

Rob Gordon

Subject: FW: The Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan**From:** Personal info**Sent:** Tuesday, February 27, 2018 7:08 PM**To:** Engagement <engage@victoria.ca>**Subject:** Re: The Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

Hi Planners,

I missed completing your survey so I will simply briefly send you my views. I live in a 5 storey condo in Fairfield. I feel very strongly that we need to give others the same opportunity of life by constructing 4-6 story Rental buildings in our neighborhood. Look at what happened in the past along Cook Street from the village and north. Now no one objects to all those rental buildings which displaced old homes; they are taken for granted; they were needed. I do not own a car and I walk all the time so I really know my surroundings. I feel disheartened when I see signs in peoples' yards expressing views against new development. I find the 'not in my back yard' attitude so arrogant, so lacking in compassion towards your fellow human beings and their needs. Fairfield is a pleasant area, but it is full of what I call "mean, little, grey, stucco bungalows of no architectural merit", probably built during the 2nd W.W. We will not lose any delight in our area by exchanging those for more dense buildings of 3-4 storeys, if the planning department has some control over the looks. I should love to see such buildings built for mixed use but built so that each apt. has wide doorways (walkers, beds etc), large bathrooms and where the elevator is sufficiently capacious to take an electric scooter, a gurney, a baby stroller and the like. There should also be a communal garden with benches and a sandpit. It is very possible to create these, and they would be suitable for both seniors and families.

I personally am not in favour of narrow town houses with many stairs and few rooms on several floors in the same dwelling. They are much harder to live in than horizontal dwellings. I hope you show courage and come forward with a plan that has much greater density; there will be opposition from the Nimby Persons but we need the density. Maybe then more people will use the public transit.

I feel sure I am unusual in my views, but I think you should hear them.

Cheers, Personal info

Rob Gordon

Subject: FW: The City needs to consult neighbours about Fairfield Small Urban Villages

From: Personal info

Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2018 4:23 PM

To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>

Cc: Community Planning email inquiries <CommunityPlanning@victoria.ca>; Jonathan Tinney <JTinney@victoria.ca>

Subject: The City needs to consult neighbours about Fairfield Small Urban Villages

Dear Mayor and Council,

Another issue has arisen with the "Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan" with regards the suggested 13.5 (4 storey) buildings in Fairfield small urban villages. An exception for rezoning individual building as OCP, Large Urban village buildings, was not included in the draft plan. This was obviously a planning oversight.

At a recent CALUC meeting on rezoning Fairfield United Church at 1303 Fairfield Rd. from a small to a large urban village in order to accommodate the new structure on a road that was not arterial there was wide scale opposition from the neighbours. There was a good attendance at the meeting (perhaps 80-100). Alex Johnston in attendance for the City and he spoke briefly about the application for why the last minute change from small to large urban village designation was appropriate (Government regulations). In any case there were about 25 speakers and about 22 were opposed with only 3 in favour. The major reason for opposition was the precedent of changing 2/3 storey to 4 storey (i.e. making an exception to the OCP for this case, which would obviously have a knock-on effect to the surrounding buildings). We also heard that a petition was circulated against allowing the development application and it already has 560 signatures. Julie Angus who circulated that petition was given 5 minutes to speak and listed about 10 major faults with the zoning variances that covered most of the bases. (You will no doubt be sent the text) by CALUC.

The draft Fairfield Plan was not at any time mentioned in the discussion by either the advocates or the opponents. However, it is obvious to me that the planners should be compelled by City Council to do a consultation with those in vicinity of the Fairfield small urban villages just as they will be doing with Cook St. Village groups. The CALUC attendance sheet and the Julie Angus' petition should provide the names of those who should be consulted as well as those in the local businesses, the school and the Fairfield United Church. Certainly all buildings in the Small Urban Villages should be restricted to a 3 storeys maximum and there should be consideration of the heritage and land mark value of the present structures and safety considerations around the nonarterial roads.

Thank you for your consideration,

Personal info

Fairfield

Personal info

Rob Gordon

From: Personal info
Sent: August 14, 2018 9:20 AM
To: Andrea Hudson
Subject: Accessible gentle density and thoughts on accessible planning processes

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Andrea Hudson
Assistant Director, Community Planning

It was nice to meet Rebecca and you yesterday at the Cook St. Gentle Densification pop-up. Thank you for your card and invitation to correspond directly to re-iterate points made in person and expand on thoughts I wasn't able to provide in the survey.

I thought I would first mention that this consultation and the pop-up is not highlighted on the City's webpage, appearing neither on the calendar or news section. I was trying to find the hours to pass on to a neighbour and could not.

I will summarize my input and thoughts on Gentle Densification here:

- Residents' acceptance of higher density forms of housing will be tied to the rules around parking requirements, yet the two exercises proceeded independently.

I found it very difficult to answer questions about the acceptability of a form of housing when I didn't know its impact on parking. My thinking is that if a single family home zoned property is going to have any more than one extra unit, there should be an off-street spot per unit. On my street, the frontage of homes usually fits 2-3 cars parked in front, depending on where driveways are located. Many of the homes have suites. Already, if a visitor to my home arrives after residents return from work, they are not likely to find parking in front of my house (and we park our own vehicles off-street). The impact of even three more living units on this long block would mean a game of musical cars. Remember that in Fairfield, there is competition from non-locals. Much of the parking close to Dallas Road is taken up by people driving to Dallas Road destination off-leash area. That will probably worsen with the CRD force main bike lane project that reduces parking on Dallas Road itself and brings people to the area with bikes on their vehicles. Fairfield is the City's playground and its recreational amenities create outsider parking demand here much like around urban villages. There are six vehicles associated with a nearby suited home, only one of which parks on the property. Of some suite dwellers I know on my street, some are in construction who either have to drive to various distant worksites or drive company large vehicles, and one works at VGH for which the bus ride is much too time consuming. The City can't assume they all walk or bike to work downtown. To go anywhere other than downtown requires at least one transfer. Students can't even easily and speedily get to UVic.

I wanted to ensure that planning staff are aware that although the bylaw relating to parking requirements for private development was recently updated, no changes were made to the requirements for accessible parking because the project did not collect sufficient data to make informed recommendations on that matter. They consulted the AWG too late, after the research was done. Council more recently approved a motion for staff to scope the work of an accessible parking consultant and consultation because that whole piece was carved out to be dealt with later. Thus, the new rules do not include any change to accessible parking requirements, which now continue to be governed by the building code's very minimal requirements. So the gentle density plans are slated to be approved before any accessible parking rules come out. If they do not allow for accessible parking, a group of potential residents may be permanently shut out of a desirable form of housing. Can design guidelines mention that they will follow future accessible parking rules? I don't know if they will affect smaller developments but they could.

Requiring off-street parking does not necessarily mean paving over land. I think there are permeable but green surface options and the design guidelines might be able to describe and recommend them.

- I suggest that staff look at the BC Transit map of served areas in Fairfield.

I remember when the route and timing of the #3 was cut back from every 20 minutes throughout the day to a “senior’s shopper bus” only operating outside commuting periods and once an hour, the area my home is in was then classified as not served by transit. Yet, there seems to be an assumption that the area is prime for densification due to existence of public transit. And not everyone can ride a bike for work or shopping. We have a Handi Dart van serve two residences on our street, and when they do pick up and drop off, the street is blocked due to shortage of curb parking. I mentioned that buses are inaccessible to me [Personal info](#)

This comment may have as much to do with the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan as gentle density.

- I mentioned that I am in favour of some of the forms of housing because they afford separate entrances to each living unit.

For me, a separate entrance is an essential accessibility feature if I am to live in any multi-unit dwelling, unless they share a common forced air heating system. Further, as I age and downsize, I would like to stay in my neighbourhood, rather than move to a concrete jungle or major corridor for a condo or large apartment building. That led me to thinking that everyone should have the opportunity to live in a quiet, green residential neighbourhood. When houses are converted, some sites might lend themselves to wheelchair access, particularly ground floor suites. Could the design guidelines include accessibility features? Could the presence of those features be a factor that might benefit a proposal that would require rezoning or an approval process to increase density? I cannot state now what the features might be, but the City could consult with the AWG. There might be a conflict with the emphasis on permeable surfaces, which might decrease accessibility of pathways. I don’t know.

- Regarding the information provided with the survey, it did not come across clearly that each form of housing wasn’t a possibility for any gap it would fit, on any street within a traditional residential area. To planners, maybe a phrase such as that pointed out to me, “form and massing?” captures that, but people I have spoken to and I thought that a monster house could go in next door to them which would be totally out of character with surrounding homes. In order to understand what is proposed, we need to understand the approval process and what type of developments would require public approval processes and rezoning.
- Because the proposed developments are small, they will not likely feature elevators. Yet generally they increase density vertically. Thus, the focus on having densification include people with mobility disabilities probably needs to focus on ground floors and garden suites.

I also wanted to thank Rebecca for an openness to doing something different to allow me to participate in the pop-up engagement. To date, I have been constrained by putting my input only in writing. That doesn’t allow back and forth, for me to understand if my concerns are founded and staff to clarify concerns. Communication is so much better in person, yet the City’s engagement processes so seldom allow me to participate. I did have to leave before exploring the back room and engaging on the Fairfield plan though, because the presence of others [Personal info](#)

Now some thoughts about the City’s planning processes and accessibility:

1. I am not aware that the AWG or other disability groups have ever been consulted on neighbourhood plans. Have staff undertaken accessibility research and analysis? I am aware that the AWG was included in an invitation to participate in a site-visit of Cook Street, but the design workshop took place in an inaccessible forum for people who use

wheelchairs. It could be onerous for AWG members to become familiar with lengthy neighbourhood plans but perhaps in a meeting, the group could tell staff about the features of importance in general.

2. All Accessibility Impact Statements in reports to Council read the same and may not be accurate, stating that the building code covers it. Their uniformity renders them meaningless. I have heard from people with various disabilities that it does not, and it certainly does not address mine. Surely, not all development proposals are equal in terms of accessibility. If staff became aware of common accessibility challenges, they could comment, for instance on whether there is a level entry available to people using wheelchairs, proximity to bus routes, existence of a second elevator, special air quality or non-toxic materials features or way finding aids. The AWG could help staff understand what to look for, and staff themselves might be able to develop a checklist of things to look for and report to Council. The presence of accessibility features might eventually be a consideration in granting variances.
3. To my knowledge, the City has no development rules or design guidelines or even policy statements about housing for people with disabilities, a group that commonly lives at low incomes or has few options due to the particulars of their disability. I mentioned the minimum suite size being incompatible with accessible bathrooms. I provided that input but Council was not briefed on this aspect when the decision was made.

Please feel free to follow up for clarification

Regards, **Personal info**

Rob Gordon

From: Personal info
Sent: August 20, 2018 2:07 PM
To: Marc Cittone
Subject: Fw: Gentle Density - Fairfield

Hi Marc and thanks again for meeting with me the other day.

I have filled out the Gentle Density Survey (I prefer the term “ Gradual” density)but I would like to comment further on a couple of things.

Firstly, as we discussed the other day I think it is important to have not only a diversity of housing types but also a diversity of unit types (ie one bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom) within the different housing types, particularly apartments (if ever approved) townhouses (if ever approved with suites for example) and houseplexes.

Perhaps there is a way to write some guidelines to encourage a minimum % of say 2 and/or 3 bedroom units within a complex.

There are lots of students now renting in our area(actually throughout the Fairfield and Gonzales areas) and also lots of seniors who may or may not want to stay in their homes for the long term but generally want to stay in their community. Hence I can see a “market” for smaller one bedroom units; however, there is also a need to provide accommodation for families ,so requiring a certain % of larger units would help in this regard.

Another form of housing that could work for singles (students and seniors wanting to age in place) as well as families would be the duplex with suites. Parking ofcourse becomes an issue , as it does for any of the multi unit forms of development.

However, small rental suites (which those in a duplex would likely be) are often perfect for students and single senior adults and often these folks don’t own cars, so it may be appropriate to “relax” parking standards for the suites and only require 2 spaces for the duplex units, which could very well be occupied by families (the suites being a perfect mortgage helper). Many of the sites in the Fairfield area do not have secondary access so requiring only 2 spaces would allow for parking to occur in the front , leaving the rear yard open space for “recreation” purposes and retaining “green” space for the neighbourhood.

As we discussed, on sites with no secondary access, provision of on site parking becomes problematic for a number of reasons, particularly with respect to impacts on neighbours (noise and light pollution) and often results in loss of rear yard open/green space, loss of trees (including street trees) and disruption to the pedestrian sidewalks because of the curb cuts required for crossings.

I have always been supportive of a form of development that retains an existing structure ,thereby “ re-purposing” an older home and avoiding copious amounts of debris being added to an already over burdened landfill. Often this form of development will result in the retention of mature trees and landscaping simply because of the siting of the existing building and the growth that has occurred over time.

Perhaps there is a way to write in incentives for retention of existing buildings vs. “new builds”. Perhaps there is also a way to “relax” parking standards for a retention given that many of the existing buildings are “non conforming” with respect to current parking standards. In those cases, existing units being retained could be grandfathered and parking would only need to be provided for any NEW units created.

In the case of an existing house with an existing suite, it is conceivable that they could apply for a development permit to retain and add to the house , ending up with say 3 or 4 units and being required to only supply parking for the newly created units (in this case 1 or 2 spaces) Again, the 1 or 2 spaces could likely be provided in the front , preserving and enhancing rear yard green space

I am also very supportive of “conversions” of existing buildings, particularly where there is heritage merit. I am also supportive of allowing sensitive additions to an existing building in order to retain and convert to suites. Again I believe a diversity of unit type is important in this type of multi unit development.

However, I would have concerns regarding the amount of RETENTION vs. ADDITION that occurs noting that it can be a slippery slope when one is attempting to retain and add to an existing building. Depending on the extent of additions/structural alterations proposed, National Building Code requirements could necessitate full “replacement” of much of the structure . This ends up being a NEW building and the spirit and intent of retaining and converting an existing building is lost.

Houseplexes as “new builds” are a form of development that I’m not familiar with ; however, I would be supportive of this form of development along Fairfield Road and in the Cook Street Village area, particularly on larger lots. It would be very important to ensure that the scale, form and character of such a development reflected the scale, form and Character (design features) of surrounding neighbours .

I have walked around the entire Fairfield neighbourhood and it is clear to me that the areas around Cook Street Village (actually west of Moss) are more suited to multi-unit development given the existence of many large older homes (suitable for conversion) and numerous apartment buildings. Newly constructed houseplexes that were designed to reflect the character of the neighbourhood would not appear “ out of place” in and around that particular area. The area east of Moss is quite different in terms of form and character and consists of small scale single family dwellings and duplexes . Large older buildings suitable for conversion do exist; however, they are few and far between. Therefore, in my view gradual density in these parts should take the form of single family and duplex dwellings with or without suites. There may be the odd opportunity for additions to existing buildings to facilitate a “conversion” to suites; however as noted above it would be very important to ensure the scale, form and character of

such a development reflected scale, form and character of the surrounding residential neighbourhood. I would NOT support newly built houseplexes , other than along Fairfield Road. Indeed, even around Cook Street Village area the parking for these new multi-unit houseplexes will likely remain an issue.

I would support new Houseplexes in the area West of Moss Street and along Fairfield Road subject to the following site criteria

- 1) on large lots 60 ft wide (min) and min. 7000 +sq ft with secondary access (corner lots or with lanes)
- 2) on large lots 60 ft wide (min) and min 7000+ sq ft which do not have secondary access, but form part of a front yard /rear yard subdivision pattern on the block AND where careful consideration is given to on site parking to ensure neighbourliness. On site parking , manoeuvring aisles, driveways and street access must be configured in such a way so as to minimize impact (noise, light pollution, privacy) on adjacent residents and also to avoid removal of mature trees and landscaping. Further, the development would need to provide SUBSTANTIAL visual/noise buffering along the side property lines to minimize impacts. As noted above, a certain % of the units provided should be suitable for families so it is important not to sacrifice useable outdoor space in the rear yard for parking.

There is a 3rd type of lot which exists and that is one that is a large lot (60 ft wide) and 7000 +sq ft with no secondary access AND where the side property line of such lot abuts the rear property lines of adjacent sites. There are not many that fit this description but there are a few and these I believe are NOT suitable for multi unit accommodation because of the negative impacts on rear yard open space, privacy , noise and light pollution and general disruption to the ambience of the houses immediately adjacent. I believe such lots in the traditional residential areas should be limited to single family dwellings with suites or duplexes with suites and I also believe that consideration should be given to parking variances on these atypical lots so that parking is kept out of the rear yard altogether.

I acknowledge that in most cases any redevelopment would require submission of a rezoning application, at which time neighbours would have an opportunity to comment; however, I believe it is extremely important to have clear and concise guidelines in place setting appropriate parameters to begin with. That way, applicants are clear on what is expected in order to meet the spirit and intent of the neighbourhood plan under which they are making application AND residents in the area, immediate neighbours and the community as a whole, can reasonably expect that the neighbourhood plan they have helped create would be adhered to.

I strongly disagree with having vague and ambiguous guidelines and policies which could be open to various interpretations. Instead, the spirit and intent of what is finally agreed upon as the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (including local area plans within) should be reflected in clear and concise language within the OCP, the relevant bylaws, and the area specific policies and guidelines.

I thank you again for taking the time to meet with me and I also appreciate your patience in reading through this lengthy email.

I am passionate about my community and while I acknowledge that change is inevitable over time, I also believe change can be facilitated in a sensitive and gradual way with careful planning. As I mentioned to you, I do have some experience in my previous life Personal info

in place to guide development. Without stepping on any toes, I want you to know that I would be happy to help in any way I can.

Best regards,
Personal info

ps. It is important to note that the views expressed here are mine alone and are not representative of any of my neighbours nor any of the community groups in Fairfield.

Rob Gordon

From: Marc Cittone
Sent: August 30, 2018 8:59 AM
To: Personal info
Subject: RE: OCP Cook street village - west of cook

Personal
Hi info

Thanks for your input. I appreciate the time you've taken to bring your and many of your neighbour's viewpoint to us. We will be considering your feedback as we formulate a report to Council on September 20th on both gentle density proposals and Cook Street policy and design recommendations, and will include your email in the engagement summary.

The retention of the existing OCP designations west of Cook Street Village does not come from a recommendation of a steering committee, but rather was directed by Council on March 15, 2018 as follows:

"That Council direct staff to amend the plan as follows:

3. Urban Place Designation West of Cook Street Village (Cook Street to Heywood Street)
 - a. Support "gentle density" approach:
 - i. Re-instate OCP designations for traditional residential areas but expand option for larger houseplexes (4+ units), emphasize adaptation of heritage properties, ground-oriented housing up to 3 storeys, and creative housing on laneways in this area.
 - ii. Retain option for single townhouses in area
 - iii. Add new policy to consider other new and innovative housing types that meet plan objectives
 - iv. Consider reduced parking requirements for houseplexes with more than 3 units in this area."

You may be interested to note that 1016 Southgate Street has been shown in our survey as an example of gentle density (a "larger houseplex" up to 1.0 floor space ratio and 3 storeys).

We'd be happy to meet with you if you want to further discuss concerns, and I am also happy to share your email directly with the steering committee if you would like. The staff recommendation to Council ultimately comes from staff, not one committee, and takes into account all the feedback we have heard to date; and of course the decision will be with Council.

Next steps in this process are anticipated to include a report to Council on September 20th outlined the key recommendations, followed by a revised plan being brought forward in that fall.

- Marc

From: Personal info
Sent: August 24, 2018 12:10 AM
To: Marc Cittone <mcittone@victoria.ca>
Cc: Lisa Helps (Mayor) <LHelps@victoria.ca>
Subject: OCP Cook street village - west of cook

Hello mark,

With Kristina no longer working for the city of Victoria, please see below and please call to discuss at your earliest convenience.

Thanks,

Hello,

I and numerous Fairfield residents do not agree with the latest OCP that shows gentle density and the "Traditional Residential" designation for about 25 homes west of Cook Street, east of Vancouver Street and between Park Blvd and Meares Street.

These 25 homes are surrounded by rental and strata condo units. Similar land uses over the next 25 years should be permitted and not gentle density.

Moreover, most of the 25 homes were in various stages of disrepair over the past few decades and would have been demolished and converted to condos but the restrictive zoning and OCP prevented this. Some homes were modestly upgraded whilst others were converted to 3 or 4 units. Given future growth projections, the proposed low or gentle density is no longer suitable to accommodate the future growth of Victoria and negatively affects affordability.

Converting character homes to 3 or 4 is very rare these days and doesn't meet future housing needs and underutilizes larger lots [Personal info](#) are good examples of what should be allowed for the 25 homes.

Closing off Oliphant Avenue is also a bad idea and doesn't appear to make good sense from an objective transportation perspective especially given the likely dedication of Vancouver Street for bike lanes and closures along Humboldt.

Affordability is clearly a huge issue in Victoria and restricting density in apartment areas will worsen matters. There is a lack of affordable supply (ie condos and townhomes).

One major reason for the affordability crisis among many cities including Victoria is due to a few organized single family owners expressing their views to a given municipality which is not the best nor majority view ... it's a view projected at the expense of those that want to live in the area but can't afford to and aren't vocal nor familiar with the complex Zoning and OCP process and municipal land use processes. The "unheard" are also not well organized.

Over the past year or so, I and other home owners have sent a variety of correspondence to the city of Victoria and met with OCP staff months ago (including yourself) with several other owners and provided a petition (see letter below sent) supporting more density.

I was aghast to hear that a proposal to close Oliphant was on the new proposed plan and residents of Oliphant were not consulted about the idea...until tabled at the open house in Cook Street Village about 1 week ago.

Expanding the traditional residential OCP designation on and around Oliphant Avenue and closing Oliphant are not views widely held by the majority of owners around Cook Street Village and those further out not what objective informed citizens would want.

I had asked the engagement team and city of Victoria staff working on the OCP on a number of occasions what I can do to ensure that the views that owners like myself are heard for a balanced approach.

A gentle approach is clearly advocated by single family owners and not the majority view that those who want to live in the area but can't afford and aren't organized to influence the OCP.

I was not made aware of steering committees formed to make the latest OCP changes ..notably a traditional housing designation for about 25 homes including mine along Oliphant and Vancouver street.

As I understand, the committee is composed of mainly Fairfield residents over 60 years old which is not an objective composition for advocating a 25 year vision!

I'd be pleased to meet and ensure that the road closure and gentle density not be adopted along the 25 remaining homes along Oliphant and Vancouver street which are surrounded by apartments....which hurts affordability, the Economy and facilitates the "NIMBY" view.

Please advise of how I can get more involved.

Thank you!

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