



TOWN OF SIDNEY

Report to Council

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Corey Newcomb, Senior Manager of Long Range Planning
DATE: June 16, 2020 Folder No. 6480-20
SUBJECT: Official Community Plan Review – Draft Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan

PURPOSE:

To provide Council with an overview of the Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan for the Official Community Plan (OCP) Review Project, some related budget considerations for optional project tasks, and to seek Council feedback prior to finalizing these documents.

BACKGROUND:

Following the award of the OCP Review Project to the primary project consultant, Modus Planning Design and Engagement Ltd. (“the consultant”) on March 23, 2020, staff began working with the consultant on the first primary task of the project, developing and refining a detailed Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan which will guide the project’s progress over the next 18 months.

This work was delayed slightly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only delayed initial project meetings, but also necessitated a rethink of how and when community engagement would be carried out. Initially, staff had anticipated primary community engagement events to take place over the summer of 2020, utilizing popular community events such as the Thursday Night Market to better reach residents and businesses. However, with these events now being cancelled for this year and large-scale gatherings not being possible for the next few months at least, primary community engagement activities have been delayed until the fall.

At the March 23, 2020 Council meeting, staff also recommended that the project budget be increased by \$50,000 to a total project budget of \$200,000 over two years. (The current budget is \$100,000 in 2020 and \$50,000 in 2021.) This extra budget amount would accommodate a number of additional community engagement activities that staff believe would benefit the overall project. These extra items total approximately \$30,000, with the remaining amount intended to cover miscellaneous expenses such as advertising, room bookings, etc.

At the meeting, Council indicated that their preference would be to receive additional information regarding these extra items prior to making a decision on the project budget. Final drafts of these documents (*attached as Appendix A*) have now been completed for Council’s review and consideration, including the additional information on the optional extras. A cost summary of the project and optional extra items is also attached as Appendix B.

DISCUSSION:

The Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan establish a comprehensive process to be followed over the next 18 months for the OCP Review Project. Information and feedback gathered during each successive task will build on the previous tasks and ultimately provide the basis for a draft OCP document that can be reviewed, vetted and refined by the community prior to proceeding to the bylaw adoption stage.

As part of their original proposal, MODUS provided some optional tasks which have been included (but marked “optional”) in the draft Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan. Staff have reviewed these tasks and shortlisted the “recommended” additional tasks for the project. The cost of the recommended extra tasks would increase the project budget by approximately 20%; however, staff believe these tasks would benefit the project by increasing the level of community engagement and public buy-in to the project. As OCP reviews are generally undertaken once per 10 years or so, staff suggest this extra expenditure is a relatively limited cost for significant benefits over the life span of the OCP resulting from the additional community engagement. Furthermore, as Council has indicated, on more than one occasion, this OCP Review Process is the most significant and critical planning process that will be undertaken to date for the Town of Sidney.

The shortlisted optional extra tasks staff are recommending be included in the project are as follows:

- Three suites of infographics
- Two extra days for the Land Use and Design Charrette
- Four stakeholder workshops or community walking workshops
- OCPizza Night Workbook program
- OCP Summary Broadsheet

Staff believe these items represent the greatest “bang for the buck” both in terms of gaining valuable community feedback for the project, as well as providing the community with an accessible way to absorb information, data summaries and results during and following completion of the project. While it represents the highest cost item, staff believe that an extended Land Use and Design Charrette is a valuable addition to the project; staff have heard consistent concerns regarding the scale and design of new development in the community over the past several years, and this would be a useful exercise to reconfirm the community’s wishes in this regard.

The total cost of these extras is **\$30,785**.

The following extra optional tasks are not recommended for inclusion in the project budget:

- “Project Ambassador” recruitment, training and pop-ups.
- Video production
- Geospatial Development Capacity Analysis

Staff propose to undertake the Project Ambassador work in-house; this would include staff visiting events or popular locations throughout the duration of the project to hand out information, garner feedback and build awareness of the project as it progresses. In terms of the other optional tasks, while they are “nice-to-haves”, staff see less value to the project from these items.

Once Council has discussed and decided on the optional additional tasks, staff further recommend that the updated Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan be forwarded to the OCP Review Advisory Committee for further review and comment. Following this, staff’s preference would be to immediately incorporate any feasible changes (i.e. within budget and project scope) and finalize the

two documents without bringing them back to Council for further consideration. This would allow staff and the consultant to move the project ahead immediately following this review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

As noted above, the budget for this project is currently \$150,000 (budgeted amounts include \$100,000 in 2020 and \$50,000 in 2021.) In order to accommodate the addition of the extra tasks noted above, as well as additional miscellaneous expenses (i.e. primarily newspaper advertising, but also room rentals, materials, etc.) staff recommend that the budget be increased to \$100,000 for 2021, for a total project budget of \$200,000.

In order to minimize the property tax impacts of the proposed additional cost, staff recommend that the extra \$50,000 for 2021 be funded from excess 2020 Building Permit revenues.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the OCP Review Project Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan be received for information.**
- 2. That the 2021 fiscal year budget for the OCP Review and Update Project be increased to \$100,000.**
- 3. That the OCP Review Project Work Plan and Community Engagement Plan be referred to the OCP Review Advisory Committee for additional review and comment prior to being finalized.**

Respectfully submitted,

I concur,

I concur,

Corey Newcomb, MCIP RPP
Senior Manager, Long Range
Planning

Andrew Hicik,
Director of Corporate Services

Randy Humble,
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Draft Work Plan & Community Engagement Plan

Appendix B: Summary of Project Costs