



## **Highlights of Draft Documents**

2020.06.19 Drafts

# Highlights

The following highlighted changes reflect major changes to the draft documents versus the current Official Plan and Development Bylaw, and are not an exhaustive list. For more details on the proposed changes please refer to the full documents.

## 1.1 Housing

Adequate housing is a fundamental human right, and during engagement events participants noted that Victoria's lack of housing diversity can be challenging to residents looking for a home that suits their needs. Victoria's stock of detached, owner-occupied homes is a defining element of the community's character, but many community members felt there was room for more options in the local market to accommodate young professionals, seasonal workers, and seniors. Quality housing suited to a range of household types, incomes, and abilities in a range of physical forms (barrier-free, small homes, grouped housing, etc.) are currently unavailable. The proposed drafts expand potential housing options in several ways, including:

- Removing the minimum 1.5 storey requirement for dwellings;
- Allowing accessory dwellings (secondary suites, backyard suites, etc.) on land zoned as General Residential, Central Core, and Agricultural;
- Allowing grouped dwellings (consisting of two or more dwellings on one lot) on land zoned as General Residential and Commercial; and
- Permitting residential facilities (supportive housing, long-term care, etc.) wherever residential uses are allowed, regulating these facilities in the same manner as dwellings of a similar scale.

## 1.2 Short-term Rentals

While vacation rentals have been present on the Island for a long time, more recent online listings such as Airbnb and HomeAway have increased the popularity and visibility of the market. This trend extends to Victoria, and with the increase in tourism over the past few years some homeowners are interested in subsidizing housing costs by renting their homes for short-term stays during the summer. This practice raises concerns about competition with the traditional hospitality sector, a loss of housing, and an increase in seasonal residency.

In order to maximize the benefits short-term rentals offer to homeowners while limiting negative effects, this use needs to be carefully regulated. The draft documents recommend Council adopt a Short-term Rental Bylaw which could require registration of short-term rentals, only permit them in primary residences, limit the number of rentable nights in a year for "whole house" rentals, and prohibit short-term rentals in detached accessory dwellings. The draft planning documents define the use, and allow the use within dwellings located in the Central Core, Commercial, and General Residential Zones, subject to all other applicable bylaws. The draft Short-term Rental Bylaw proposes the mechanisms by which these rentals would be controlled, and is also available for review.

## 1.3 Commercial in the Central Core

This Central Core has been mixed-use since it was initially laid out in the 1850s, with many of the original structures remaining. This area serves as Victoria's cultural and commercial hub and draws a

significant number of visitors during the summer months. While the Core has a long history of commercial uses, the streetscape has experienced significant changes in recent years with the influx of visitors, and the identity of this area is a difficult topic in the community. The question at the heart of the issue is about the desired identity of the central core, and a survey of community members conducted as part of this Plan development indicated that while some residents feel very strongly that the Central Core should be maintained as a residential neighbourhood, there is a larger proportion of residents who prefer a balance more weighted towards commercial.

Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development, and it is Council's intention to preserve the heritage character of this area and prioritize residential uses while facilitating its economic viability. The draft documents attempt to facilitate the appropriate and desired character in several ways, including:

- Establishing the Architectural Control Overlay Zone, which includes architectural controls for buildings located in both the Central Core and Commercial Zones;
- Laying out criteria for Council's approval of special permitted uses including residential-commercial operations and commercial development outside the Commercial Zone; and
- Expanding special permitted uses to include convenience stores (up to 93 square metres in total floor area) within the Central Core Zone.

## 1.4 Heritage

There is a long history of many generations of settlement in this region, dating back long before the first European arrivals. Victoria's heritage is evident in its landscapes, stories, cultural assets, and built environment, creating a culture made up of all those who have and continue to call Victoria home.

Victoria's first streets were laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and many of the original structures remain. Four of Victoria's buildings are designated as heritage property under the Provincial *Heritage Places Protection Act*. This designation prevents exterior alteration or demolition of heritage properties without approval from the Minister. Victoria also has 28 properties on the Heritage Register, which recognizes the heritage value of these properties but offers no protections from alteration or demolition.

The draft documents recognize the value of the community's cultural and heritage assets, and prioritize protection of these elements in many ways, including:

- Enabling Council to adopt a Heritage Plan and Bylaw, which would provide an inventory of heritage assets and establish policy support and incentives for conservation;
- Establishing design guidelines which aim to promote quality design and preserve the heritage character of Victoria;
- Providing opportunity for the adaptive reuse of accessory structures with heritage value through the allowance of accessory dwellings on land zoned as General Residential, Central Core, and Agricultural;
- Identifying within the Plan the location of heritage designated properties as well as those included on the Heritage Register;
- Recommending that Council consider adopting a Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Bylaw; and

- Recommending that Council consider adopting a Municipal Signage Bylaw, which could replace Provincial regulations and ensure that signage respects heritage values and conforms to the existing character of the community.

## 1.5 Design Guidelines

The character of a community is in large part defined by its buildings. This relates to their location on the street and their height and massing, but also their architecture. In order to promote quality design and preserve the heritage character of Victoria, the community could benefit from controls that extend beyond land use regulations.

The draft documents include architectural controls as part of Municipal design guidelines, included in the Development Bylaw. These will help to ensure that Victoria's development process promotes strong architecture of all styles and preserves specific heritage styles. These controls apply to the Architectural Control Overlay Zone, which covers both the Commercial and Central Core Zones. Graphic illustration and clear regulations establish controls that are easy for developers and building owners to understand and implement, and regulate and guide the following:

- Roof styles;
- Window orientation and moulding;
- Exterior cladding;
- Door styles;
- Building form;
- Porches and verandahs;
- Symmetry;
- Barrier-free entrances; and
- Other features deemed appropriate by Council.

## 1.6 Parking

The heritage streetscapes of the central core are a key contributor to the character of the community. However, the narrow roads and dense development leaves little room for parking, forcing cars to park on the grass outside businesses and homes, and in the summer, creating congestion and safety hazards. At the same time, large parking areas can push land uses apart, making the community less enjoyable for pedestrians and cyclists, and increasing servicing costs (e.g. longer lengths of pipes for each lot).

To prevent demolition of buildings for parking, the draft documents maintain existing minimum parking requirements for selected uses where feasible, and allow for the establishment of a public parking area in the Commercial Zone (i.e. outside of but accessible to the Central Core). Parking requirements will be intended to reduce overflow, but will not necessarily accommodate peak demand at all times. The draft documents facilitate this through the following:

- Establishing parking lots as a permitted use within the Commercial and Public Service and Institutional Zones;
- Upholding existing minimum automobile parking requirements except where the Development Officer determines that lot coverage renders the siting of parking spaces impossible;

- Reducing the minimum size of automobile parking spaces from 3.05 x 6.1 metres to 2.4 x 6.1 metres; and
- Encouraging the provision of bicycle parking for academic schools, business or professional offices, restaurants, and retail stores (excluding residential-commercial operations).

## 1.7 Usability

Overall, the documents have been updated to reflect modern approaches to formatting and usability, create clear organization, and to avoid “legalese” as much as possible. This should make it easier for anyone to understand what they can do on their land.

Currently, Victoria’s land use documents set out two designations for land uses which require additional consideration. Major developments include large-scale residential, residential-commercial, commercial, and light industrial developments and are subject to a public review process prior to approval or denial at Council’s discretion. Similarly, special permitted uses are listed in each land use zone, and allow the Authority Having Jurisdiction to issue a special permit where it deems appropriate, and impose any necessary conditions.

As part of improving usability, these draft documents simplify land use regulations by eliminating the Major Development designation. Uses previously designated as major development are reclassified as special permitted uses, which are still allowed at Council’s discretion. The Development Bylaw sets out criteria for Council’s approval, as well as requirements for the review process. To reflect the intention of the Commercial Zone, only commercial uses outside this zone are classified as special permitted uses within the draft documents. The drafts include the following special permitted uses:

- Major residential development over four lots;
- Changes to subdivision agreements;
- New or expanded commercial development outside the Commercial Zone;
- New or expanded residential-commercial developments;
- New or expanded light industrial development;
- New or expanded intensive livestock operations; and
- On-site animal processing.

# Summary of Zones

Zone Name	Symbol	Description
General Residential Zone	R1	This zone is intended to permit residential development on serviced and unserviced lots. Zone standards shall provide flexibility on the location of dwellings and support infill development, particularly on serviced lots.
Commercial Zone	C	This zone is intended to permit a range of commercial uses, including retail, service, and accommodations. Zone standards shall provide flexibility for the location of buildings and support infill development, particularly on serviced lots.
Central Core Zone	CC	This zone is intended to permit a range of residential, recreational and institutional uses as-of-right, as well as a mix of stand-alone commercial uses and residential-commercial operations allowed at the discretion of Council. In order to maintain the character of the area, lot size allowances will accommodate denser development.
Light Industrial Zone	M	This zone is intended to provide flexibility to accommodate limited types of industrial operations and their specific operational needs.
Agricultural Zone	A	This zone is intended to prioritize agricultural activities. Zone standards will accommodate the needs of agricultural uses and permitted uses shall include those associated with agricultural and resource uses, as well as residential uses and commercial operations.
Recreation & Public Open Space Zone	P	This zone is intended to protect and preserve recreational uses and public open space. Permitted uses shall include but are not limited to parks, trails, playgrounds, interpretive centres, and recreation centres.
Public Service & Institutional Zone	PSI	This zone is intended to apply to the lands of public service and institutional uses. Permitted uses shall include, but are not limited to, government offices, health facilities, recreational uses, and cultural facilities.
<i>Special Overlay Zones</i>		
Environmental Reserve Zone	O2	This zone is intended to limit development surrounding environmentally sensitive areas in accordance with the Province's Environmental Protection Act.
Wellfield Protection Zone	WP	This zone is intended to protect the Municipality's wellfield in accordance with the Municipal Wellfield Protection Plan.
Architectural Control Zone	AC	This zone is intended to establish design guidelines within the Commercial and Central Core Zones.

# Zone Placement

A number of properties have been rezoned as a part of the proposed drafts, in order to reflect the current use and character of the land. These include the following:

- The property containing the Grand Victorian (currently zoned Central Core) and a portion of the parcel located to the north of the venue (currently zoned Agricultural and used for parking) have been rezoned Commercial;
- The Light Industrial Zone has been expanded to the west to cover the full land parcel where a portion was previously zoned Agricultural;
- The Architectural Overlay Zone covers the Central Core and Commercial Zones; and
- Existing Environmental Reserve and Wellfield Protection Overlay Zones have been included on the Zoning Map.

For more information on the proposed changes, or to provide feedback, visit:

[rmvictoria.com/vision2035](http://rmvictoria.com/vision2035)

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