THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Patricia Bridal, Chief Administrative Officer	**FILE:**	6480-06 / 8300-07
PC:	Terry Barton, Director, Planning and Community Services Roy Nuriel, Acting General Manager, Planning	**DATE:**	March 12, 2024
FROM:	Barbara Everdene, Long Range Planner Danielle DeVries, Transportation Planner		
SUBJECT:	**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN JOINT REVIEW ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FUNDING REQUEST**		

In December 2023, Administration launched the Joint Review of the Official Community Plan (OCP) in tandem with the City's Transportation Action Plan (TAP). Together, these plans will guide development and growth in Vernon over the next 20 years and ensure that infrastructure investments are directed to areas with the highest population and business growth.

Engagement Strategy

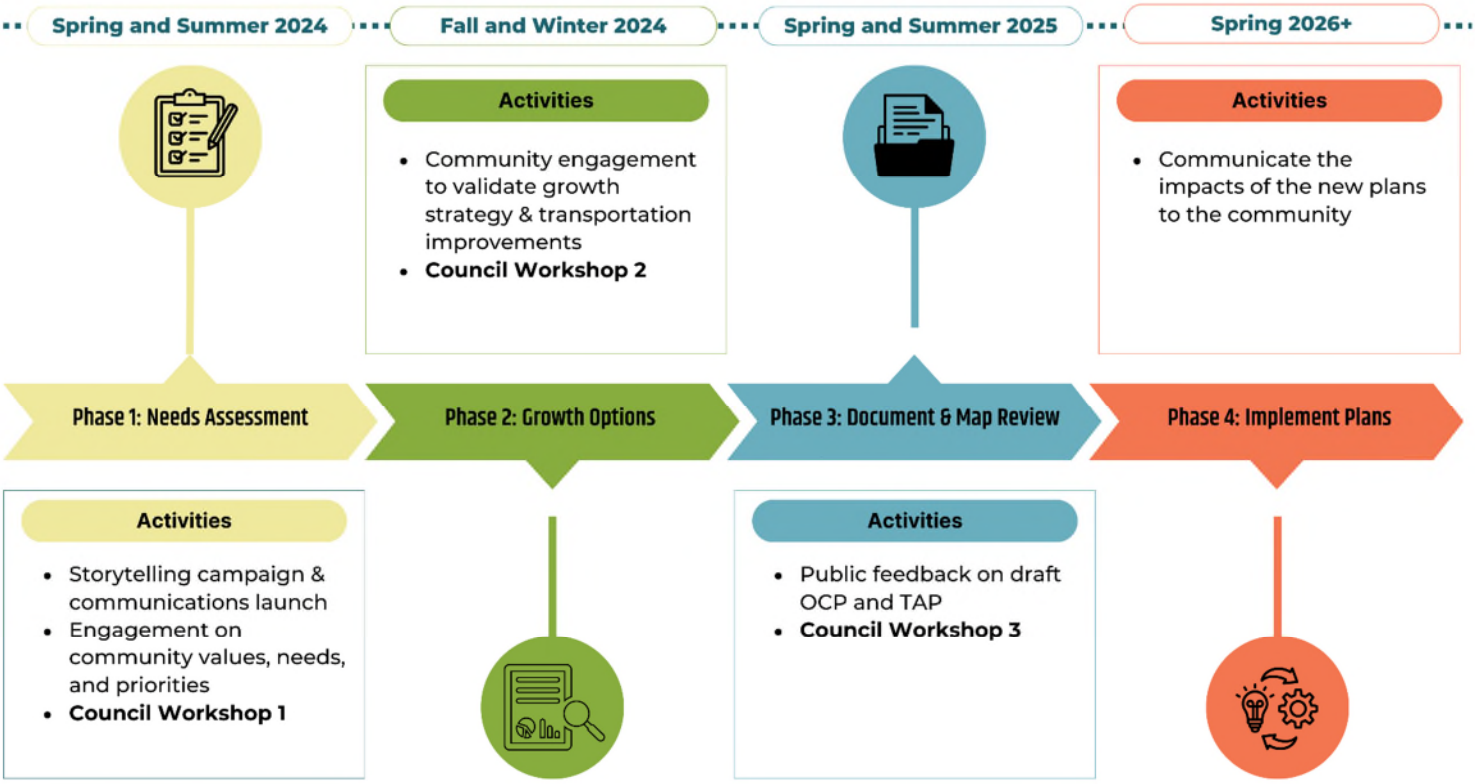
In collaboration with Engage Delaney, Administration developed the attached Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan ("Strategy") for the Joint OCP/TAP Review (Attachment 1). The Strategy proposes a streamlined approach to reach as many community members and interested parties as possible and meet the consultation requirements of the *Local Government Act,* while completing the project by the regulated deadline of December 31, 2025. It is informed by a set of inclusive engagement principles (Attachment 2).

Public consultation would be conducted in four phases (Figure 1). The Strategy involves concurrent events and requires hiring a consultant to accomplish it within the proposed timelines. In addition to periodic updates on the Joint Review process, Council would be engaged at each phase.

Project Branding

Administration is currently working with external expertise to develop a unique brand for the Joint Review project, informed by recent branding work undertaken by Vernon Tourism. The goal is to develop materials in a brand voice that is approachable, welcoming, inclusive, and collaborative. An update to Council will be provided as soon as a proposed branding package is available from the consultant.

Figure 1: Proposed engagement phases and timeline



Project Funding

To meet new regulatory requirements and update aging technical information within the project timeline, the Joint Review project requires additional staff capacity and external expertise. This includes a Project Coordinator and consultant support across four of the five workstreams (background studies, engagement and communications, options analysis, and document drafting).

The full project budget is estimated at $1.42 million (Table 1). The Division currently has $350,000 in Infrastructure Reserve funding for this project, which was allocated for the TAP review, and $120,000 approved by Council on March 11, 2024 for a Parks and Green Space study under the Climate Action Plan implementation workplan.

Administration is requesting $950,000 from the Development Excess Revenue Reserve, which has an updated available balance of $2,209,762. Administration anticipated that some of this budget would have been covered by the Housing Accelerator Fund; however, the City recently received notice that our application was not funded.

Table 1: Estimated Project Budget

Workstream	Budget
Technical Studies	
Housing needs report	$ 75,000
Land inventory, parks study & related gap analyses	$200,000
Update environmental mapping*	$150,000
Update sewer model**	$300,000
Update traffic counts & road classifications	$100,000
Active Transportation & Transit Gap Analysis	$75,000
Mobility policy reviews	$135,000
Other	
Engagement & Communications	$160,000
Document drafting	$100,000
Options analysis	$25,000
Additional staff capacity (Project Coordinator)	$100,000
Total	**$1,420,000**

*****Environmental mapping was last conducted prior to 2013 to support implementation of the Environmental Management Areas Strategy and the Province's *Riparian Areas Protection Regulation.* These are assessed as part of the issuance of Development Permits. Technology has advanced significantly, and it is timely to update our maps.

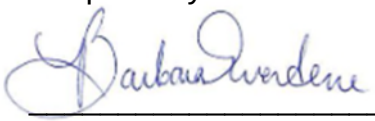
******The sewer model would provide information on sewer capacity available and the extent to which residential neighbourhoods across the city can densify, as well as to support infrastructure planning for future densification in designated areas.

RECOMMENDATION:

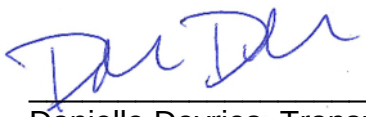
THAT Council endorse the Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan for the Joint Review of the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Transportation Action Plan (TAP), as outlined in the memorandum titled "Official Community Plan and Transportation Action Plan Joint Review Engagement Strategy and Funding Request", dated March 12, 2024, and respectfully submitted by the Long Range Planner and Transportation Planner;

AND FURTHER, that Council approve the expenditure of up to $1,420,000 funded by $350,000 from the Infrastructure Reserve, $120,000 from the Local Government Climate Action Program, and $950,000 from the Development Excess Revenue Reserve.

Respectfully submitted:



Barbara Everdene, Long Range Planner



Danielle Devries, Transportation Planner

Attachment 1 – Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan
Attachment 2 – A Process for Everyone: Inclusive Engagement Principles

Approved for the Agenda by the CAO ☐

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Proposed Engagement Strategy and Communications Plan
Joint Review of the Official Community Plan and Transportation Action Plan

Engagement Vision
Administration proposes the following **vision statement** to guide both engagement and communications for the Official Community Plan and Transportation Action Plan (OCP/TAP):

> We will encourage the full and meaningful participation of the community in the process of reviewing our Official Community Plan and Transportation Action Plan to the extent possible within the provincially regulated timeline. We will ensure that the contributions of all community members that participate within the project timeline are heard and valued. We commit to ensure that these plans are informed and enriched by the results of the community engagement process.

Engagement Context: Constraints and Importance
The Province mandated that all BC municipalities must complete their first review and update of their Official Community Plan (OCP) based on an interim Housing Needs Report by December 31, 2025. The Province also made changes to the *Local Government Act* that reflect a shift to "a more pro-active, long-term approach to planning…where public engagement takes place earlier in the land use development process" (BC website). New regulatory changes put more limits on public engagement at the site-specific level and the emphasis is now on public engagement during the review of Official Community Plans. The Province also mandated that OCPs be reviewed every five years. There will be more time for engagement in future review cycles; however, currently, the length of the public engagement period is constrained by the deadline for completion.

Engagement Workplan
We propose to conduct engagement in three phases:

	Timeframe	**Activities**
Phase 1: Needs Assessment	Spring and Summer 2024	• Media Launch and Community Call to Participation • Community engagement on values, needs, and priorities • **Council Workshop 1**
Phase 2: Growth Options Analysis	Fall to Winter 2024	• Community engagement to validate growth strategy and transportation improvements • **Council Workshop 2**
Phase 3: Document & Map Review	Spring and Summer 2025	• Community feedback on draft OCP/TAP documents, Development Permit Guidelines and Land Use Maps • Formal agency referrals of draft documents • **Council Workshop 3**
Phase 4: Plan implementation	Spring 2026+	• Communicate the impacts of the new plans to the community

Given the tight timelines, Phase 1 would take place concurrently with the production of the background studies. Administration proposes to integrate Phase 1 engagement findings with the technical outputs of the background studies into draft growth options, to bring to the public in Phase 2. These timelines will ensure that a draft document will be presented to Council in Fall

2025 to begin the formal review and adoption process, so that the project is complete by December 31, 2025.

Engagement Objectives

The following eight **objectives** were distilled from conversations with the community about how they wanted to be engaged in the OCP/TAP process:

1. Ensure that all community members have the opportunity to participate
   (see **Attachment 2** for a set of Inclusive Engagement principles to support this objective)
2. Build community trust, understanding and participation over time
3. Help community members understand the significance of their participation
4. Provide community members with clear and accessible information
5. Accommodate diverse engagement preferences
6. Make participation fun
7. Make participation safe for staff and community members
8. Be transparent in how community feedback is being gathered and used

Target Audiences

Our proposed approach to engagement has been developed to reach out to the following audiences:

- General public
- Community-based organizations
- Individuals and groups that represent diverse communities
- Indigenous communities
- Other agencies and interested parties specified in the Local Government Act
- City Administration, and
- City Council (see Engagement Workplan for workshop dates).

Engagement Topics

The OCP and TAP include and integrate a variety of topics that together will comprise the long-term vision for development and growth in Vernon over the next 20 years. The public will have the opportunity to explore each of the following themes and the interconnections between them in all engagement opportunities in the community and online:

- Community Vision and Values
- Housing
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Climate, Nature, Parks and Trails
- City Centre and Neighbourhoods
- Economic Development & Investment

The public will have the opportunity to explore these topics through questions such as:

- How do we make room for more neighbours?
- How do we move around our community?
- How do we prepare to be a more climate ready and climate friendly community?
- What does our City need to do to support growth?



Engagement summaries will be posted to EngageVernon.ca after each Council Workshop, to provide timely feedback to the community on the results of the engagement and how their feedback is being integrated into the development of the Official Community Plan and Transportation Action Plan. These summaries will also present key information on the reach and success the engagement phase by reporting on the number of engagement events and the estimated number of people engaged across all demographics of our community.

Engagement with Indigenous Governments

The Local Government Act requires the City of Vernon to consider consultation with interested parties, including First Nations in this region. The Okanagan Indian Band ("OKIB") is the primary interested party, has reserves adjacent to municipal boundaries and is the owner of fee simple lands within the municipality. Administration reached out to OKIB to determine how they would like to be engaged in the OCP and TAP Joint Review.

Respondents speaking on behalf of the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) observed that:

- The community as a whole may not understand the significance of their participation
- The community has invested significant recent time and resources in community planning
- OKIB has a Land Use Plan and is currently developing a Comprehensive Community Plan (supported under Indigenous Services Canada, a CCP serves a similar function as an OCP)
- Capacity is a significant concern for OKIB and funding is required to assist participation in OCP/TAP
- The City may use the CEDI Working Group as an engagement channel at the political level, if they reconvene
- Administration-led engagement is best co-facilitated with OKIB Staff Liaisons
- OKIB community members prefer engagement in person and/or on the land, and
- Any educational/engagement materials for OKIB should be vetted by OKIB Staff Liaisons to make sure they reflect OKIB values and language.

Administration proposes the following engagement values/commitments:

1. We will acknowledge our shared history and role in Reconciliation
2. We will provide the resources needed to support participation
3. We will help the community understand the significance of their participation
4. We will listen and learn
5. We will prioritize safety and respect for everyone involved
6. We will engage in locations where OKIB is most comfortable to participate
7. We will work with OKIB Staff Liaisons to provide clear and accessible information
8. We will be transparent in how community feedback is being gathered and used
9. We will seek to build community trust and understanding through the OCP/TAP process and beyond
10. We will look for ways to create shared benefits through this project and beyond.

Communications and Education Plan

The communications and education plan for this project will target both internal and external audiences and be guided by the following vision:

Build shared understanding about the project, the opportunities for community engagement and a sense of collective opportunity and responsibility to help shape the future of Vernon.

Communications Objectives

1. Help staff and community members understand the significance of their participation
2. Provide education on value and benefits of OCP/TAP, and
3. Drive participation to modes that capture feedback at in person events, in the community, or online.

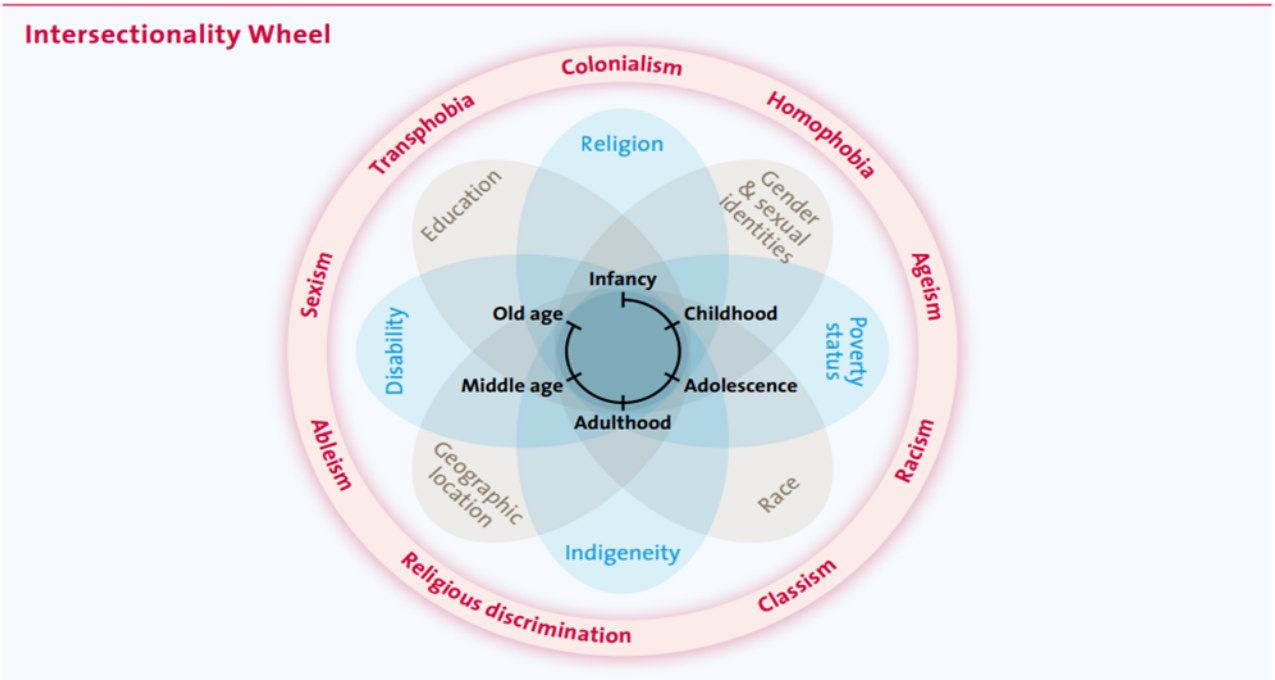
A media strategy to support the communications vision and objectives will be developed in collaboration with the Communications Division. A variety of communications methods will be used to support the strategy, including but not limited to:

- A project presence on engagevernon.ca
- Project email newsletters with a sign-up on engagevernon.ca
- Storytelling campaign of videos integrated with social media
- Interactive booths for pop-up engagement in the community, and
- Digital, print and radio news advertising

A Process for Everyone

A Process for Everyone is a set of inclusive engagement Principles developed to inform the engagement process for the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Transportation Action Plan (TAP) Joint Review. The City of Vernon is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community, and reflecting this commitment in how we engage and communicate on our OCP and TAP. This Framework expresses how we will plan and adapt our process to create distinct engagement opportunities for diverse groups based on their needs and preferences. This approach is responsive to the potential barriers individuals and groups may face, illustrated on the Intersectionality Wheel (Figure 1 below):

Figure 1: Intersectionality Wheel



How We Will Practice Inclusion in Our Engagement Process

The following six principles will guide the City in considering inclusion and equity in our communications, engagement, and education plans for the OCP/TAP Joint Review:

1. We will acknowledge our shared history.

The City recognizes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the Province of BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and the Federal Government's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. We will engage with openness to learn about the history of what is now the City of Vernon. We will also listen with openness to the experience of other individuals and groups who may have been historically marginalized within the community.

2. We will listen and learn.

We recognize that learning about priority populations facing inequities and barriers in the City is an ongoing process. In designing engagement, we will ask how we can be most welcoming and inclusive. During engagement, we will ask equity-focused questions to better understand barriers and what is working well to address them; collecting data that is disaggregated according to common barriers; and, monitoring whether social well-being is trending better or worse over time. It may mean learning with humility if the City has not been inclusive to priority populations in the past. Most importantly, it involves cultivating relationships over time with priority populations and listening to their lived experiences, challenges and aspirations.

3. We will invite diverse perspectives and foster a welcoming experience.

The City regularly offers engagement opportunities—through in-person Open Houses and events and through online portals such as EngageVernon.ca. These are open to everyone and designed to be as inclusive and accessible as possible. Nonetheless, the OCP/TAP team recognizes that this is an approach that relies on the public to come to us, and that there are groups in our community that may not feel comfortable to interact in these modes. Others may not have felt seen, heard or valued in the past and do not see a call to participate in general processes. In light of this, we will intentionally make plans to reach out to all members and groups in our community and help them participate in various parts of the OCP/TAP planning process. We will adjust our way of doing things to address the needs of different people. This way, everyone can obtain assistance to be part of the OCP/TAP engagement process.

4. We will provide the resources needed to support participation.

In designing engagement, we will ask priority populations what is needed for them to be able to contribute. We will budget for our engagement process by allocating resources to support participation, whether in the form of direct payment to individuals and groups or funding support to service providers who can assist with conducting context-responsive engagement initiatives.

5. We will build relationships that go beyond the current planning process.

We recognize that the OCP/TAP Joint Review prompts us to renew and seek out new relationships with community groups and organizations. This provides us an opportunity to connect or reconnect, but our goal is to build relationships of trust, continuity and reciprocity that will help with community planning and development going forward. When we engage diverse groups and individuals, we commit to doing our work respectfully. One way of expressing this idea is: “nothing about us without us”. This means that we consider concerns and aspirations with care, and ask for permission to share information to City decision makers and the public. We are willing to talk openly about both opportunities and constraints as we develop our Implementation Strategy and express how new policies, plans and infrastructure addresses equity concerns. We recognize that some aspirations will take time to accomplish. Some may require the involvement and leadership of other government agencies or new resources.

6. We will look for ways to create shared benefits.

We prioritize our relationships with diverse groups and seek to develop partnerships that can offer more value to our community. In doing so, the City benefits and each group benefits from moving forward together. We look for ideas and opportunities that allow us to make progress. We ask for feedback and we reflect on our work on a regular basis. We are active in exploring the root causes of what is contributing to inequality. We will consider the question: how do we gauge and report on our progress towards equity? In all our relationships, we maintain our commitment to a more equitable and inclusive future for all.