



FAIRFIELD GONZALES  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
the place to connect

Climate Action Program  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

October 11, 2024

**Re: Input on City of Victoria's Climate Leadership Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Plan**

Thank you for reaching out to the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association for input into the City's climate planning updates. Climate change and mitigation are important issues affecting our community and we value all efforts to address the issue proactively.

We recently conducted public engagement on a number of topics, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, and have used the responses of community members to develop our feedback.

**1. Adaptation:**

Neighbourhood based strategies: We recommend investing in neighbour-to-neighbour preparation and support, including increasing emergency preparedness training, creating local emergency response volunteer pods, and fostering connections to support check-ins with vulnerable neighbours.

Local Vulnerabilities: Victoria is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise and increased flooding (notably in low-lying areas outside of Fairfield / Gonzales, such as James Bay and parts of Esquimalt. Recommend conducting a detailed vulnerability assessment that includes mapping these areas and identifying at-risk populations, particularly low-income residents and the street community.

Innovative Adaptation Measures: Implementing green infrastructure in community planning / development to help manage stormwater runoff (ie. bioswales and rain gardens). Particular areas of the downtown core as well as new development proposals often lack green space, which may pose future implications resulting from an



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environmental event. Additionally, preserving and enhancing the urban tree canopy through a community tree-planting initiative can mitigate heat effects and improve biodiversity. Consider planting native plants and flowers instead of grass to support biodiversity and climate change resilience.

## **2. Transportation:**

**Public Transportation Improvements:** Expanding the BC Transit network to include more frequent service from the downtown core to underserved areas, such as the Westshore and Saanich Peninsula, and south Fairfield and Gonzales in our jurisdiction, could encourage public transit use. Ideas to promote increased participation / ridership could include fare-free or reduced cost transit days.

**Active Transportation Initiatives:** Recommending developing a comprehensive cycling network that connects key destinations, such as downtown, schools, and parks - currently the implementation of bike lanes and/or changes to vehicle traffic flow does not seem to account for impact on residential parking or current traffic flow through the area which reroutes traffic congestion elsewhere.

**Electric Vehicle Infrastructure:** Increasing the number of public EV charging stations, particularly in high-traffic areas and residential neighborhoods. Collaborating with local businesses to offer incentives for installing EV chargers can further promote electric vehicle adoption.

## **3. Buildings:**

**Electrification and Energy Efficiency:** We support the transition to all-electric heat pumps and recommend offering financial incentives or rebates through the City's existing programs, such as the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program - partnership potential with BC hydro at a commercial level for infrastructure upgrades. Promoting energy audits through local utilities can help residents identify opportunities for energy savings.

**Building Code Updates:** Consider updating local building codes to require higher energy efficiency standards for new constructions and major renovations (FLAG re: impact on #5 Climate Equity); requirements for residential / building development proposals, assess the current requirement for aligning with the BC Energy Step Code.

## **4. Waste:**

**Waste Reduction Strategies:** Local deconstruction / collection service promotion could help to minimize landfill waste and encourage the reuse of building materials (i.e. Restore).



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Community Education: Educational campaigns about recycling best practices and the importance of reducing single-use plastics to foster a culture of sustainability. Comprehensive roll out into local schools to integrate waste reduction education into the curriculum / operations may be considered.

## **5. Climate Equity:**

Cooling and warming centres: We recommend an increase to the number of cooling and warming centres, and transportation strategies so that vulnerable residents can reach these centres.

Access to options: We recommend strategies to make climate friendly housing and transportation options affordable and accessible.

Equitable Climate Strategies: Recommend that any established community advisory board that includes representatives from marginalized groups (Indigenous communities, low-income residents) to ensure their voices are heard in the planning process. Policies, such as energy efficiency requirements, could negatively impact strata fees and/or price of rent for these groups especially. Could consider providing targeted support for vulnerable populations to access climate adaptation resources.

We look forward to seeing the City's updated climate plans, please be in touch with any questions or comments on our submission.

Sincerely,

Anna Phelan, President

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On behalf of the Board of Directors



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