VICTORIA, BC — Victoria has a new Official Community Plan to guide the growth and change in BC’s Capital City over the next 30 years. Last night, at a special Council meeting, Council gave final reading to Victoria’s new plan, the most important guiding policy for a municipality, and then formally adopted it as a bylaw.

“Our community’s new plan will guide the decisions of council and staff to ensure Victoria remains a sustainable and vibrant community for people to live, work, and play,” said Mayor Dean Fortin. “Shaped by input from more than 6,000 people, this plan incorporates what the public told us was most important to them.”

Individuals representing neighbourhood associations, businesses, developers, service providers, First Nations, heritage, arts and culture groups, recreation services, and youth organizations have participated and helped ensure that the new plan is reflective of the community’s values.

Citizens participated through activities such as kitchen table workshops, Citizen Insight Councils, community forums and direct correspondence with staff. Staff attended markets, coffee shops, community centres, schools, and meetings with various interest groups in an effort to capture a diverse range of thoughts and opinions.

Over the next 30 years, Victoria is expected to grow by approximately 20,000 new residents and create 10,000 new jobs. The new Official Community Plan will guide growth and change in the years ahead, while maintaining and preserving the special places and features that are unique and valued in the community. Council, staff, and the community will use the plan as a guide for decisions such as where to locate housing and businesses, what the communities transportation priorities are, and how to address aging infrastructure.

Key elements in the new Official Community Plan include:

- A focus on vibrant, walkable villages and town centres
- Downtown core as the heart of the region
- Recognition of unique neighbourhood character and sense of place
- Strategically focused local area plans
- Emphasis on sustainable transportation such as walking, cycling, and transit
- Increase in housing options to accommodate different needs
- A more resilient city with support for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, seismic upgrades to buildings and infrastructure, and local food production

The new plan also reflects new provincial legislation, requiring Official Community Plans to include policies that address affordable and special needs housing, as well as to establish targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
Work to update the plan has been underway since early 2010. The City’s plan was last updated in 1995. While the new Official Community Plan is a 30 year plan, it will act as a living document that will be updated regularly, ensuring it responds to emerging trends and priorities.

For more information, visit www.ShapeYourFutureVictoria.ca.

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