 2014 - 2018 Strategic Plan provides specific direction to "Commence a multi-year project to update the 12 Local Area Plans." In responding to this direction, a key point of consideration is how the Local Area Plan updates can be undertaken while still continuing work on other important community planning initiatives.

Prior to commencing work on the Local Area Plan updates, it was essential that the entire work program of the Community Planning Section would be looked at, to determine value, as well as where and when to focus defined resources. By resources we not only mean those of the Municipality, but also the ability of the residents and other stakeholders to be able to participate in numerous ongoing initiatives without getting overburdened or burnt out.

As part of this background work, staff undertook a detailed consultation process with representatives from each of the Neighbourhood Associations, seeking their input on: options for undertaking updates to the Local Area Plans; how to incorporate Village, Centre and Corridor planning; what were other key planning issues of importance to neighbourhoods and the greater community; and how best to balance these work streams.

As an outcome of this work, the subject report not only identifies a framework for the update to Local Area Plans, but also proposes a general work plan for the Community Planning Section that provides direction for Village, Centre and Corridor Plans, and for work on Policy Initiatives.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Community Planning Section of the Planning Department focuses on three primary streams of work: 1) Local Area Plans; 2) Centre and Corridor Plans; and 3) Policy Initiatives. A general explanation of the role and purpose of each stream is provided below.

Stream 1 - Local Area Plans

Local Area Plans (LAPs) provide a framework to help guide and manage positive change in a neighbourhood, while also seeking to further district-wide goals. LAPs have helped guide growth and change in the neighbourhoods of Saanich since the 1970's. The plans have been updated on a regular basis, typically in response to the adoption of a new citywide plan. The most recent round of updates of the 12 LAPs occurred from 1997-2007 after the adoption of the General Plan in 1993. Figure 1 shows existing LAPs and the years that they were last updated.

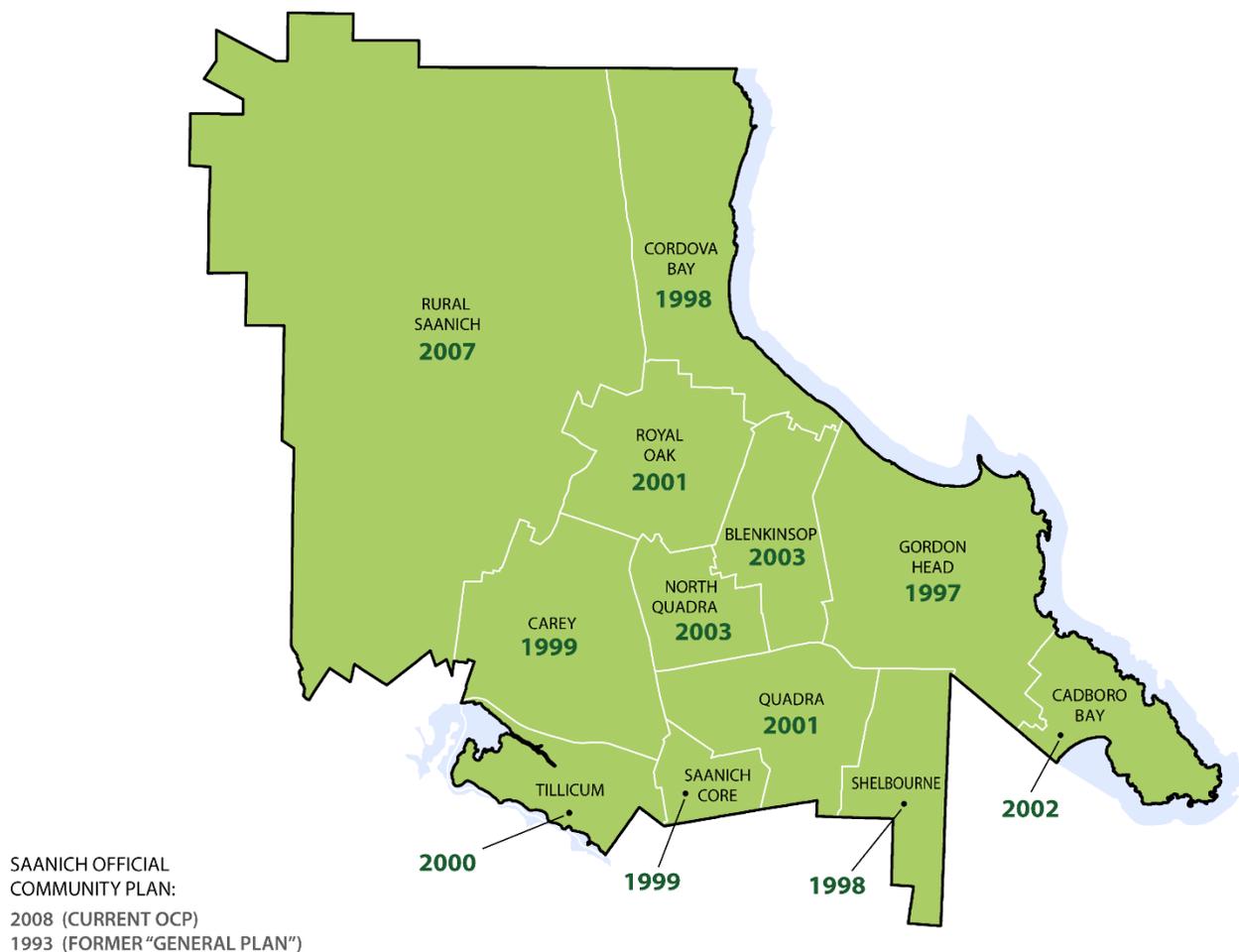


Figure 1: Date of Last Local Area Plan Updates

Stream 2 - Centre and Corridor Plans

The Official Community Plan (OCP) emphasizes the concept of Villages, Centres and Corridors as key areas to focus future sustainable growth. At present, the Saanich’s Villages and Centres are for the most part established commercial shopping areas. Corridors typically link Villages and Centres, and are key multi-modal transportation spines within Saanich that connect us to neighbouring communities and regional destinations. Future efforts will look to redevelop these areas as vibrant, walkable, mixed-use hubs of community activity.

Plans for Centre and Corridor areas are focused on regions identified for significant growth and change in the OCP and Regional Growth Strategy. These studies, which often incorporate portions of multiple Local Areas, provide an opportunity to tailor planning boundaries to match the scope of planning issues being addressed. The Shelbourne Valley Action Plan is an example of a Centre/Corridor planning study.

Villages not included in Centre/Corridor planning areas are generally smaller in scale, not on major transportation routes and would be addressed through LAP updates. Figure 2 shows the five proposed Centre and Corridor planning areas and how they relate to Local Area boundaries.

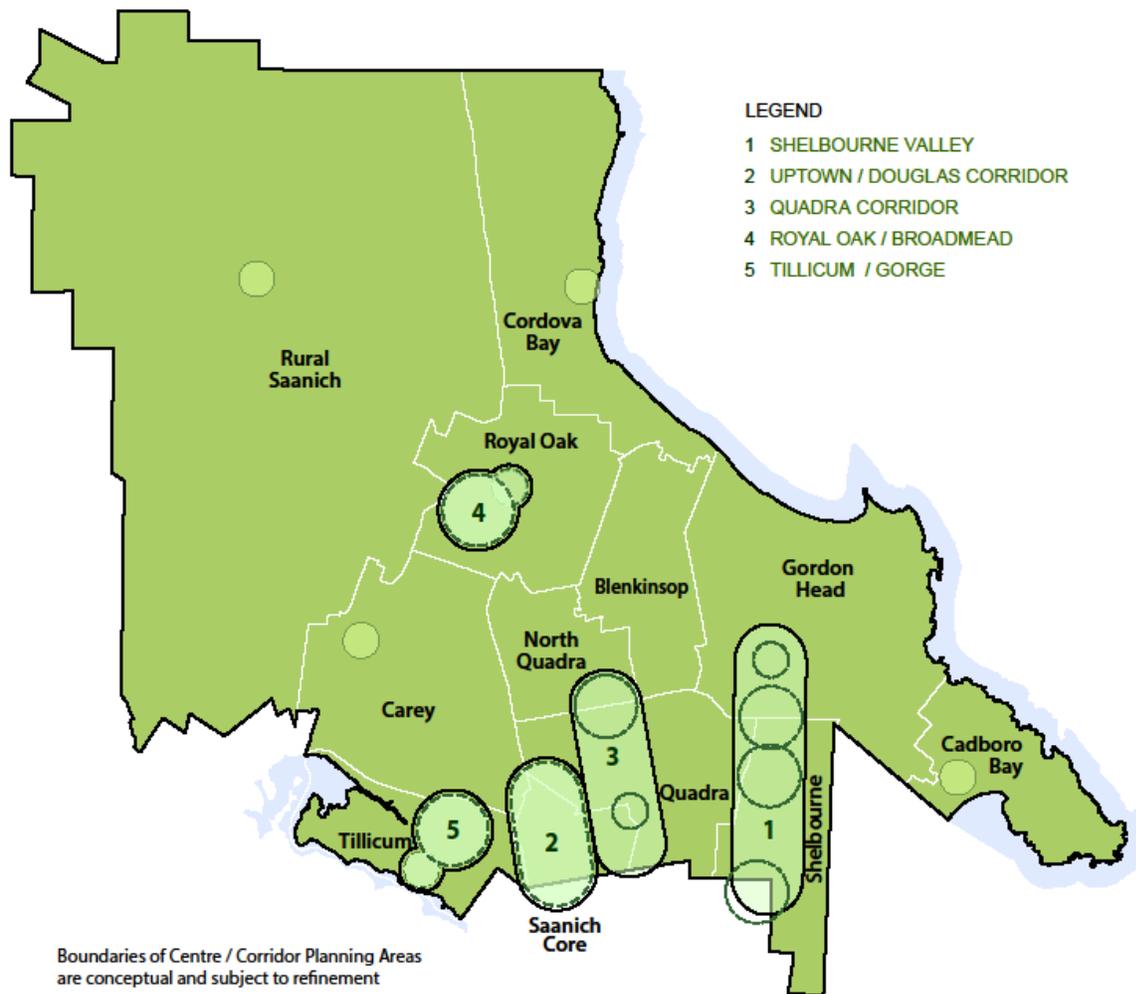


Figure 2: Local Areas and Centre/Corridor Areas

Stream 3 - Policy Initiatives

Many planning issues where municipal support and/or policy development is sought, are common across all, or multiple, Local Planning Areas/Neighbourhoods. Examples of such issues are: affordable housing; sensitive infill development; urban agriculture; accessibility; sustainable development; design guidelines; and support for seniors, youth and young families, etc. While such issues can be addressed as part of a Local Area Planning process, it makes better use of resources, and most often delivers better solutions, when looked at as part of a District/Region wide process.

The Secondary Suites programme, Accessible Housing Requirements and Access to Transit Guidelines are a few examples of valuable Saanich wide planning initiatives. Within this work stream we have also included work the Section does related to small area planning studies, Community Public Art, Heritage related applications and programs; agricultural policy and programs; and required support for regional and inter-departmental initiatives such as Affordable Housing, Active Transportation Master Plan and the Regional Growth (Sustainability) Strategy.

CONSULTATION

Neighbourhood Associations

In order to evaluate the best approach for updating Local Area Plans (LAPs), three workshops were held with Neighbourhood Association members. The workshops focused on identifying pressing local issues, exploring alternatives for LAP updates and considering linkages to Centre/Corridor Plans and Policy Initiatives. Approximately 80 participants in total attended the three workshops.

While a diversity of opinions were expressed at the workshops, strong themes emerged with respect to participants' preferences for the update of LAPs and priorities for the Community Planning Work Plan, including:

- Interest in focusing planning attention where growth and change is most significant;
- A desire for shorter, more focused LAP update timelines (quicker timelines with a reduced scope);
- Support for balancing resources between LAP updates, Centre/Corridor Plans and Policy Initiatives; and
- Interest in better linking LAP updates to other Saanich and regional initiatives.

Private feedback ballots were used to assess support for various directions at each of the three workshops. The results of the private ballots were as follows:

- Unanimous support for a different approach to LAP updates, rather than conventional 24-month process with chronological updating of plans (Workshop 1);
- 95% support for an approach that balanced resources between LAP updates, Centre and Corridor Plans and Policy Initiatives (Workshop 2); and
- Two-thirds support for a Community Planning Work Plan that balanced resources between the three streams and prioritized work as proposed in Option1 of this report (Workshop 3).

Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee

On June 11, 2015 staff presented an overview of the Community Planning Work Plan report to the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee. At that meeting, the Committee made the following motion:

“That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee recommends that Council consider allocating adequate manpower and resources to the Planning Department for updating the Local Area Plans.”

PROPOSED WORK PLAN – OPTIONS & RESOURCES

This section presents an overview of the three Community Planning Work Plan options, followed by discussion of required resources to implement the Work Plan and an explanation of how priorities were determined within each stream of work. Scenarios presented are based on the assumption of the continuation of existing staff and budgetary resource levels.

Each of the three options identified below lay out a proposed work program for the next decade. Included in this work program are approximate timelines for the update of the LAPs, development of Centre and Corridor Plans and completion of Policy Initiatives.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Balanced Focus

The overall premise of Option 1, consistent with feedback received from Neighbourhood Association members, is to balance resources between the three streams of community planning work. Significant resources would be dedicated to Local Area Plan updates, Centre and Corridor Plans and Policy Initiatives in this scenario.

The overall timeline for the update of Local Area Plans and development of Centre and Corridor Plans would be extended in comparison to an approach that focused extensively on one stream. However, in this scenario, consistent progress would be made on a range of Community Planning projects and flexibility would be maintained to deal with a broad spectrum of community issues and concerns. In workshops with Neighbourhood Association members, support was expressed for this option.

Staff recommend this option, as it directs planning attention to all three streams of work, has community support, and provides flexibility to address a range of planning issues.

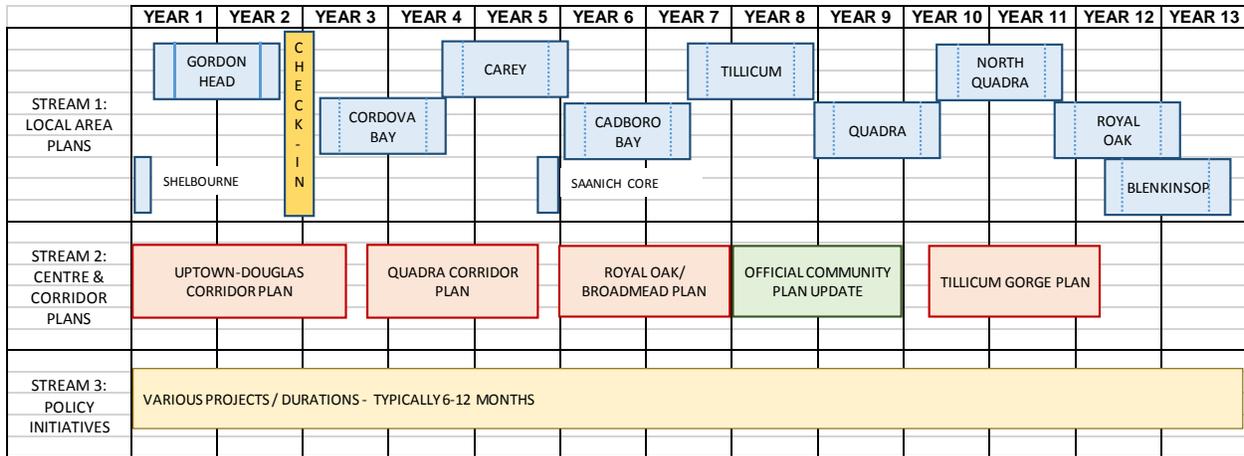


Figure 3: Community Planning Work Plan with Balanced Focus (Option 1)

Option 2: Local Area Plan Focus

Option 2 prioritizes Local Area Plan updates above other streams of work. In this scenario, the majority of Local Area Plans would be completed in a relatively short time horizon, however Centre and Corridor Plans would be completed more slowly and limited resources would be available to address strategic Policy Initiatives.

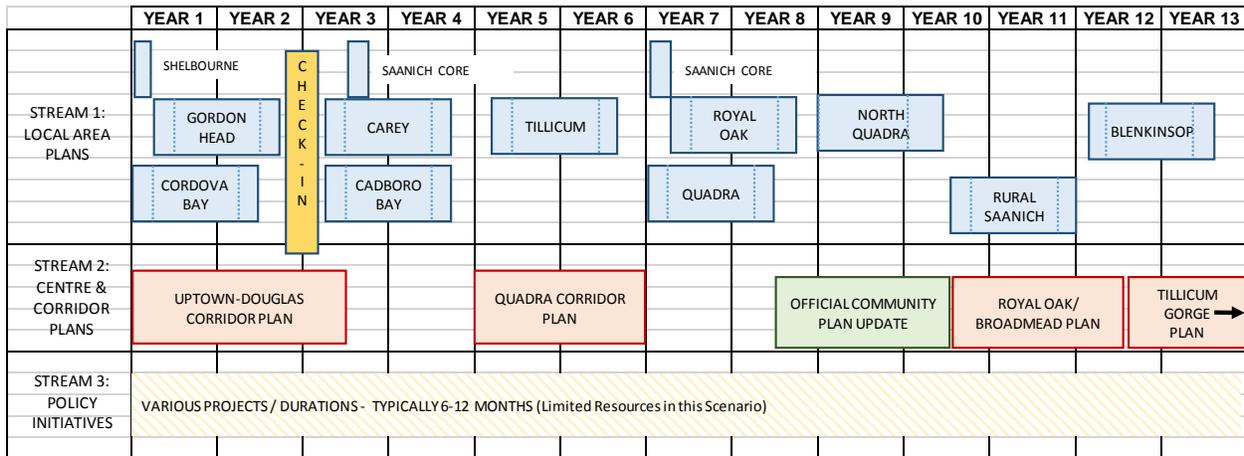


Figure 4: Community Planning Work Plan with Local Area Plan Focus (Option 2)

Option 3: Centre and Corridor Focus

Option 3 dedicates the majority of short-term resources to developing plans for Centre and Corridor areas where the majority of growth and change is occurring. In this scenario, the remaining Centre and Corridor Plans are anticipated to be completed in just over five years. This option was not presented at the workshop with Neighbourhood Associations, but was added in response to comments received from Neighbourhood Association members. From a purely planning perspective, there is a sound rationale for this option, as it provides focused planning attention in those areas expected to undergo significant growth and change. However, an implication of this option is that the update of LAPs would not be initiated until six years from now.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	YEAR 12	YEAR 13
STREAM 1: LOCAL AREA PLANS	SHELBOURNE		SAANICH CORE			CORDOVA BAY	CAREY	CADBORO BAY		GORDON HEAD	TILLICUM	QUADRA	NORTH QUADRA
STREAM 2: CENTRE & CORRIDOR PLANS	UPTOWN-DOUGLAS CORRIDOR PLAN			ROYAL OAK/ BROADMEAD PLAN				OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE					
		QUADRA CORRIDOR PLAN		TILLICUM GORGE PLAN									
STREAM 3: POLICY INITIATIVES	VARIOUS PROJECTS / DURATIONS - TYPICALLY 6-12 MONTHS												

Figure 5: Community Planning Work Plan with Centre and Corridor Plan Focus (Option 3)

RESOURCES

The staffing resources required for each of the Work Plan items varies and can involve the supplementation of consultant resources. In general, it is anticipated that a Local Area Plan update will require the equivalent of two full time staff (including technical resources). Centre and Corridor plans, which typically deal with a more complex set of issues, will require the equivalent of approximately three full time staff. Policy Initiatives are generally smaller in scope and require either all or a portion of one staff member’s time.

From a staffing perspective, the Community Planning Division consists of a Manager, four Planners and a Planning Technician. While the Division’s work is primarily project-oriented, a number of day to day tasks, such as the review and processing of heritage applications and involvement in regional and interdepartmental initiatives represents a significant time commitment.

If Option 1 were endorsed by Council, it would mean that one Planner would be assigned to Centre and Corridor Plans, one Planner would be assigned to Local Area Plan updates, and one Planner would assigned to Policy Initiatives. Additionally, one Planner would work on Heritage, Public Art and Agriculture files, while serving as a support for Local Area Plan and Centre and Corridor Plan initiatives as needed. Finally, the Planning Technician would provide support for all projects. In Option 2, two Planners would be assigned to Local Area Plan updates, while the other Planner would alternate between Centre and Corridor plans and Policy Initiatives. In Option 3, three Planners would be primarily assigned to Centre and Corridor plans.

In each of the options, consultant resources would be required to deliver Local Area Plan updates and Centre and Corridor Plans within proposed timelines. At present, Council has allocated funding for the Uptown-Douglas Corridor Study, the first two Local Area Plan updates and the development of an Agriculture and Food Security Plan. As work proceeds, Council would need to consider additional funding to ensure the continued competition of Work Plan items.

Should Council wish to expedite the development of additional LAPs, or include further work items, additional resources would need to be allocated. While consultant resources are helpful

to delivering additional projects, there are some limitations with respect to overall project administration and technical capacity.

WORK PLAN PRIORITIES WITHIN EACH STREAM

Development of the Community Planning Work Plan priorities involved the consideration of LAP updates and Centre/Corridor Plans and how they could be delivered in a manner that optimized use of resources and effectively addressed areas of concern. Other key considerations in developing the work plan and sequence of planning studies included the following:

- Providing planning attention to areas where growth and change is occurring or is anticipated to occur;
- Avoiding duplication of planning efforts; and
- Aligning with other Saanich and regional planning initiatives.

In the interest of limiting a duplication of efforts, it is proposed that the Shelbourne Local Area Plan and Saanich Core Local Area Plan be subject to a minor update at this time, as greater than 50% of their land area is addressed in high priority Centre and Corridor planning areas. This minor update would be limited to updating maps and graphics, modernizing the format, and integrating directions from recently adopted Centre/Corridor Plans and other plans relevant to the local area's geography. All other LAPs are recommended to be updated in accordance with the proposed 18-month process listed in the Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference.

Local Area Plans

One of the key components of developing a Community Planning Work Plan is determining which of the existing Local Area Plans is of highest priority to update. Feedback received from Neighbourhood Associations indicated the desire to look at a range of considerations, as opposed to simply updating the oldest plan first. To evaluate the relative priority of each local area, five criteria were used that looked at current and projected development activity, the age of the existing plan and the relationship to Centre and Corridor planning areas. A description of each of the criteria is provided in Table 1.

	Criteria	Measure	Rationale
1	Recent Development Activity	Number of development and subdivision applications per km ² – past 5 years	Captures intensity of development activity within local area boundary as an indicator of relative change area is experiencing
2	Projected Dwelling Unit Increase	Projected dwelling unit increase per hectare to 2038	Indicates the relative amount and intensity of change projected to occur
3	Age of Existing Plan	Years since last Local Area Plan was adopted	Indicates the length of time that has elapsed since the area has received comprehensive planning attention
4	Presence of Village	Presence or absence of a Village not addressed in Centre/Corridor Plans	Places a greater emphasis on planning for areas that contain a OCP-defined “Village” that is not located in a Centre or Corridor Plan
5	Coverage in Centre and Corridor Plans	Amount of Local Area contained within Centre/Corridor Planning Areas	Accounts for local areas that will experience significant planning in other processes

Table 1: Criteria for Prioritization of Local Area Plan Updates

Each of the local areas was scored and ranked based on the above criteria. A full summary of the criteria and rankings is available in Attachment A. Based on this scoring and adjustments to optimize alignment with other initiatives, LAP update priorities were ranked as follows:

1. Gordon Head
 2. Cordova Bay
 3. Carey
 4. Cadboro Bay
 5. Tillicum
 6. Quadra
 7. North Quadra
 8. Royal Oak
 9. Rural Saanich
 10. Blenkinsop
- Saanich Core (minor update)*
Shelbourne (minor update)

In general, the priority order follows the criteria scoring, however, two adjustments were made to the initial rankings to provide optimal alignment with Centre and Corridor planning studies and other ongoing planning processes:

- The Gordon Head LAP update was moved up to capitalize on planning work undertaken as part of the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan and also to align with the UVIC Campus Plan currently underway; and
- The Carey LAP update was moved back to follow the Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan, which will be studying an area of the Carey local area currently undergoing significant change.

Centre/Corridor Plans

The development of Centre/Corridor Plans for the five areas identified in Figure 2 would provide clear policy guidance for the vast majority of the municipality that is anticipated to experience significant future growth and change. The relative priority of Centre/Corridor Plans has already been partially established, as the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan process is concluding, the Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan is being initiated and Tillicum-Gorge area was subject to relatively recent planning as part of the 2005 Tillicum Burnside Action Plan.

Of the two remaining areas, the Quadra Corridor is recommended for prioritization before the Royal Oak-Broadmead area as it is subject to a greater amount of development pressure and land use change. Therefore, Centre and Corridor Plans are proposed to be undertaken in the following order:

1. Shelbourne Valley (Draft Plan complete)
2. Uptown-Douglas Corridor (To be initiated in 2015)
3. Quadra Corridor
4. Royal Oak-Broadmead
5. Tillicum-Gorge (Tillicum Burnside Action Plan adopted in 2005)

Policy Initiatives

Priorities for Policy Initiatives will be determined through future Council Strategic Planning sessions. Based on the directions from Council's Strategic Plans and motions made in the Chamber, a sample of some of the Policy initiatives currently being/to be worked on are:

- The development of a Local Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan;
- Implementation of key mobility initiatives from the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan;
- Development of a Heritage Procedures Bylaw and Heritage Minimum Maintenance Bylaw;
- Urban Goats Process Option Report;
- Study of Secondary Suites in Accessory Buildings;
- Regulatory changes to enable Farmer's Markets;
- Bowker Creek Design Guidelines with City of Victoria, Oak Bay and the CRD;
- Regional Sustainability Strategy update with the CRD;
- Option Report regarding a Local/Regional Farm Land Trust;
- Heritage Designation for the Municipal Hall (interior);
- Alternative Transportation Fund (akin to the Affordable Housing Fund);
- Fence heights on rural properties.

The above list illustrates that there are many important community-wide initiatives that have been identified by Council. Through Council Strategic Planning sessions, priorities can be established amongst this list, in consideration of new emerging priorities. Depending on the Community Planning Work Plan Option selected, the resources available to address Policy Initiatives will vary.

WORK PLAN CHECK-IN

Whichever Work Plan Option is selected, it is recommended that the new approach proposed for LAP updates and Centre/Corridor studies be reviewed and assessed on a regular basis to ensure lessons learned can be integrated into subsequent processes.

Following the first LAP update, staff will conduct a check-in to review the successes and failures of the first planning process and provide a report to Council on lessons learned and any recommended modifications to future planning processes.

LOCAL AREA PLANNING PROGRAM TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of the Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference is to provide a framework for overseeing the efficient and effective update of existing LAPs. The Terms of Reference includes direction regarding the scope of plans, planning and public engagement processes and roles and responsibilities of involved parties. The Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference is included as Attachment B. Through approval of the Terms of Reference, Council would provide clear guidance to staff on the how Local Area Plans would be updated.

The Terms of Reference was developed through an assessment of the existing approach, feedback received from Neighbourhood Association workshop participants, and an exploration of models used in other communities. The Terms of Reference has been crafted to provide clarity to all parties as to how LAPs could be updated, as well as to create a standardized process that would enable the efficient update of plans.

Key elements of LAP updates are proposed to be:

- An 18-month plan update process with a 12-month public process;
- A standard process with standard phases, deliverables and timelines for each plan update;
- A focused scope to LAP updates that directs the majority of attention to a limited number of priority issues; and
- A Project Advisory Committee that would be a component of each LAP update, advising on process, helping to promote the project and providing input on plan concepts.

The scope of the plan updates would be focused, meaning not all components of the LAP would be updated, but rather specific priority issues would be the focus of the plan update (not a comprehensive review and update of every topic area). Priority issues would be determined through a community process in the initial stages of the project.

The specific process and scope of Centre and Corridor Plans is proposed to be handled through individual Terms of Reference for each project. The complexity and scope of issues addressed in these initiatives is such that a specific Terms of Reference is warranted.

SUMMARY

This report lays out general options for addressing community planning issues over the next decade. While there are a significant number of planning issues that are important to address, the endorsement of a Work Plan by Council would provide clarity on areas of focus and the timing of various planning studies.

Option 1: Balanced Focus is recommended by staff as it dedicates a significant amount of resources to address the three primary streams of work that the Community Planning Division undertakes: Local Area Plan updates, Centre and Corridor Plans and Policy Initiatives. This allows the foundational Local Area Plans to remain current, enables major areas of anticipated growth to be planned for through Centre and Corridor Plans and retains flexibility to proactively address community concerns through Policy Initiatives.

The Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference provides a framework to guide the efficient and effective update of existing Local Area Plans. The Terms of Reference includes guidance for the scope of plans, planning and public engagement processes and roles and responsibilities of involved parties. Through approval of the Terms of Reference, Council would provide clear guidance to staff on how Local Area Plans would be updated

Collectively, the items before Council provide a roadmap for how and when key community planning activities would be undertaken in the coming years. Council endorsement of a general Community Planning Work Plan Option and the Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference will provide a framework for advancing a number of key initiatives in the community.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse:

1. The Community Planning Work Plan Option 1 – Balanced Focus, that identifies future priorities for three streams of work:
 - Local Area Plan Updates;
 - Centre and Corridor Plans; and
 - Policy Initiatives.
2. The Local Area Planning Program Terms of Reference (Attachment B)

Report prepared by:

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Report reviewed by:

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Attachment A: Criteria used to Prioritize Local Area Plan Updates

Attachment B: Local Area Planning Terms of Reference

cc: Andy Laidlaw, Administrator
Graham Barbour, Manager of Inspection Services

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation of the Director of Planning.

Andy Laidlaw, Administrator