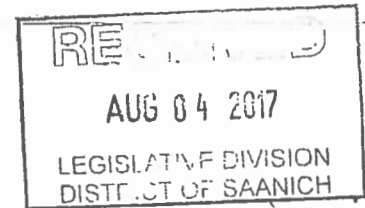




The Corporation of the District of Saanich

## Supplemental Report

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning  
**Date:** August 1, 2017  
**Subject:** Local Area Plan Updates - Expedited Work Plan  
File 2310-20



### RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Expedited Option 1 Work Plan.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Present to Council options for an expedited Work Plan for updating Local Area Plans and completing Centres, Villages, and Corridor studies, while maintaining capacity for policy initiatives; and
2. Seek Council's direction on a preferred Work Plan.

### DISCUSSION

#### Background

Council's 2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan provides specific direction to, "Commence a multi-year project to update the 12 Local Area Plans". In responding to this direction, a key point of consideration is how the Local Area Plan updates can be undertaken while still continuing work on other important community planning initiatives, such as the Garden Suite program, an infill housing policy, support for affordable housing, public art projects, heritage policy renewal, etc.

Prior to commencing work on the Local Area Plan updates, it was essential that the entire work program of the Community Planning section be looked at, to determine value, as well as where and when to focus defined resources. By resources we not only mean those of the Municipality, but also the ability of the residents and other stakeholders to be able to participate in numerous ongoing corporate initiatives without getting overburdened or burnt out.

As part of this background work, staff undertook a consultation process with representatives from each of the Neighbourhood Associations, seeking their input on work plan options. Feedback from Neighbourhoods Associations indicated a desire to balance resources between

streams of work (Local Area Plan updates, Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans, and policy initiatives).

### **Initial Report to Council**

In September 2015, Council considered work plan options to update Local Area Plans, develop Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans, and undertake policy initiatives. The report recommended a balanced approach to undertaking the three streams of work. With the complement of staff available at that time, the timeframe for the recommended work plan was 14 years.

In response to the staff report, Council passed a motion on September 14, 2015 "that staff be requested to provide an additional option based on additional resources and an expedited timeline."

Subsequent to Council's direction, two additional community planning staff positions have been approved by Council through the Strategic Planning and Budgeting process to assist in expediting the community planning work plan. These positions were a Community Planner and Community Planning Technician. Once hired, this would provide an additional project manager and sufficient technical resources to support the delivery of multiple planning processes concurrently.

### **Council Motion - Cordova Bay Village**

On May 1, 2017 in response to a presentation from the Cordova Bay Village Vision Group, Council directed, "That staff be requested to bring forward a report, at their earliest opportunity that would provide options for expediting the Cordova Bay community in the Local Area Plan, Villages, Centres and Corridors update."

### **Expedited Local Area Planning Options**

Based on Council direction to develop an expedited option and the assignment of additional resources, staff have developed two options which would significantly accelerate Community Planning work. These expedited options build upon the previous recommendation, seeking to balance quicker completion of work with sufficient process time to allow for adequate community engagement and technical research/analysis.

Both expedited options accelerate the delivery of planning work, but fundamentally differ in terms of the approach to Local Area Planning, in general:

- Expedited Option 1 - Prioritizes the update of Local Area Plans, incorporating a focus on Centre, Village, and Corridor areas; and
- Expedited Option 2 - Prioritizes the development of stand-alone Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans where the vast majority of future growth in Saanich is to occur, with the update of Local Area Plans to follow the completion of Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans.

### **Expedited Option 1 – Local Area Plan Updates with a focus on Centres, Villages, and Corridors**

Expedited Option 1 integrates Centre, Village, and Corridor studies as a component of Local Area Plan updates in order to maximize the efficiency of community and staff efforts and reduce potential redundancy of planning processes. With the recent allocation of additional resources, all 12 Local Area Plans could be updated within seven years. This timeline is based on a typical planning process of 18-24 months, which is reflective of the recommendation and analysis provided in the September 2015 staff report.

With the exception of Quadra Corridor, the remaining Centres, Villages, and Corridors are fully located within the boundaries of a single Local Area. In Option 1, the Local Area Plan process would, where applicable, include more comprehensive analysis of land use, mobility, and urban design issues in the Centre, Village, and Corridor areas. To ensure a comprehensive study of the Quadra Corridor, two planners would be assigned to concurrently undertake the Quadra Local Area Plan and North Quadra Local Area Plan updates.

In Expedited Option 1, four planners would be assigned to area plans and one planner would be assigned to policy initiatives.

The timeline for Local Area Plan updates in Expedited Option 1 is proposed as per the schedule in Figure 1. Projects would be phased so that no more than two community planning projects would be in an intensive public engagement period at any one point in time. Based on the schedule, 11 of the 12 Local Area Plan updates would be completed or initiated within the first five years.

The Local Area priorities associated with Expedited Option 1 are identified below and are based on:

- Prioritizing Local Areas containing a Centre, Village, or Corridor;
- Pairing complementary Local Area planning processes; and
- Prioritization analysis completed as part of the September 2015 staff report.

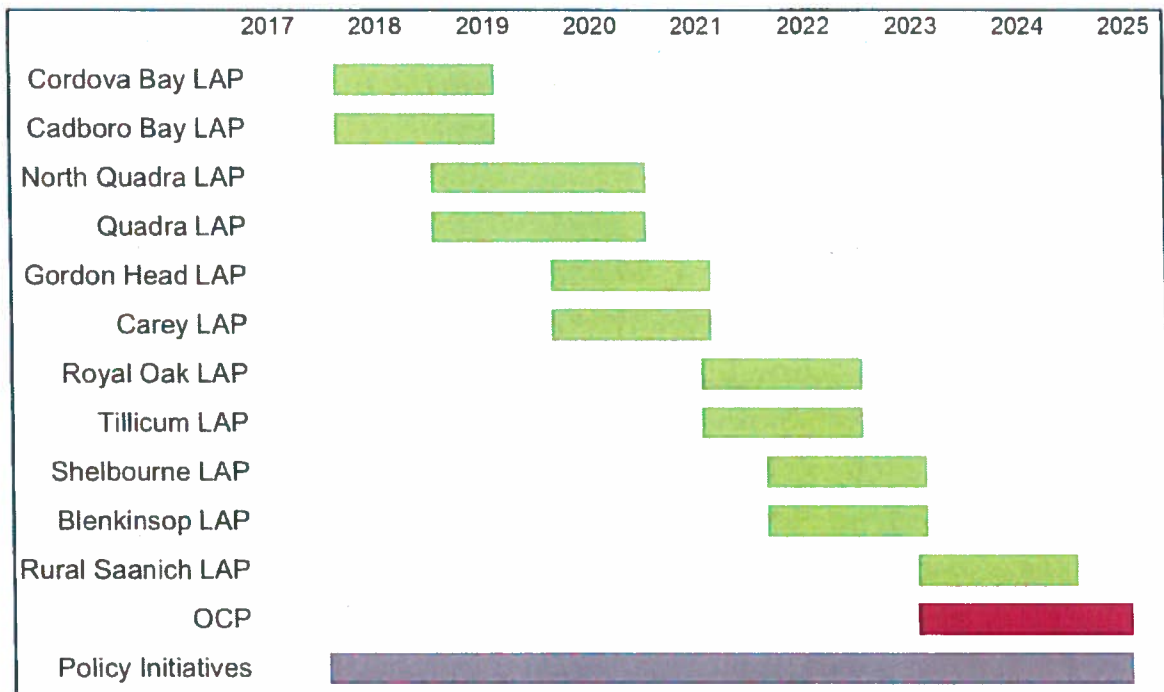


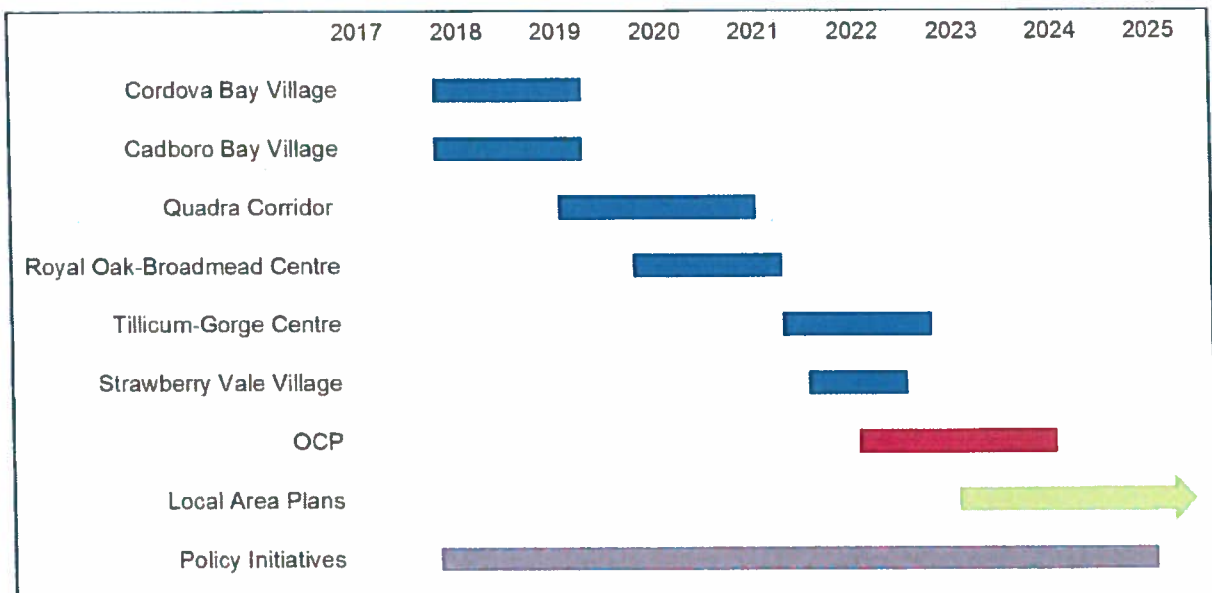
Figure 1: Expedited Option 1 Timeline

Expedited Option 2 - Prioritize Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans with Local Area Plans to follow

Expedited Option 2 prioritizes strategic initiatives in high change areas. Plans would be created for Centre, Village, and Corridor areas, focusing resources on areas of Saanich experiencing the greatest amount of growth and change. These plans would look at a relatively small geographic area of the municipality, but produce more detailed analysis and policy guidance. Additionally, Expedited Option 2 would provide an additional resource for policy initiatives to address issues that are common across neighbourhoods. This could include initiatives such as an infill study or the development of design guidelines.

In Expedited Option 2, three planners would be assigned to area plans and two planners would be assigned to policy initiatives.

In Expedited Option 2, Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans would be completed within five years, with a timeline as shown in Figure 2. Local Area Plan updates and the Official Community Plan update would be completed subsequent to the completion of the Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans. Centre, Village, and Corridor areas are prioritized based on the same considerations identified for Option 1.



**Figure 2: Expedited Option 2 Timeline**

In Expedited Option 2, it proposes at the outset, that one Planner would be assigned to undertake administrative updates to the existing Local Area Plans. This would involve new maps, updated statistics, and demographic data, but no change to content and hence no public engagement. Given that a comprehensive update of Local Area Plans would be deferred in Expedited Option 2, this would ensure existing documents contained current contextual information and reflected current Saanich visual identity standards.

**Further Acceleration of Either Option**

Either Expedited Option 1 or 2 could be further accelerated, however, there would be significant staff implications, particularly in relation to the availability of support staff in Planning and staff in other Departments such as: Engineering; Parks and Recreation; and Finance. The availability

of physical space to accommodate additional staff would also be an issue. Under the Expedited Option 1 and Expedited Option 2 scenarios, these supporting resources are already at capacity. Based on the above-noted constraints, to accelerate either the Option 1 or 2 timeline for area plans by two years, the additional resources noted below would be required:

- Community Planner;
- Planning/Graphics Technician;
- Admin/Engagement Coordinator;
- Transportation Planner; and
- Parks Planner.

The additional resources identified above would primarily be engaged in delivering Local Area Plan updates, however, there may be limited residual time to contribute to other work items. While it is possible to offset some of the additional staff resources with consultant resources, significant staff resources would still be required to coordinate the project, contribute to policy development, manage the internal review, and coordinate adoption and implementation activities.

In applying this super accelerated scenario to Expedited Option 1, all Local Area Plan updates could be completed within five and a half years if the additional staff resources identified above were made available. Approximately 4 - 6 months would be required to hire the five new positions and have the staff in place and up to speed. These five positions would be hired on a five year term contract to support the Local Area Planning work program. Once the work was complete, these five staff contracts would come to an end.

As a high level estimate, the cost of the five additional staff resources would be approximately \$500,000 a year (wages, furniture, computers, etc.). Additional physical space would also need to be secured at an unknown cost for this super accelerated option to be viable. In addition, while the overall Local Area Planning budget would remain the same, the annual budget allocation towards Local Area Planning would increase, as there would be more planning projects being undertaken simultaneously.

In terms of community engagement, further acceleration of the Local Area Planning work would also mean up to six high profile planning projects would be in progress at any one point in time. In combination with initiatives being undertaken by other Departments, this would create an unprecedented number of projects requiring public input being undertaken at the same time. It should be noted that even under Expedited Options 1 and 2, the number of high profile community projects underway simultaneously would be quite high.

Staff do not recommend the super accelerated option as it has a number of implications that would limit its overall value. From a cost-benefit perspective, drawbacks of this option include:

- The requirement of an additional estimated \$500,000 annually to hire and provide office space for new staff;
- The need to secure new physical office space outside the Municipal Hall to accommodate additional staff members;
- Time required to complete the hiring process and bring new staff members up to speed would limit some of the potential time savings; and
- The number of concurrent projects underway would mean less senior management oversight of planning processes and products.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council endorse the Expedited Option 1 Work Plan (Recommended).

This option prioritizes the update of Local Area Plans, with a focus on Centres, Corridors, and Villages. As highlighted in the staff report, this option would complete all Local Area Plan updates within approximately seven years, while retaining a focus on Centre, Village, and Corridor areas. All areas of Saanich would receive planning attention in a relatively short time frame and additional resources would permit complementary areas to be planned concurrently.

2. That Council endorse the Expedited Option 2 Work Plan.

This option prioritizes the completion of Centre, Corridor, and Village Plans, based on a rationale that these areas are the focus of the vast majority of future growth in Saanich. Through Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans and more resources for policy initiatives a priority is placed on addressing the most pressing issues in the most expeditious manner possible. A consequence of this alternative is that the update of Local Area Plans would be deferred until after Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans are complete, approximately five years. While policy initiatives have the capacity to address issues across neighbourhoods, some portions of Saanich would not receive planning attention in the near term.

3. That Council provide alternate direction to staff for undertaking work on the Local Area Plans and other Community Planning work.

Alternative direction could be provided to staff to undertake community planning work in a different manner. This could include reallocating resources to place more emphasis on policy initiatives or area plans or providing additional resources to further expedite plan delivery in either option. As noted, broader organizational capacity issues would necessitate significant new staff resources if Council wished to further accelerate timelines.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The completion of Local Area Plans will require significant dedicated staff time and financial resources to ensure appropriate public engagement and technical analysis is completed to inform plan and policy development.

For each Local Area Plan update, it is anticipated that approximately \$100,000 will be required as a project budget. In areas that deal with more complex subject matter (i.e. transportation planning at the corridor level), the cost will be higher to account for additional technical analysis. For Centre, Village and Corridor studies proposed as part of Expedited Option 2, the cost figures would be similar, as there would still be a requirement for robust community engagement and detailed technical analysis. For both types of plans, the costs are anticipated to break down as follows:

- 60% for technical studies;
- 30% for public engagement; and
- 10% for miscellaneous costs.

In order to support the timelines associated with both options, it is estimated that \$200,000 - \$250,000 will be need to be allocated annually. The 2017 budget includes \$200,000 to fund the development of the first two plans.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The Strategic Plan includes the direction to “commence a multi-year program to update the 12 Local Area Plans”, with a target of 2024 for completion.

Both expedited options direct significant resources to area planning. In the case of Expedited Option 1, all Local Area Plan updates are anticipated to be completed by 2024, meeting the Strategic Plan direction. Expedited Option 2 takes a different approach to area planning and completes Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans within five years. However, as a consequence, Local Area Plan updates have a longer time horizon, well past the 2024 date identified in the Strategic Plan.

Given that in either expedited option, area planning will be a primary focus, there will be implications for other community planning work. Currently the Community Planning Division manages files related to heritage, public art, and agriculture. While the day-to-day administration of these portfolios will continue, larger-scale initiatives related to heritage, public art, or agriculture will need to be identified, prioritized, and resourced through the Strategic Planning process.

## **INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Local Area planning work requires both significant inter/intra departmental collaboration and support to ensure policies are implementable and sufficient information is considered in their development. In particular, collaboration with Transportation Engineering, Parks staff, and other Divisional staff within Planning is critical to plan development.

Meetings have been held with these divisions and departments and indications are that staff can be made available to support the delivery of the work plan. It should be noted that the budget for technical studies may be required to supplement Engineering or Parks resources depending on the extent of issues being explored in each study. Should Council wish to explore further acceleration of timelines, additional resources for these departments would need to be considered.

## **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

As noted previously, the primary distinction between the two Expedited Options is the approach to Local Area Planning. In Expedited Option 1 the priority is Local Area Plans with a focus on Centres, Villages, and Corridors, while in Expedited Option 2 the priority is Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans.

### **Expedited Option 1 or 2**

Each of the options provides distinct benefits and trade-offs. Expedited Option 1 addresses issues at a well-defined and familiar planning scale, while providing a level of emphasis on higher change areas. Expedited Option 2 takes a strategic approach and focuses resources on a smaller extent of high change areas in the short term.

#### Key benefits of Expedited Option 1 are:

- Economies are gained in use of resources from integrating Centre, Village, and Corridor studies into Local Area Plan updates;
- Local Area Plans are maintained as a key policy tool and touchstone for the community;

- New staff resources would enable high change areas to be addressed in a relatively short timeframe; and
- All areas of Saanich would have an updated plan within the next seven years.

Key drawbacks of Expedited Option 1 are:

- A slightly longer timeframe to address all Centres, Villages, and Corridors;
- More time spent on areas that may not be in urgent need of planning attention; and
- Less capacity for major policy initiatives.

Key benefits of Expedited Option 2 are:

- Allocation of resources to areas of highest growth and change;
- Shorter time frame for completion of Centre, Village, and Corridor studies; and
- More capacity allocated for policy initiatives.

Key drawbacks of Expedited Option 2 are:

- Local Area Plans would not be updated in near term and may lose more relevance;
- Community Associations who see Local Area Plans as their key neighbourhood planning tool may have concerns;
- Addressing transition areas could expand scope to a "virtual" Local Area Plan; and
- Only a small geographic portion of Saanich would be addressed in the short term.

The expedited options differ in their approach to area planning, but also with respect to the allocation of resources, with Expedited Option 2 providing an additional staff member for policy initiatives. From a cost perspective, the annual cost estimate is similar for both options, however, Expedited Option 2 would require a larger overall expenditure. This is attributable to separate processes being undertaken for Local Area Plan updates and Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans, which would create a longer overall timeframe for area planning in Expedited Option 2.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the two options, as well as a super accelerated Expedited Option 1, with respect to key scope, cost, and time considerations.



	EXPEDITED OPTION 1	EXPEDITED OPTION 2	SUPER ACCELERATED OPTION 1
APPROACH TO PLANS	Local Area Plans with focus on Centres, Villages, Corridors	Centre, Village, Corridor Plans first, then Local Area Plans	Local Area Plans with focus on Centres, Villages, Corridors
PLANNERS FOR PLANS	4 out of 5	3 out of 5	5 out of 6
PLANNERS FOR POLICY	1 out of 5	2 out of 5	1 out of 6
COST ESTIMATE (PER YEAR)	\$200-250k/yr	\$200-250k/yr	\$300-350k/yr
COST FOR NEW STAFF	-	-	\$500k/yr
TIME PER PLAN	18-24 months	12-24 months	18-24 months
TIME TO COMPLETE ALL PLANS	7 years	12 years (5 yrs for CVC Plans)	5.5 years

**Table 1: Comparison of Expedited Options**

**Further Acceleration of Either Expedited Option 1 or 2**

Further acceleration of Local Area Planning work would require the hiring of a significant complement of staff. To accelerate Expedited Option 1 by two years (five and a half years to complete all Local Area Plan updates), would require approximately \$500,000 annually to fund the hiring of term positions and increased project budgets.

Further acceleration would also mean that up to six high profile planning projects would be in progress at any one point in time. In combination with initiatives being undertaken by other departments, this would create an unprecedented number of projects requiring public input being undertaken at the same time. It should be noted that even under Expedited Options 1 and 2, the number of high profile community projects underway simultaneously would be quite high.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommend that Council endorse the Expedited Option 1 Work Plan, as it provides a balance between addressing high priority Centre, Village, and Corridor areas and providing comprehensive updates to all Local Area Plans in a relatively short time frame. Local Area Plans remain the primary unit of area planning, but would incorporate much more robust policy guidance related to Centres, Villages, and Corridors.

By integrating Centre, Village, and Corridor studies into Local Area Plans, potential duplication of work is reduced and a potential confusion between the roles of various plans is diminished. Further, additional resources provide the opportunity to phase work so that complementary planning processes would run in parallel, allowing resources to be shared and common issues to be addressed more efficiently.

**Next Steps**

Should Council approve one of the Expedited Options, the first two planning processes would be initiated in late 2017. Each planning exercise would start with a project plan/terms of reference being brought to Council for approval. Other Policy initiatives would be prioritized as part of Council annual Strategic Planning process.

**CONCLUSION**

The update of Local Area Plans is identified as a key Strategic Plan priority. Staff have explored options to update Local Areas Plans within the context of other community planning work. This exploration included meeting with Community Association members and resulted in a recommendation to Council in September 2015 to take a balanced approach towards updating Local Area Plan updates, completing Centre, Village, and Corridor plans and undertaking policy initiatives. With the complement of staff available at that time, the timeframe for the recommended work plan was 14 years.

In response to the staff report, Council passed a motion "that staff be requested to provide an additional option based on additional resources and an expedited timeline." Subsequent to Council's direction, two additional community planning staff positions have been created through the budget process to assist in expediting the community planning work plan.

Two expedited options have been developed based on the recently allocated additional resources that would accelerate area planning work. Expedited Option 1 prioritizes the update of Local Area Plans, incorporating a focus on Centre, Village, and Corridor areas. Expedited Option 2 prioritizes the development of stand-alone Centre, Corridor, and Village Plans, followed by the update of Local Area Plans. In Expedited Option 1, all Local Area Plans (with a focus on Centre, Village, and Corridor areas) would be updated within seven years. In Expedited Option 2 all Centre, Village, and Corridor Plans would be completed within five years, with Local Area Plan updates to follow and take an additional seven years.

The primary distinction between the two options is the approach to area planning. Expedited Option 1 addresses issues at a well-defined and familiar planning scale, while providing a level of emphasis on higher change areas. Expedited Option 2 takes a strategic approach and focuses resources on a smaller extent of high change areas in the short term.

Staff recommend that Council endorse Expedited Option 1, as it provides comprehensive updates to all Local Area Plans within a seven year time frame, while also integrating more robust policy guidance for key Centre, Village, and Corridor areas. This approach would provide planning to all areas of Saanich in the near term, with 11 of 12 Local Area Plan updates either completed or initiated within five years.


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cc: Paul Thorkelsson, Administrator

**ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:**

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

  
Paul Thorkelsson, Administrator

