
District of Lantzville

REPORT TO CAO

**Regular Council Meeting Agenda Item
November 10, 2014**

File: 6930-20-VCCIP
G: Reports/14/ VCCIP

AUTHOR: Robyn Holme, Community Planner

SUBJECT: **DRAFT Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan**

Recommendation

- 1. THAT** Council receives the draft "Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan" as information and attached to the November 10, 2014 staff report as Schedule 'A'.

Purpose

To provide Council with the draft Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan.

Background

Lantzville's Official Community Plan calls for a Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan to address beautification, improve on-street parking and pedestrian flow and create a framework for increasing public amenities such as courtyards and other gathering places. In June of 2013, Council directed staff to begin the process of developing a Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan.

At its regular meeting on July 22, 2013, Council endorsed a Terms of Reference for a Standing Committee for the Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan. In September of 2013, a Select Committee of community members was formed to ensure the plan was rooted in stakeholder and community perspectives. The Committee met through the fall, and hosted a participatory meeting in January, where residents completed a visual preference survey and shared ideas about desired improvements. A design workshop was held in late February. Since then, staff and the Committee have been working on preparing a draft plan.

The draft plan establishes a long term design vision for form and character within the village core, as well as long term streetscape design principles. The long term vision will be achieved over time as redevelopment, infill and new development takes place. The plan also recommends a range of small and larger improvement projects that could be led by the District in the interim, in collaboration with community groups, residents and other stakeholders.

Discussion

The Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan (VCCIP) is intended to assist Council and staff in guiding the development in the commercial stretch of Lantzville Road over time. The commercial stretch of Lantzville Road – from Ware Road to Huddleston Park – represents Lantzville's 'main street'. This improvement plan is intended to build upon the existing assets and create a vision and roadmap for enhancing the main street now and into the future.

Elements of the plan include a design concept providing long range land use, preferred form and character, streetscape and circulation improvement concepts, storm water management approaches and public realm concepts. The design concepts will then be translated into policy recommendations and short and long term improvement project priorities.

The next step will be to create a detailed streetscape concept to ensure that incremental improvements result in a unified improved streetscape.

The plan will be implemented by incorporating it as part of the Official Community Plan and implementing the recommendations into other bylaws and policies. These policy levers will shape new development. The plan also includes suggested improvement projects. These are intended to be the pieces that can be municipally-led or implemented in collaboration with partners and community groups.

Through creating the policy framework within which development will occur and leading with improvement projects in the meantime, the concepts and recommendations in the plan will continue to shape and change within the village commercial core.

Vision

The VCCIP Select Committee of community members, appointed by Council to guide the plan development created a 'working vision' statement, inspired by the Official Community Plan and along with other considerations:

The current village centre, generally recognized as along Lantzville Road from St. Philips Church to Huddleston Park, is the heart of the community. The village centre has a unique character, a range of businesses, residences, active volunteer groups, and community assets. We envision further enhancing the village centre with:

- More housing options – for seniors, young families, and others
- An improved street with enhanced accessibility, safety, and room for all modes of transportation
- Examples of green and low impact development standards in the streetscape infrastructure and urban form
- An enhanced range of businesses, public gathering places, and space and events for showcasing assets

Guiding Principles

Several principles emerged through the planning process and inform the vision as follows:

- **Place Making & Planning for People**
Enhancing and creating new gathering places could nurture the creation of a village centre that builds community cohesion and fosters interaction. Inspired by Lantzville's volunteerism and community pride, place making is participatory and puts people and community at the centre of planning and development. Further to putting people at the centre, this plan attempts to respond to current community needs. Through public consultation we heard, for example, that youth need spaces to gather, seniors and young families need more diverse housing options, and businesses have parking concerns. As the community changes, so will community needs.
- **Complete Streets**
The street represents the bulk of the public space in the village centre. Recognizing the street as more than the leftover space between buildings is critical to creating a vibrant and successful main street. Streets should be designed for a variety of users – vehicle

traffic, as well, as cyclists and pedestrians. Carving out safe and dedicated space for pedestrians and other modes of transportation furthers multiple objectives: enabling healthy lifestyles, creating an attractive walking village where residents and visitors want to linger and thereby supporting commercial activity in the core. Of particular importance is creating safe routes for children walking or cycling to the elementary school directly behind the commercial core.

- Sustainable Design

The Official Community Plan establishes climate change as a factor in land use decision-making and includes a goal of adapting to climate change impacts as well as targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 85% below by 2050). A sustainable approach should be integrated into infrastructure improvements, urban and building form and streetscape design. Sustainable approaches to infrastructure – such as storm water management systems can be ecologically friendly and support water infiltration. Similarly, site development and building design can be further sustainable through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and water and energy conservation. Furthermore, focusing growth in the village centre is intended to create a compact walkable community, locating jobs and housing in close proximity and enabling people to shift to active transportation, helping to further both health and sustainability objectives.

Plan Development Process & Public Engagement

Council initiated the planning process in June 2013. Staff compiled background research throughout the process and surveyed business owners on opportunities and constraints in the village core and desired improvements.

A Select Committee of seven community members and two Council members was appointed by Council in September. The group was the steering committee for the plan development – providing crucial input throughout the planning process. Fifteen meetings were held including two walkabouts, exploring opportunities for improvements to the commercial core along Lantzville Road and discussing some of the key issues – from parking to the sequencing of improvements.

The Committee visited Qualicum Beach for a question and answer period with the town planner and participated in a walkabout of the community. The Committee also learned from the planning improvements to Cedar's main street. A Committee member led a visit to an elementary school class at Seaview Elementary, gathering perspectives from youth.

The Committee created a 'working vision', brought it to the broader community for feedback and forwarded to Council for acceptance.

The Committee also hosted a participatory meeting in January with group discussions and a visual preference survey. This provided critical information and perspectives in the lead up to the Design Workshop.

The Design Workshop, held on February 22, 2014, was the main working session for plan development and focused mostly on circulation. Committee members participated, while members of the public were invited as observers. External design consultants, City Spaces, facilitated the process by building upon the ideas the Committee had compiled and translated these ideas into concept plans. While the focus of the day was on circulation, other improvement projects were also discussed.

In June 2014, a pop-up plaza and walkabout event was held to gather further public input. Residents provided valuable input on the emerging directions presented. Feedback from this event has been incorporated into the draft plan.

At this time, the Committee has endorsed the draft plan to be forwarded to Council for its consideration. The Committee worked towards decisions regarding the long term design concept for the streetscape – the most challenging pieces being parking and building setbacks. The Committee discussed form and character in detail, and the emerging direction is to allow a range of architectural expressions providing they fit the context. The Committee also supports the incorporation of subtle design elements that build the connection between the seashore and the village core. These design elements can also be present in public realm fixtures such as benches, bike racks and landscaping.

Timeline

In the initial report to the Committee of the Whole on June 3 of 2013, the timeline for the plan was anticipated to stretch from the summer of 2013 to the summer of 2014, with implementation continuing on from that point.



The policy and plan development stage is now nearing close and being presented before Council for its input.

Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan policies 6.2.8 and 6.2.9 direct the District of Lantzville to work with property owners to develop the Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan to address on-street and off-street parking, design guidelines, beautification, utilities, streetscape, and public amenities. The VCCIP is consistent with the OCP.

Regional Growth Strategy

The draft Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan is consistent with the OCP Regional Context Statement and supports the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy (adopted 2011), including the following:

RGS Goal No. 1 – Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption

The VCCIP supports a sustainable approach to infrastructure improvements by encouraging ecological storm water management and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Further, focusing growth in the village centre is intended to create a compact walkable community, locating jobs and housing in close proximity.

RGS Goal No. 2 – Protect the Environment

Similarly, the VCCIP encourages using green infrastructure and ecological storm water management in order to protect the natural environment.

RGS Goal No. 3 – Coordinate Land Use and Mobility

The VCCIP supports a village centre served by a variety of transportation modes including the automobile, public transit walking and cycling.

RGS Goal No. 4 – Concentrate Housing and Jobs in Rural Village and Urban Growth Centres

The VCCIP encourages directing future commercial development to the village core area to promote a variety of mixed land uses.

RGS Goal No. 7 – Enhance Economic Resilience

The VCCIP supports the development of the village core area for retail and service needs for the local community.

RGS Goal No. 9 – Celebrate Pride of Place

The VCCIP encourages the preservation of community character and recognition of local history. The plan encourages celebrating pride of place through the use of architecture, design, and construction materials.

Strategic Plan

The District of Lantzville Strategic Plan 2012-2014 identifies the Village Core Improvement Plan as a priority. Through the development of this plan Council has accomplished this strategic direction by:

- Establishing the VCCIP Committee;
- Holding a number of public engagement events on various aspects of the plan; and
- Completing a draft of the plan for Council's consideration

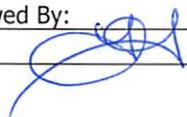
Summary

This report provides Council with the draft Village Commercial Core Improvement Plan for its consideration. Council is being asked to receive the draft plan and provide any written feedback to the community planner no later than Tuesday, November 18, 2014. Any comments received by Council will be compiled and presented in a report to Council for its consideration at its regular meeting scheduled for Monday, November 24, 2014.

Respectfully submitted


Robyn Holme
Community Planner
District of Lantzville

Reviewed By:

CAO 	Dir. Finance	Dir. of PW
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