



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT  
Development Services  
For the May 26, 2020 Council Meeting

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DATE: May 20, 2020  
TO: Paul Gipps, CAO  
FROM: Dallas Clowes, Senior Planner  
RE: File: P20-01; Update on Community Visioning (Phase 1 OCP Review)

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This report is being brought forward to Council to provide an update regarding the development of the Community Vision that will constitute Phase 1 of the Official Community Plan (OCP) Review and outline the revised public engagement process and timeline in context of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY OBJECTIVE:

Strengthen Our Community – Community Visioning

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:

Official Community Plans are authorized by Part 14 of the *Local Government Act*.

BACKGROUND:

The Community Visioning process was initiated in May 2019 with the issuance of a Request for Proposal for consulting services to undertake extensive community engagement to establish a long-term vision for the community as Phase 1 of the OCP review. Lanarc Consultants was selected as the successful proponent for this project.

On July 24, 2019, City staff and the consultant held a series of meetings with community stakeholders, management staff, and members of Council to introduce the project, gather input on the proposed engagement strategy and begin discussion on the vision. Following these meetings, the project was placed on hold to better understand Council's expectations for this project.

From September 2019 to February 2020, the project was refined and a revised scope, budget, and schedule were created to better align with Council's vision for the project.

On February 25, 2020, Council was provided with an update on the Community Visioning process, including an overview of the draft public engagement and communications strategy, which

identified a combination of digital engagement and in-person community outreach to achieve a collective vision for the community's future. At this meeting, Council confirmed the direction of the project and the project team subsequently worked with the consultant to move towards a public launch that was scheduled to occur at the beginning of April, with the initial first phase of public engagement continuing until mid-July. However, in mid-March, the project was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***Summary of Initial Work Plan***

As presented to Council on February 25, the initial work plan for this project included an extensive public engagement and communications strategy that was intended to reach a wide audience in the community to engage as many citizens as possible to develop a shared direction for West Kelowna's future. The Community Visioning project was anticipated to use a three-phase approach for engagement as outlined below, with the bulk of community engagement occurring in Phase 2 and follow-up engagement (i.e. 'What we Heard') occurring in Phase 3.

Phase 1: Setting the Foundation (January-March 2020): *COMPLETE*

- Identified and refined outreach options
- Created the project identity and key messaging tools
- Summarized background information and emerging community issues

Phase 2: Building a Draft Vision (March – July 2020) was intended to:

- Kick off the public process with a public engagement launch with both digital and print media to help build awareness of the project
- Develop an online community questionnaire
- Encourage discussions with the community through various community 'pop-up' events to help establish building blocks for the draft vision, funnelling community input to the online community questionnaire for ease of data analysis
  - A wide variety of events were anticipated, ranging from outreach occurring at community-wide events such as the Easter Egg Scramble, Music in the Park, Westside Daze, and Farmer's markets, to more targeted events including presentations at local organizations and businesses
  - In addition, it was anticipated that staff would be present throughout the community, engaging with residents at such locations as grocery stores, retirement homes, hiking trails, beaches and the Gellatly Bay recreational corridor as well as working with School District No. 23 to create targeted engagement activities and presentations for students

Phase 3: Refining the Vision & Preparing for What's Next (July -December 2020) was intended to:

- Report back to both Council and the community to confirm 'What we Heard' during the previous phases
- Develop a draft community vision document and refine it through further community and Council consultation, including in-person engagement activities (i.e. community-led meetings and workshops) and a second online questionnaire to refine the draft vision

## ***Effects of COVID 19 on the Public Engagement Process***

In the weeks following the February 25, 2020 update to Council, the Consultant and the project team were working to compile the background documents, create the project website and online questionnaire, and prepare the public information materials (play blocks, posters, project cards, community leader's kits, etc.). However, in mid-March, the emergence of COVID-19 affected the project due to necessary restrictions put in place by the Provincial Medical Health Officer to help stop the spread of COVID-19. All public gatherings over 50 people were ordered to cease and all in-person gatherings of any size (outside of one's own household) were strongly discouraged. Local businesses, recreational facilities, community venues, and libraries were also closed which hampered the ability to do in-person engagement and community outreach (including in-person presentations, an open-house, and static information stations that were anticipated to occur throughout the community from April to mid-July). Physical distancing requirements and the closure of businesses and venues further hampered in-person engagement at the smaller scale that was planned to occur via 'pop-up' events throughout the community. In addition, the project had included the appointment of two summer students that would have been tasked with the bulk of the in-person community engagement. As a result of the emergence of COVID-19 and the effects on the workplace, the City did not move forward with the hiring of Development Services summer students for 2020.

## ***Moving Forward – Key Considerations***

With respect to the decision to move forward, the project team believes that recent announcements by the Province and changing social parameters provide an opportunity to re-initiate the Community Visioning project as outlined below.

### **1) Timing and Sensitivity in Moving Forward**

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Visioning project was paused to ensure that residents could focus fully on the public health crisis, which required many to adjust to family changes (working from home, meeting children's educational needs), personal economic concerns (business closures, job losses), and emotional stresses. Because of these hardships, the Community Visioning project was paused until there was a better understanding of what the future may hold.

In recent weeks, positive announcements have been made by the Province, which provides an opportunity for the Community Visioning project to move forward. It has been documented that BC (and Canada) are 'flattening the curve' with regard to the spread of COVID-19. In addition, the Province announced BC's *Restart Plan* on May 6, 2020 which establishes a phased re-opening plan for the Province. The first phase of the ReStart Plan began in mid-May, which has allowed some businesses and services to re-open, so long as physical distancing measures can be maintained.

With these announcements, many businesses and services will be available to residents, which may provide a return to a sense of normalcy within the community. In addition, the phased re-opening will allow some people to return to work, which has been a very stressful factor for many during this period. In recognition of the strict physical distancing requirements that have been and continue to be in place, and the start of summer, there is also opportunity to have residents become involved in the Community Visioning project so they may continue to be social and active

in the community, a point that has been stressed as vital to the health of individuals during this time by public health officials.

## 2) Adjustment of the Public Engagement and Communications Strategy

Initially, a multi-pronged approach to engagement was proposed, with a combination of both in-person consultation and online engagement to reach as many community members as possible. In considering how we may move forward with public engagement in context with physical distancing requirements, the weight that online engagement will play in the Community Visioning process has substantially increased, as summarized below:

- Project website – Include additional background information and project updates to help disseminate information about the project
- Increased use of online platform and social media – Feedback and participation in the project will be funneled through the online platform MetroQuest (which will house the online questionnaires), and the use of social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) can help direct participants to this platform.
- Leverage existing networks – In order to help boost participation in the online questionnaires, it is recommended that Council, the project team, and City Staff be encouraged to utilize their professional and social networks to help spread the word about the project and boost participation in the questionnaires
- Harness community groups to help spread the word about the project (i.e. provide social media content, newsletter-ready information) and funnel participation into the community questionnaire
- Consider using additional forms of online engagement – It is recommended that the project team use additional online tools such as videos, additional social media postings, weekly questions (i.e. ‘a theme and question of the week’), contests, and activities and educational releases that support online engagement to gain additional feedback that would have been received at in-person engagement activities
- Consider presenting digitally (i.e. webinars and video series) as opposed to in-person presentations, to community groups, Council Committee meetings, etc.

## 3) Flexibility in Timing of Engagement and Outreach Methods

As COVID-19 has changed our day-to-day reality rather rapidly, a key consideration for the success of the development of the Community Vision is to allow for flexibility in all aspects of the project moving forward. It is suggested that:

- Community feedback be evaluated continually in order to adjust the engagement process as necessary (i.e. potentially increase the time for online engagement, look to additional outreach methods to fill any gaps in responses, etc.)
- The outreach methods be flexible to adjust accordingly if in-person engagement becomes possible during the course of the project, or to scale back in-person engagement if a second wave of COVID-19 is experienced (i.e. put the emphasis back on online engagement methods)

## 4) Potential Impacts on Public Engagement

As the initial public engagement and communications strategy involved a multi-pronged approach to involve the greater community in the project, the project team has had to rethink how engagement is still possible with persons that are considered ‘harder to reach’. While the transition to a heavier reliance on online engagement may ease information sharing to the general

population, it may be harder to disseminate to those that are not 'online'. As was already anticipated, the project team will rely on community stakeholders, leaders, and volunteers to help carry these conversations and spread information about the project. As the re-opening plan expands with future phases, there may be additional opportunities to engage with the wider community.

In the meantime, the project team has identified additional ways we may wish to consider to engage with our community, and those that are considered 'harder to reach':

- Mailout of key information – potentially in alignment with other planned mail outs from the City to manage costs
- Planned information drops at key locations (senior's housing, foodbank, etc.).
- Posters, flyers, handouts, and temporary banners at open locations (i.e. grocery stores)
- Radio and phone outreach to those that may be immobile or not online
- Attend, where permitted by physical distancing requirements, events to present information

As more businesses and services open with the implementation of the Province's re-opening plan, we may consider additional and/or revised options.

### ***Summary of Adjustments to Key Activities and Project Timeline***

Table 1 below outlines the adjustments made to the key project activities and approximate timelines associated with the activities. As noted above, flexibility in the timing and type of activities will be key for the success of this project. The project team will continually review methods and approximate timelines and adjust as necessary. Additional information is provided in Attachment 1.

Table 1. Initial and Revised Project Activities and Timelines

<b>Initial Key Activity</b>	<b>Initial Anticipated Timeline</b>	<b>Revised Activity</b>	<b>Revised Anticipated Timeline</b>
Council Meeting #1: Project Introduction	Nov 12, 2019	Complete	Complete
Council Meeting #2: Pre-Launch Council Update	Feb 25, 2020	Complete	Complete
Not anticipated		Update to Council re: Impacts of COVID-19	May 26, 2020
Public Launch	Mar - Apr 2020	Revised to heavier reliance on digital communications	Jun 2020
Questionnaire #1 Launch	Apr 2020	No Change	Jun 2020
Presentations to Council Committees (APC, EDC, AAC)	Apr 2020	Revised to digital presentations (versus in-person)	Jun - Jul 2020
Community Pop-up Series (dates to align with community events / processes)	Apr – mid Jul 2020	Revise to: Phone and Email Outreach; At-Home Activity Series; Outreach to SD#23; Targeted Information Drops; Weekly Questions;	Jun – mid Sept 2020

<b>Initial Key Activity</b>	<b>Initial Anticipated Timeline</b>	<b>Revised Activity</b>	<b>Revised Anticipated Timeline</b>
		Weekly 'Backgrounder' Information Releases; 'Appropriately-Distanced' Pop-ups	
Community Forum Event	May 25, 2020	Revise to: 'Ask and Answer Series'; "Coffee Talk Series"; "Video Speaker Series"; Interactive Website Content	Jun – mid Sept 2020
Attendance at Stakeholder Meetings or Activities	Apr – mid Jul 2020	Revise to: Online/Phone meetings	Jun – mid Sept 2020
Static Stations	Apr – mid Jul 2020	Revise to: Relocation where possible; Refined Questions; Safe Participation; Drop Boxes, Public Updates	Jun – mid Sept 2020
Not Anticipated		Engagement Tactics Review in Context of COVID-19	Aug – Sept 2020
Engagement Summary #1	Aug 2020	No Change	Oct 2020
Council Meeting #4: Summary & Preliminary Vision Development	Sept 2020	Revise to online meeting	Oct 2020
Community Circles Program	Sept/Oct 2020	TBD (will be re-evaluated in the summer in context of COVID-19)	
Questionnaire #2 Launch	Sept 2020	No Change	Nov 2020
Community Visioning Workshops	Oct 2020	TBD (will be re-evaluated in the summer in context of COVID-19)	
Draft Vision Document	Nov 2020	No Change	Jan 2021
Council Meeting #5: Presentation of Draft Vision Document	Dec 2020	Revise to online meeting if required	Jan/Feb 2021
Final Vision Document	December 2020	No Change	Jan/Feb 2021

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

It is anticipated that the costs associated with the revisions to the Public Engagement and Communications Strategy can be accommodated within the existing project budget. Future phases of the OCP review will require additional funds, to be considered as part of future budget deliberations.

## ***Council Involvement***

As discussed previously with Council, the revised work plan included two additional working sessions with Council (one occurred in November 2019 and one is anticipated for October 2020), to ensure that Council's feedback on the project is obtained at the outset of the project as well as during key points throughout the project. Moving forward, meetings with Council may involve online participation by the Consultant as required. In addition, the Consultant is still intending to prepare Community Leaders Kits to assist Council in discussions with community members and Council will be encouraged to spread the word about the project with their respective community networks. As initially planned, the draft community questionnaire will also be provided to Council prior to public launch for feedback. It is anticipated that the draft community questionnaire will be provided to Council on May 27, 2020.

### **COUNCIL REPORT/RESOLUTION HISTORY:**

Date	Report Topic/Resolution	Resolution No.
February 25, 2020	Update on Community Visioning (Phase 1 OCP)	N/A
July 23, 2019	Community Visioning Update – Information Report	N/A
May 21, 2019	Community Visioning Project – Information Report	N/A
February 26, 2019	<b>THAT</b> Council adopt the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan as presented.	C118/10

### **Next Steps**

As there are many unknowns with the future of the COVID-19 crisis and potential future waves of the virus that may impact daily operations, staff will continually monitor Provincial Health Orders and policy changes at senior levels of government to evaluate the impacts and opportunities for the Community Visioning process. The Public Engagement and Communications Strategy will be adjusted as necessary to be both sensitive to the needs of our community and engage as many community residents as possible.

### **REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:**

Brent Magnan, Planning Manager  
Mark Koch, Director of Development Services  
Sandy Webster, Director of Corporate Initiatives  
Tracey Batten, Deputy CAO/Corporate Officer  
Paul Gipps, CAO

Powerpoint: Yes ☒ No ☐

#### **Attachments:**

1. #OurWK: Shifting our Communications and Engagement Strategy.