



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 1470-20

From: Director of Development Services

Date: October 23, 2024

Subject: Downtown Local Area Plan Communication Strategy and Workplan

PURPOSE: For Council to receive the report and endorse the Communication Strategy for the Downtown Local Area Plan (DLAP).

BACKGROUND:

At the regular meeting of Council held on July 17, 2024 staff provide a report on the consolidation of Harmston Precinct, Downtown Playbook, OCP Downtown Centre and provided a new boundary for a Downtown Local Area Plan (DLAP) which Council approved. Staff indicated they would report back to Council with a Communication Strategy for the DLAP and staff is seeking Council's endorsement of the proposed plan in accordance with the community engagement and consultation requirements of the Local Government Act.

DISCUSSION:

The DLAP is intended to inform and amend the Official Community Plan which triggers consultation requirements pursuant to Section 475 of the Local Government Act in addition to the requirement under Section 477 (3) (c) for the subsequent bylaw amendment.

The proposed communication strategy and actions is outlined in Attachment 1 and provides an overview of the engagement approach. The strategy will provide opportunities, with a variety of methods and utilizing communication tools, to provide early and on an ongoing consultation to form a draft local plan for Council to consider in 2025. This project is intended to implement the OCP and provides and aligns with Council's Strategic priorities. This work has been incorporated into staff's workplan and has been identified in the 2023-2026 financial plan.

In accordance with the legislation, the communication strategy includes broad public and engagement with parties with a direct interest in the DLAP study area. This strategy is designed to reflect the Public Interest will include the general public and groups including but not limited to: Downtown Business Association, Chamber of Commerce, Comox Valley Arts Council, and local property owners. In order to engage with intergovernmental authorities who have an interest in the plan area the strategy includes contact with School District 71, CVRD, MoTI and BC Transit. With respect to K'omoks First Nation, a detailed engagement plan will be developed through following direct contact with the Nation to determine their level of interest in the study area as well as to determine how they would like to be involved in the project and subsequent consideration of the OCP amendment.

Table 1 below is a high-level summary of the three phases of the communication strategy which supports the development of the local area plan by the project team. Staff have initiated the development of the communication strategy and engaged on the first two tasks in Phase 1 in order to provide the strategy to Council and seek endorsement of the plan.

TABLE 1 Summary of Communication Strategy Plan

<p>PHASE 1: Planning Context & design Foundations Engagement Planning Workshop (with project team) Communications Strategy Plan (developed with Team) Public Interest and Intergovernmental Interviews</p> <p>Summary of what we heard Material preparations for Social point</p> <p>PHASE 2: Key Directions & Concept Plan Public Open house/Pop-up Virtual Engagement Public Interest and Intergovernmental follow-up What we Heard Summary</p> <p>PHASE 3: Refinement & Draft Plans Virtual Engagement (Social Point) Public Interest and Intergovernmental follow-up meeting Engagement Analysis & Report</p>
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This communication strategy supports the development of the local area plan while building upon the work undertaken through the OCP and Downtown play book as discussed at the July 17, 2024 council meeting. Tools being utilized include virtual, in person, survey, and interviews. The engagement will be summarized and utilized to inform the development of the local area plan. Staff will report back to Council at the end of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the communication strategy to provide status updates and to outline how the engagement is informing the local area plan. These steps will be taken prior to the DLAP being presented for consideration of the OCP Amendment Bylaw.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Section 475(1) in the *Local Government Act* that during the development of an amendment to the Official Community Plan (OCP) the proposing local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for the consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.

- For the purposes of subsection (1), the local government must*
- (a) consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing, and*
 - (b) specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:*
 - (i) the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;*
 - (ii) the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;*
 - (iii) the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;*
 - (iv) first nations;*
 - (v) boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;*

(vi)the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies.

*(3) Consultation under this section is in addition to the public hearing required under section 477
(3) (c).*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The 2023-2026 financial plan includes \$150,000 for the Harmston Local Area Plan. The Downtown Local Area Plan includes the Harmston Local Area Plan and has incorporated a number of strategic priorities like the Duncan Mews to create a comprehensive and coordinated local area plan to guide implementation of key actions that have been identified in the Downtown Playbook and OCP. To date \$45,000 has been spent on the first phase of the DLAP to create a SWOT analysis which is required to initiate and inform the communication strategy with the development of the DLAP.

MODUS has provided a proposal to support the DLAP process of \$45,000 plus additional \$10,000 to build the Social point page (Virtual Engagement) and monitor the page throughout the engagement process. The total cost to support the DLAP process is \$55,000 which leaves \$50,000 in the budget. The \$50,000 will be utilized for EKISTICS support to complete the DLAP. Any additional requirements outside of this plan would require additional funds.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

This project is being delivered with a combination of staff resources from Development Services and external consultants. Internally the project will require support from Communications to utilize city social media, webpages, media and newsprint where required. This project will include input and support from all city departments in the development and implementation of the DLAP.

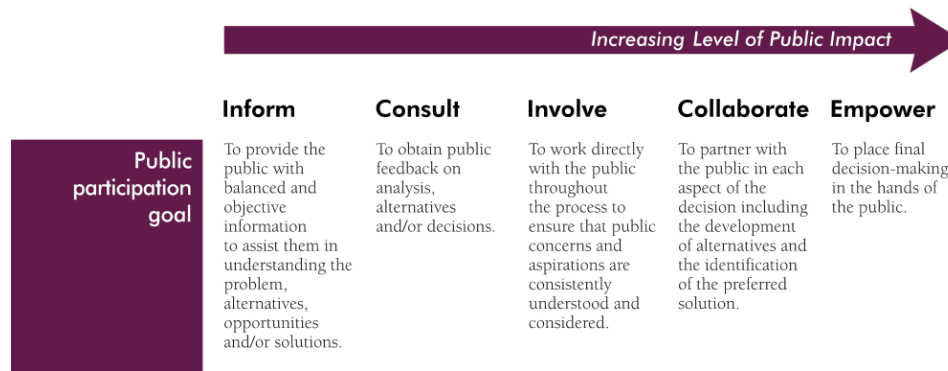
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Streets and Transportation - Improve Cliffe Avenue and 5th Street intersection pedestrian facilities
- Streets and Transportation - Plan and implement bike parking and secure storage
- Buildings and Landscape - Update Zoning Bylaw - review maximum building heights
- Buildings and Landscape - Develop a local area plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct
- Buildings and Landscape - Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th Street staging/phasing
- Buildings and Landscape - Review and update land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Based 2 Spectrum the communication strategy will inform, consult, involve and collaborate.



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As discussed at the July 17, 2024 Council meeting, Staff is utilizing the engagement undertaken to date from the Downtown Play Book and the OCP to inform the development of the DLAP.

The DLAP will amend the OCP and the amending bylaws to the OCP will be prepared for Council's consideration after the conclusion of the communication strategy that supports the development of the DLAP.

Staff anticipate initiating and completing the Social Point page to be live and completing the public interest and intergovernmental agencies interviews in November 2024.

Phase 2 would be initiated in February 2025 followed by Phase 3 in April 2025.

OPTIONS

1. THAT Council receive the report on the Downtown Local Area Plan Communication Strategy and Workplan and endorse the communication strategy outlined in Attachment 1 in order to guide community and and interest holder engagement;

THAT Council pursuant to section 475 and 476 Local Government Act, Council will provide opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons and parties it considers will be affected, including the Comox Valley Regional District, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, First Nations, and the province/provincial agencies and pursuant to section 476 Local Government Act, Council will consult with Comox Valley School District 71 prior to considering amendments to City of Courtenay Official Commuity Plan Bylaw No 3070, 2022.

2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Communication Strategy Downtown Local Area Plan
2. July 17, 2024 SDDR Local Area Plan Update - Staff Report

Prepared by: Marianne Wade, Director of Development Services
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

Phase 1: Planning Context & Design Foundations

1.1	Engagement Planning Workshop (with project team)
1.1.1	background review (of LAP work to date, other resources, etc.)
1.1.2	facilitate workshop to plan the "what, when, who & how" of engagement
1.1.3	prepare notes from workshop
1.2	Communications & Engagement Strategy
1.2.1	draft plan (including timeline, key messages, etc)
1.2.2	finalize plan
1.3	Public, Interest-holder and Intergovernmental/Agency Interviews
1.3.1	coordination & preparation for interviews/meetings
1.3.2	facilitation (assumes 10)
1.3.3	summary of interview notes and key takeaways

Phase 2: Key Directions & Concept Plan(s)

2.1	Public Open House / Pop-Up
2.1.2	coordinate open house logistics and preparations
2.1.3	facilitate event (includes travel)
2.2	Virtual Engagement
2.2.1	develop public survey & other online engagement tools through Social Point
2.3	Follow-Up w/ Public, Interest-holder and Intergovernmental/Agencies
2.3.1	coordination of meeting
2.3.2	preparation of materials
2.3.3	facilitation of meeting
2.4	Analysis and Reporting
2.4.1	analysis of all feedback in phase 2
2.4.2	draft engagement summary
2.4.3	final engagement summary

Phase 3: Refinement & Draft Plan

3.1	Virtual Engagement
3.1.1	develop short form survey for comments/feedback on draft plan
3.2	Follow-Up w/ Public, Interest-holder and Intergovernmental/Agencies
3.2.1	coordination of meeting
3.2.2	preparation of materials
3.2.3	facilitation of meeting
3.3	Engagement Analysis & Reporting
3.3.1	analyze feedback from phase 3
3.3.2	Prepare a short summary of final comments/recommendations to support plan refinement

Project Management

	Regular Project Meetings
	Project Admin (project setup, invoicing, processing expenses and



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 3030-01

From: Director of Development Services

Date: July 17, 2024

Subject: Update Local Area Plan Harmston Civic Precinct and Downtown Centre

PURPOSE:

To update Council on the Strategic Priorities for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct Local Area Plan and the implementation of the Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, including 5th street staging and phasing that are scheduled for 2024, 2025, and beyond.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2016, Council adopted the Downtown Courtenay Playbook. The “Playbook” outlines the vision, five strategic goals, high-level planning principles, and detailed actions necessary to initiate goal implementation. Each goal specifies actions, desired outcomes, involved parties, and timelines. The document acknowledges that further detailed analysis is needed to implement actions, which will require budget allocation. While some actions, such as the Sidewalk Patio Policy and Downtown Parking Analysis, have been implemented, others require more detailed analysis and could benefit from a more cohesive plan.

The *Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3070, 2022* builds on the 2016 Downtown Playbook goals and actions and identifies Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct as a Local Area Plan to be initiated in 2024 and 2025. This is in the departments workplan for 2024 and 2025. In the 2024 Financial Budget \$150,000 was approved for the Harmston Local Area Plan. Further that the 2024 financial plan identifies budget for the design and construction of Harmston Park.

Council’s 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities identify building and landscape priorities:

1. “Develop a Local Area Plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct for 2024 and 2025”
2. “Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th street staging/phasing for 2025 and 2026 and beyond”.

At a regular Council meeting in November 2023, Council passed a resolution for staff to bring forward a report on the Duncan Avenue Summer Pilot project outlining considerations and financial implications for implementation in 2024. Staff were also directed to collaborate with the Duncan Avenue working group to review options for the design, implementation and evaluation of the pilot, and include recommendations informed by the consultation in the report back to Council.

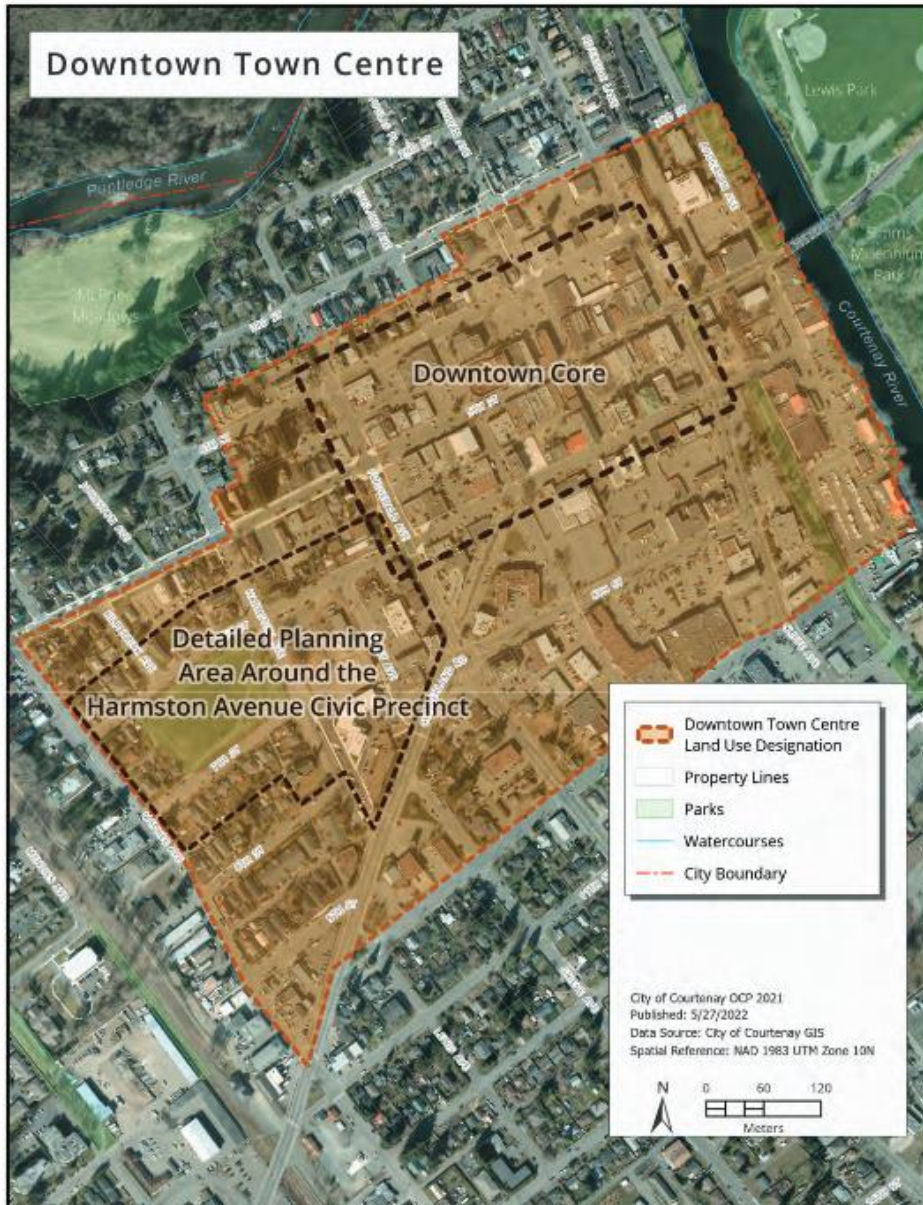
In January of 2024, staff initiated conversations with the Duncan Avenue working group Liaison, the Executive Director of Comox Valley Arts, to discuss the Duncan Commons program. Following these initial discussions, several factors including changes to provincial legislation, enhanced understanding of infrastructure challenges, and the transition from Wednesday markets to “Pulse on the Plaza”, necessitate an adjustment to the overall land use and community planning approach for the downtown core.

DISCUSSION:

To develop an effective process for informing the Downtown Town Centre in a coordinated and structured manner, staff are proposing the consolidation of the Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct with the Downtown Playbook to create a comprehensive Local Area Plan. This plan aims to build upon the five strategic goals and actions outlined in the Downtown Playbook, as well as the Official Community Plan (OCP) policies for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct and the Downtown Centre. The plan will also incorporate the Harmston Park design principles to guide construction.

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the existing Downtown Town Centre from the OCP and identifies the Harmston Civic Precinct and the Downtown Core.

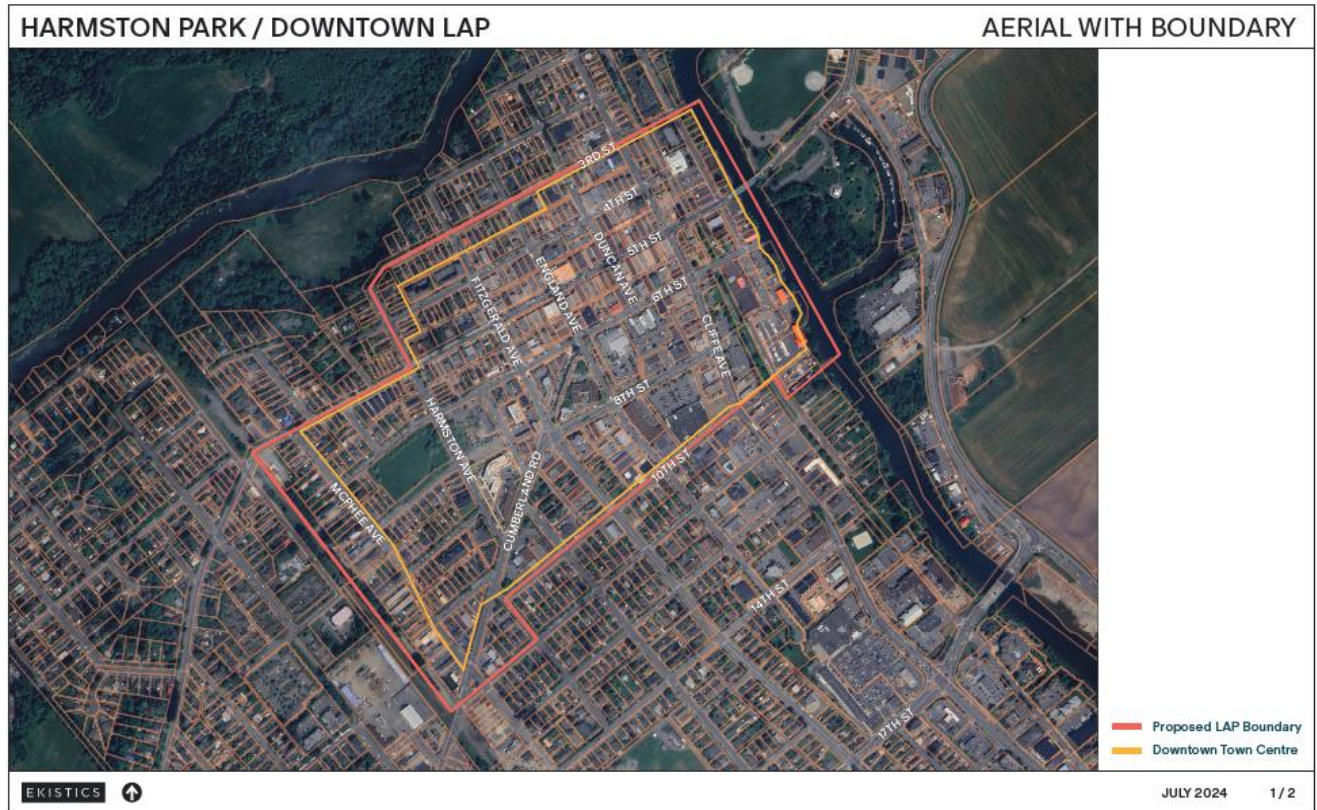
Figure 1: Downtown Town Centre



Map B-2 Downtown Town Centre

Figure 2 (below) illustrates the consolidated local area plan in dark orange encompassing the existing Downtown Town Centre Plan in light orange.

Figure 2 Consolidated Local Area Plan



This proposed consolidated Local Area Plan connects and coordinates two strategic priorities for 2024, 2025 and beyond, integrating strategic priorities from various City departments.

Projects such as the Duncan Commons require capital investment to develop the necessary infrastructure for activation and programming. Through the consolidation of existing plans, there is a greater opportunity to align and advance strategic and capital projects, like those actions currently identified in the Downtown Playbook. Through an all-encompassing Local Area Plan, the infrastructure planning can be developed to support activation of programming, connection to the downtown, and to seek opportunities for partnerships for capital investment.

The first phase of this Local Area Plan is to understand the land through Inventory and analysis, workshop with City departments exploring the plan area, a SWOT Analysis with City staff that will outline:

- *Strengths*: Positive attributes of a location that can be leveraged to enhance the success of a project.
- *Weaknesses*: Negative attributes of a location that can hinder the success of a project.
- *Opportunities*: External factors that can favorably affect the project's success.
- *Constraints (Threats)*: External factors that may have a negative impact on the project's Success.

After this analysis work is completed, an engagement plan will be developed for interaction with the community, associations, and agencies for initial discussions on the SWOT analysis. The outcome of Phase One will inform Phase Two which is the development of design principles, partnerships, and incentives.

Ekistics Town Planning has been retained for Phase one of the Local Area Plan. The inventory and analysis are completed, first city inter department workshop was held in June, and the SWOT analysis is underway with a city inter department workshop to be held in late July. Figure 2 below identifies the Local Area Plan boundary based upon this analysis in the orange line and the yellow line represents the Downtown Town Centre boundary from the OCP. Adjustments have been made to incorporate stronger connections to the ICF and River and neighbourhood connectivity.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

This Local Area Plan address objective 4 of the Official Community Plan “Sub-area planning provides more direction on growth” and will assist in guiding the implementation of the newly adopted Residential-SSMUH zone along with identifying zoning to support the Downtown policies in the OCP.

Further this consolidated Local Area Plan addresses thematic policies in the Official Community Plan that address: Parks and Recreation along with Arts; Cultural and Heritage policies; Streets and Transportation; Social Infrastructure; and Local Economy.

The consolidated Local Area Plan addresses the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Section 3.2.2 Conduct Park Plans:

- Harmston Park is identified as requiring a park plan and is identified as a short term priority in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The budget for this Local Area Plan is in the 2024 Financial Plan under Development Services Community and Sustainability Special Projects Harmston Local Area Plan for \$150,000. Phase 1 contract is \$35,000.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

The development of the Local Area Plan involves all departments and crosses over many strategic priorities for 2024 and 2025. This is a strategic approach to coordinating Infrastructure, natural environment, building, housing, active transportation, to provide informed analysis and priorities to the consolidated area to support programming of space.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

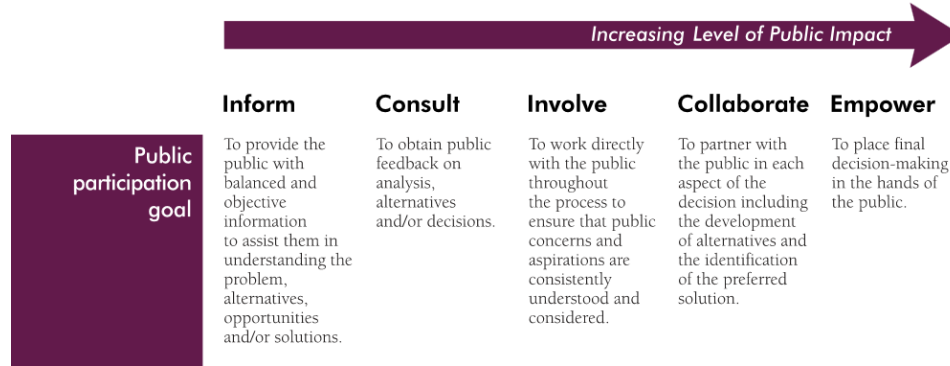
This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Buildings and Landscape - Develop a local area plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct
- Buildings and Landscape - Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th Street staging/phasing
- Buildings and Landscape - Review and update land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP
- Buildings and Landscape - Update Zoning Bylaw - review maximum building heights
- Parks and Recreation - Optimize active public spaces to respond to density increases and increased park use

- Buildings and Landscape - Support investment and redevelopment in downtown core: Review and evaluate Downtown development incentives e.g. fast tracking/density bonuses/DCC

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

An engagement plan will be developed and brought back to Council for endorsement based upon the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.



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OPTIONS:

- 1) THAT Council receive the report "Update Local Area Plan Harmston Civic Precinct and Downtown Centre"; and

THAT Council direct staff to consolidate the Harmston Precinct, The Downtown Playbook, and the Downtown Centre with related land use plans, community plans, and policies into a comprehensive encompassing Downtown Area Plan.

- 2) THAT Council receive the report "Update Local Area Plan Harmston Civic Precinct and Downtown Centre" and provide alternative direction to staff.

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Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)