

**Official Community Plan  
brainstorming session**

One of the more important functions of any City Council is to establish and adhere to an “Official Community Plan” (OCP), which outlines the longer-term vision for the community through objectives and policies that guide decisions on planning and land use management within the municipal boundaries. Quesnel City Council is in the process of renewing the city’s OCP, which will establish the vision and basic policy framework for Quesnel out to 2030.

The first round of public consultations on the new OCP were held at various locations throughout the City and the results of this community feedback (including from an online survey) were incorporated into a draft policy directions memo that was presented to Council last week in an open public meeting. This draft document outlined options for re-envisioning each neighborhood in the City based on current and projected demographics, community feedback, and new and emerging community planning and land use practices.

The document also provided Council with draft policy directions in the areas of: housing; arts and culture; creating an inclusive, age-friendly and accessible community, public engagement and community pride; first nations collaboration; community health and well-being; parks and recreation; environment and sustainability; urban agriculture and food security; marijuana policies; transportation and infrastructure; “smart city” opportunities; and unsightly premises.

Over the course of three hours last week, Council discussed and deliberated opportunities to refresh and re-invigorate Quesnel’s various neighbourhoods based on some creative options presented by the OCP consultants. It was a deep and meaningful dialogue about the future of Quesnel and what kinds of policies and zoning the City needs to have in place to enable Quesnel to continue to evolve into a progressive, healthy, attractive, and diverse community that will attract and retain visitors, residents and investment.

Over the coming weeks Council will continue to provide feedback to the consultants who will take that feedback and incorporate it into a new draft Official Community Plan. This draft OCP will then be subjected to further community consultation, most likely this fall, before Council will finally ratify and adopt a new OCP.

It is critically important that residents engage in this foundation setting process, as the City’s OCP will ultimately establish the zoning and policy directions for the city as a whole and for the neighborhood you live in or invest in. At the end of the month we will be launching the City’s new website, which will make it easier for you to sign up for email updates on the City’s major initiatives. In the meantime, please “like” the City of Quesnel’s Facebook page to get updates through that medium.

On a related note: I want to give my sincere thanks to the Council members who engaged in last week’s major consultation initiatives. In addition to the three hours Council members spent deliberating the City’s new OCP, they also spent another two hours on the Reid Street redesign project slated for 2018, and two and a half hours at the town hall meeting we hosted on Thursday night to update residents on the West Quesnel Land Stability project and last year’s land slippage monitoring results. Council members are effectively nominally paid volunteers and their extra efforts to engage with the community and involve themselves in the City’s major initiatives should not be taken for granted.

**Mayor Bob Simpson** - [bsimpson@quesnel.ca](mailto:bsimpson@quesnel.ca)