



## Citizen Advisory Group Will Help Develop New Official Community Plan

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Seven citizen advisors are assisting the update of Victoria's new Official Community Plan and helping determine the best way to engage the larger community in the development of the plan. Commonly referred to in planning circles as the "OCP", it is a city-wide plan that guides Council decision-making on topics such as land use, environment, climate change, transportation, and housing issues.

"The Official Community Plan sets forth the community's vision for our city; a vision that embraces sustainability and healthy communities," said Mayor Dean Fortin. "We will benefit greatly from collaborative citizen involvement throughout the process, with a shared goal of producing a quality plan that considers the needs of the community for the next 30 years."

The committee has already been meeting on a regular basis providing input on the project charter, terms of reference, and public engagement strategy for Council's consideration January 7, 2010. Offering a wide range of expertise and perspective, the committee members are Deb Curran, Lisa Helps, Blair Humphrey, Robert Jawl, Todd Litman, Dan Pollock, and Doug Rhodes. (Biographies attached)

This will be the first time the City uses a project management tool known as a *Project Charter* to provide greater certainty to process, timelines and budget.

The committee is chaired by Director of Planning, Deb Day, and supported by City staff, Kim Fowler, Director of Sustainability and Mark Hornell, Assistant Director of Community Planning.

Objectives of the Citizen Advisory Committee include the following:

- Providing feedback and advice on the planning process, including the public engagement strategy
- Reviewing and advising on the draft Victoria Sustainability Framework, as inputs into the OCP planning process
- Reviewing and providing advice on the structure and content of the new OCP

Key objectives of the OCP project include the following:

- Apply a triple-bottom line perspective, considering economic development, social and community development, and environmental stewardship
- Update existing policies and establish new policy areas, such as climate change
- Establish an updated urban structure plan based on sustainability principles and practices
- Provide guidance to public and private investment over the long-term
- Establish an approach to neighbourhood planning grounded in a citywide context

The Citizen Advisory Committee will be involved for the duration of the project, expected to be 12 months. The committee is currently designing the process to be used in preparing a new OCP, including a public engagement strategy. The public engagement strategy will propose many opportunities for public input throughout the process.

Established under the authority of the Province of British Columbia's Local Government Act, an Official Community Plan is a city-wide plan. Taking a comprehensive and long-term perspective, the OCP is the principal policy document Council uses to guide decisions related to growth, land use, building heights and transportation. The current OCP was last updated 14 years ago, in 1995.

For more information visit [www.victoria.ca](http://www.victoria.ca) and click on *What's New*.

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**For More Information:**

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## BIO BACKGROUNDER:

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### **Deborah Curran**

Deborah Curran is a Senior Instructor with the Environmental Law Centre and Faculty of Law at the University of Victoria and is principal of Deborah Curran and Company, a law firm dedicated to developing legal strategies for smart growth. Deborah advises local governments, other agencies and community groups across B.C. on sustainability. She is the author of the *Green Bylaws Toolkit* and the *Smart Bylaws Guide* website. Deborah co-founded Smart Growth BC and served as its president for five years, and is currently a board member of the Victoria Foundation and the new Whistler Centre for Sustainability.

### **Lisa Helps**

Lisa Helps is currently working on a Ph.D. on the history of homelessness and housing in Victoria and San Francisco. Not satisfied with the disjuncture between the so-called ivory tower and the rest of the world, she spends much of her time as a community activist committed to poverty reduction, place-based solutions to global and national challenges, and increasing citizen engagement.

### **Blair Humphrey**

Now mostly retired, Blair has been a university lecturer, an environmental consultant, and a college instructor. A chemist by training, his consulting area was data analysis for marine environments, with many local and international projects relating to sewage outfalls and oil spills. His recent college experience was teaching chemistry for engineers. Blair became involved in the Fairfield Community Association in 1999, and is presently President. He has been active in civic affairs since 2000, and was a member of the City of Victoria Environment and Shoreline Advisory Committee for three years. He was a member of the CRD Marine Management Advisory Group until 2007.

### **Robert Jawl**

Robert is with Jawl Properties Ltd. a Victoria, BC based owner, manager, and developer of commercial office space. Robert is also a resident of downtown Victoria and serves on the board of the Downtown Victoria Business Association.

### **Todd Litman**

Todd Litman is Executive Director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, an independent research organization dedicated to developing innovative solutions to transport problems. He has worked internationally as a consultant specializing in sustainable community planning. Mr. Litman has lived in Victoria since 1993, and has worked with various community organizations.

### **Dan Pollock**

Dan Pollock is a graduate student at the University of Victoria in mathematics. He has worked on planning, transportation and sustainability issues for a number of years. In 2005, while serving a term as the Director of Services of the Graduate Students' Society, Dan was appointed to the first of four terms on the Campus Planning Committee. He has also served on the UVic Sustainability Advisory Committee, represented graduate students on the BC Transit Rapid Transit Citizen's Liaison Committee, co-founded the Roads, Rails, and Trails transportation lecture series, led the Transportation Working Group at Common Energy UVic, was a citizen representative on the CRD Travel Choices subcommittee, and currently sits on the CRD Pedestrian and Cycling Master plan Citizens Advisory Committee.

### **Doug Rhodes**

Doug Rhodes works as a planning consultant and has volunteered as Chair of the Hillside-Quadra Neighbour Action Group for the past 15 years. Doug is a former Chair of the Advisory Planning Commission and has been an active volunteer in Victoria for many years.